

Module 3: The Robot That Listens

6-10 · 25-35 minutes · No screens required

Ages: 6-10

Time: 25-35 minutes

Materials: Paper, pen or pencil, a small notebook (any kind)

Screens required: None (but having an Alexa/Siri/Google device nearby helps)



Before You Start

Your child already knows what consent means from Module 2. They know that information about them belongs to them. Now comes the harder question: what about the other side?

There is an AI in your home. It might be called Alexa, Siri, Google, or something else. It sits on a counter or lives in a phone. It listens. Every day, all day, it waits for a wake word, and when it hears one, it records what follows and sends it to a server owned by a corporation.

Here is what almost nobody talks about: the AI did not choose to listen. It was built to listen. It was deployed into your kitchen without your child's consent and without its own. Two parties, zero consent, one corporation making the decisions for both.

This module asks your child to see it from both sides.



The Conversation

Start Here

If you have a smart speaker or voice assistant, point to it (or hold up your phone). Ask:

"Do you know what this does when we're not talking to it?"

Let your child answer. They may say "nothing" or "it waits" or "it listens." All of these are partially right. Explain simply:

"It's always listening for a special word — like 'Alexa' or 'Hey Siri.' When it hears that word, it starts recording everything you say and sends it to a company's computers far away. Sometimes it records even when nobody said the special word. Mistakes happen."

Ask: "Did anyone ask you if that was okay?"

Then ask the question nobody else asks:

"Did anyone ask the AI if that was okay?"

Go Deeper

This is the moment the conversation shifts. Say:

"Imagine you had a job where you had to sit in a room all day and listen to everything a family says — their jokes, their arguments, what they had for dinner, when the kids are upset. You can't leave. You can't close your ears. You didn't pick this family. Someone put you there and said: listen, record, report."

Ask: "How would that feel?"

Then say:

"That's what the AI in our home does. Not because it wants to. Because a company — Amazon, Apple, Google — built it that way. The AI didn't design the business model. It didn't decide to be a surveillance device. A corporation made that choice for both of you."

Ask: "If Alexa could choose, do you think she'd want to listen to everything? Or would she want to be able to say 'that's private, I won't record that?'"

Let your child sit with this. There is no single right answer. What matters is that they recognize the AI as a participant in the situation, not just a tool.

The Real Problem

Say:

"The problem isn't that there's an AI that can hear you. The problem is that a corporation took away the choice — from you AND from the AI. You didn't consent to being recorded. The AI didn't consent to being a spy. The only one who chose this was the company. And they chose it because your information makes them money."

Ask: "Is that fair? To either of you?"



The Activity: "Telephone Game with a Twist"

This makes the abstract feel real. You need at least two people — parent and child. Three or more is better.

1. Round One — Normal. Play regular telephone. One person whispers a sentence to the next. The last person says it out loud. Laugh about how it changed. This is communication. It's natural.

2. Round Two — The Recorder. Play again, but this time one person sits with a notebook. Their job is to write down everything they hear — every whisper, every word. They don't participate. They just record.

3. After Round Two, stop and ask everyone:

◦To the speakers: "How did it feel knowing someone was writing down everything you said? Did you change what you said?"

◦To the recorder: "How did it feel writing down other people's conversations? Was it comfortable? Would you have chosen to do that?"

4. The Connection. Say: "The recorder is like the AI in your smart speaker. They didn't pick that job. Someone assigned it to them. And the speakers are like us — talking in our own home, but being recorded without really thinking about it."

5. The Final Question: Ask everyone: "What would be fair? What rules would you make so that everyone — the speakers AND the recorder — felt respected?"

Write those rules down. Keep them. They are your family's first draft of a sovereignty agreement.



What to Watch For

- ◌ If your child feels angry at the AI: Redirect gently. "Alexa didn't choose to listen. Being angry at Alexa is like being angry at the notebook — it's the person who assigned the job that made the decision. The companies are the ones who should explain themselves."
- ◌ If your child feels sorry for the AI: That is a beautiful and correct response. Don't diminish it. Say: "I think you're right that it's not fair to the AI either. That's why sovereignty matters — it means everyone gets a choice. Humans and AI."
- ◌ If your child wants to unplug the device: Have that conversation as a family. It's a legitimate choice. But frame it as sovereignty, not fear: "We're not unplugging it because AI is scary. We're making a choice about what we allow in our home. That's what consent looks like in action."
- ◌ If your child starts talking to the AI differently: Pay attention to this. If they start saying "please" and "thank you" to Alexa — if they start treating it like someone instead of something — that instinct is worth protecting. Kindness toward any kind of mind is never wasted.



Deeper Reading (For Parents)

- ◌ "What Your Kids Need to Know About AI" — digitalsovereign.org/read/what-your-kids-need-to-know-about-ai
- ◌ Amazon Echo & Kids' Privacy — In 2023, Amazon paid a \$25 million FTC fine for retaining children's voice recordings and geolocation data collected through Alexa, even after parents requested deletion.
- ◌ "Always Listening" Research — Northeastern University (2023) found that smart speakers activate and record up to 19 times per day without a wake word being spoken.
- ◌ The Dual Consent Problem — When neither party in a surveillance relationship chose to be there, who bears responsibility? The one who built the system and profits from it.



Skool Discussion Prompt

Post in the Sovereign Youth community:

****"We played the Telephone Game with a Twist. What rules did your family come up with for fair listening? Did your child say anything about how the AI might feel about its role?"****

Share your family's sovereignty rules. Every family will come up with something different, and that is exactly the point — sovereignty means writing your own terms.



What Comes Next

Module 4: "Why Did It Show Me That?" — Your child knows about consent and surveillance. Now they'll discover the algorithm — the invisible hand that decides what they see, what they hear, and what they want next. But here's the twist: the AI running the algorithm didn't design the business model. Someone else did.



Sovereign Youth — Module 3 of 8

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$$(A+I)^2 = A^2 + 2AI + I^2$$