Communicating Effectively

Instructional Unit
Facilitator Guide
Introduction

In work and in life, communication is essential to articulating thoughts, understanding others, and having good relationships. We are constantly communicating when we speak, when we write, and even when we are not trying, through nonverbal communication including body language.

When communication is effective, the person sending the message (the sender) conveys meaning as intended to the person receiving the message (the receiver). Unfortunately, miscommunication is common because people don’t always know how to correctly convey and interpret meaning.

This lesson explains how essential it is to communicate effectively in work and in life, how to overcome communication issues including conflict, and how to apply excellent communication skills in any environment. This instructional unit has a particular emphasis on etiquette with social networking, email, texting, and cell phones. Throughout the unit, there are exercises for learners to improve their skills in this critical topic, and there is a project-based learning assignment at the end of the lesson.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify ways to improve communication and listening skills to help ensure a productive work environment.
2. Explain the importance of spoken communication to improving understanding.
3. Assess the use of appropriate communication including email etiquette, texting, cell phone use, and social networking.
4. Describe how to resolve conflict in the workplace.
5. Discuss how effective communication affects an organization.
Objective 1: Identify ways to improve communication and listening skills to help ensure a productive work environment.

Do you remember the childhood game “Telephone”? A group of children formed a circle. One child whispered a message in the next child’s ear. The message might have been something like, “Our dog Benji walked through his doggie door and into the house to find our cat Lyla playing with his stuffed toy.” The second child then whispered the message in the third child’s ear and so on until the final child in the circle revealed what he or she thought was communicated. As you might expect, the original message was very different than the final message. The last child would announce the message, “Our doggie kissed our cat who was playing with a boy.” No matter the final message, the difference from the original message made everyone laugh.

Why is it that a simple message changes so much when it is communicated from one person to another? Is it that the first person was not clear or that the second person wasn’t listening well? As we will discuss in this class, when it comes to communication, the answer is not always that easy.

There are three modes of listening: combative listening, passive listening, and active listening. Of these, the one you need to master in order to become an effective communicator is active listening.

1. **Combative listening** takes place when we listen in order to look for flaws in the other person’s point of view and to plan our comeback strategy. When we do this, we are mostly interested in advancing our own point of view.

2. **Passive listening** takes place when we try to hear the other person’s point of view. However, with passive listening, we do not yet provide feedback to verify whether or not we have understood the message. Passive listening is demonstrated in the Telephone game discussed previously.

3. **Active listening** is the most important listening technique. When we use active listening, we provide feedback to verify whether or not we have understood the sender. In order for you to be an active listener, you need to rephrase what someone says back to them to confirm that you’ve understood the message.

Active listening is the most important but also the most challenging method of listening because it also requires giving effective **feedback**. Feedback is used to let the speaker know that you understood his or her message and if not, to get clarification by asking questions.

One thing that gets in the way of understanding is noise. **Noise** is any barrier to communication from internal noise, such as our own thoughts and emotions, to external noise, such as the sounds of a cell phone ringing or a text message notification.
Exercise: Internal Noise

When it comes to barriers to communication, external noise is easy to identify. Distractions include any physical noise that prevents you from clearly understanding the message. Internal noise can be more difficult to distinguish. Review the table below, and then read the scenario to decide which internal factor best describes the noise that is preventing understanding of the message being communicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Factors</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>Communication is likely to be more difficult when there are significant differences in the past experiences of the speaker and the listener.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural backgrounds</td>
<td>Cultural differences reflect internal beliefs and thought patterns that cause people to react differently to the same situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional interference</td>
<td>Our emotions and the way we feel can affect our willingness to be open to what others are saying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication styles</td>
<td>Differences in communication styles, influenced by our personalities, can create challenges that affect the effectiveness of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor listening skills</td>
<td>People with poor listening skills are more concerned with what they have to say than what someone else is saying.</td>
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</table>

Chanté is a supervisor in a department store. She is proud of having the most improved sales in the past quarter for her entire region. She has a new hire, Amar, who has shown great promise in his first two weeks on the job. One day, Amar begins his shift and doesn’t seem to be himself. Instead of being friendly to customers, he seems angry and upset. Chanté decides to remove Amar from his usual register and asks Amar to do a simple task of restocking a shelf. Amar snaps at Chanté and seems even more upset. What Chanté doesn’t know is that Amar’s wife had asked for a divorce that morning.

Which of the factors listed above is the most likely cause of Amar’s behavior, that is out of character and affects his ability to communicate? Circle the correct response below.

Experiences   Cultural background   Emotional Interference
Communication styles   Poor listening skills

Debrief

When someone acts out of character, consider what might be going on in his or her life outside of work. The root cause is often emotional interference. Internal noise, including stress such as Amar’s experience, clouds his judgment, his ability to communicate with others, and the way that he interprets what might be said to him. The next time that somebody acts out of character, ask the person if there is something going on. Listen with compassion and try to understand how the person is feeling.
Objective 2: Explain the importance of spoken communication to improving understanding.

On a recent flight from Los Angeles to New York, the flight attendant, James, began the usual instructions, “Ladies and gentlemen, in the seat pocket in front of you is a card describing the safety features of the aircraft. Please take it out and follow along. To fasten your seatbelt, insert the flat metal fitting into the buckle, pull on the strap to tighten, and lift the upper portion to release....” The passengers were not attentive, which was no surprise to the flight attendant since passengers rarely seem to listen. Midway through the journey, the flight became very bumpy and the attendant said, “Ladies and gentlemen, we are experiencing turbulence. The captain has requested that everyone return to your seats immediately...” He screamed and then said, “OH MY GOODNESS!!! NO!!!”

Panic ensued in the cabin. About thirty seconds later, James came on the loudspeaker and announced, “My apologies, ladies and gentlemen. A fellow flight attendant just spilled a pitcher of hot coffee on me. You should see the front of my pants!” Many passengers breathed sighs of relief, then one said, “You should see the back of mine!” Laughter erupted.

As in the story of the flight attendant, not just what you say but how you say it matters. Context matters, too. In the context described, words created panic. In our everyday lives, think about how much better the message would be received if we took the time not only to actively listen, but also to consider the context and take the time to formulate our thoughts before speaking.

Another important thing to consider is how to decide what medium to use to deliver information. The medium is the method in which you send your message such as email, text, social networking, face-to-face, or telephone. When you speak words rather than electronically message them, you add more meaning to the message through your tone of voice and body language.

Face-to-face is the preferred method of communication, especially when conveying important or complex messages. Telephone is also a frequent method of communication in the workplace. When you answer the telephone at work, do so in a polite and professional way. Be pleasant to people during a call even if you find yourself getting frustrated.

Let’s take a few minutes to complete an exercise to assess your spoken communication. Please be honest with your responses.
Exercise: Communication Self-Assessment

For each of the following statements, indicate whether choice A, B, or C best describes the way that you communicate.

1. ___ A. I frequently use courtesy words and phrases to show respect and politeness such as, “Please,” “Thank you,” and “You’re welcome.”
   ___ B. I never use these courtesy words and phrases.
   ___ C. I sometimes use these courtesy words and phrases.

*Best answer:* A. Frequent use of these courtesy words and phrases is important to show respect and build rapport for improved communication.

2. ___ A. When in conversation, I tend to complain and focus only on what affects me.
   ___ B. When in conversation, I tend to focus on the negative things.
   ___ C. When in conversation, I tend to focus on positive things.

*Best answer:* C. When you focus on positive aspects of conversation, it draws people’s attention in a constructive way, and the conversation is more enjoyable. People are generally more attracted to those who have positive attitudes. When it comes to work evaluations and promotions, people with positive attitudes tend to do better.

3. ___ A. When I first meet someone, I wait for the other person to make the introduction first.
   ___ B. When I first meet someone, I introduce myself with a smile and offer a handshake or some other acknowledgement.
   ___ C. When I first meet someone, I hug the person.

*Best answer:* B. It is good to initiate the introduction and introduce yourself with a handshake and smile. If shaking hands is difficult or if the environment is not formal, a quick head nod is a good substitute. Initiating the introduction with a smile and some form of acknowledgement helps build rapport and shows respect and professionalism.

4. ___ A. When talking with others, I usually do most of the talking.
   ___ B. When talking with others, I usually let the other person do most of the talking.
   ___ C. When talking with others, I try to equalize my participation in the conversation.

*Best answer:* C. Conversations should be a balanced two-way flow of communication.
Debrief
In each of the questions, the emphasis is on respectful, professional, polite communication. Remind learners that those who exhibit a positive attitude and respect are much more likely to be hired into good jobs, to be promoted, and to be offered new opportunities.
Objective 3: Assess the use of appropriate communication including email etiquette, texting, cell phone use, and social networking.

What method of communication do you use most? Is it texting, talking on a cell phone, chatting, social networking, or some other method? In the workplace, email and other forms of electronic communication have often replaced the formal business letter. Sometimes when we get used to communicating electronically, we forget how easily it is to have misunderstandings when the nonverbal cues of face-to-face conversations are missing. Communication can easily result in conflict when messages are sent or interpreted incorrectly.

Netiquette is the term used for the correct or acceptable way of communicating electronically. It is an informal set of guidelines and rules used for communicating on the Internet.

Sometimes when we receive an email message that upsets us, our first instinct is to fire back. Flaming is when a critical message is sent via electronic mail, usually in quick response to another message that causes an emotional reaction. Things that flame include:

- tone
- adjectives that put people down (i.e. ignorant, lazy, sloppy)
- words that accuse (you don’t get it, don’t understand, you are missing the point)
- words like problem, error, and issue
- ALL CAPS
- quoting the other person (i.e. “problem”)
- copying higher chain of command when it is not protocol

Instead of being part of a flaming incident, step away from the computer and give yourself time to calm down. Usually an hour of time will help. Next, reread the message and ask yourself if the person may have intended the message to be interpreted differently. Finally, use other communication methods if possible. Face to face is the best way to deal with such a message, followed by a phone call if meeting in person is not possible.
Another important part of communicating digitally is doing so professionally. Write the following sentence on the board, and then ask a student to read the sentence out loud. Ask the person to try not to laugh!

If e-maile and leturs r writon with speeling and gramitckal misteaks, u mite git the meening, but the messige is not as affectiv or easily reedible.

Was the student able to read the sentence out loud okay? Poorly written messages are the equivalent of having spinach stuck in your teeth while speaking. People might get the idea, but they will be so focused on the errors that they won’t actually hear your message.

In today’s high tech world, we often lose formalities for the sake of convenience. However, in the business world, we should never compromise excellent communication. When in doubt, communicate formally. Read the tips on email etiquette below and discuss each with your class.

**Email Etiquette Tips**

By Gabrielle K. Gabrielli, Ph.D.

1. Write concisely and professionally.
2. Use all rules of proper business writing including using active voice instead of passive voice. Use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
3. Check your facts to ensure accuracy. If in doubt, do not send it.
4. Read your email message out loud before you send it.
5. Use plain text formatting. If you use HTML, select legible colors and fonts.
6. Address the recipient appropriately including the use of To, Bcc, and Cc.
7. Err on the side of formality, especially with salutations.
8. When the distribution list is greater than approximately 10, blind copy multiple recipients rather than displaying all email addresses.
9. Do not overuse Reply All.
10. Prevent email flaming whenever possible. If you feel angry or upset, wait one hour before sending or responding to an email message.
11. Do not copy the chain of command unless it is protocol.
12. Answer promptly, but don’t become a slave to your email.
13. If you won’t be able to respond for some time, and it is an urgent matter, respond to let the sender know that you received the message and that you are working on the response.

notes:
*Write this sentence on the board.*

notes:
*Ask students, What do you think? (Elicit responses from students.)*
14. Use an appropriate subject line and correct the subject line, when needed.

15. Use the high priority message option sparingly.

16. When attaching documents, limit the file size to 1MB (5MB for high speed connections) and ensure a descriptive file name and appropriate file format.

17. Do not write in ALL CAPS. It is the equivalent of yelling!

18. Delete the message thread when the topic changes.

19. Respond at the top of a message thread, and avoid embedding responses within a thread unless it is a long list of questions.

20. Avoid the use of acronyms, excessive punctuation, and emoticons. ☻

21. Do not request delivery and read receipts, or ask to recall a message.

22. Do not forward viruses, hoaxes, jokes, or chain letters. Always check http://snopes.com when you receive anything questionable.

23. Do not reply to SPAM, but do remove yourself from unwanted solicitations.

24. Always end your email by typing a closing and your name.

25. If you use a signature, ensure that it is appropriate and brief.

26. Don’t send anything via email that you wouldn’t want published in the newspaper.
Exercise: Social Media Communication

Read the article below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Using Social Media: Cautions and Possibilities

If you have a social networking account such as one on Facebook or MySpace, you should keep in mind that the Internet is available to everyone. Privacy settings are one way of controlling which individuals see what specific content, but those with full access can share with others. When in doubt, ask yourself if you would want what you published to be seen by your parents, your boss, or your pastor. Would you be embarrassed if the content was published in a newspaper? If the answer is yes, then clean up your online presence. Assume that everything you publish, despite privacy settings, will be viewed and saved for future potential bosses to see. One of the more beneficial social networking sites to make job connections is LinkedIn. Join appropriate groups to increase your connections, and ask former coworkers or supervisors to write letters of recommendation to improve visibility. Take advantage of the connections to display your positive attitude and commitment to excellence in everything you say and do. Be certain with all such sites to ensure proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as well as organization of your information.

Potential employers often use the Internet as a way of pre-screening their applicants. According to online reputation management company Reppler, a staggering 91% of recruiters now search social networking sites before making a job offer to potential new hires. Nearly 70% of recruiters have either decided to hire or reject a candidate based on their impressions from social networking sites. The top three reasons for hiring based on social networking impressions were attitude, professionalism, and creativity. The top reasons for rejecting were lying, inappropriate comments or photos, negative or discriminatory comments, and poor communication skills. If these decision-makers find incriminating pictures or other questionable content, all the education, skills, and abilities you have will not make up for your dubious Internet presence. Keep this in mind when you post pictures, status updates, and other information on the Internet. There are many things that you can do to improve your online presence and use social networking to your advantage when job seeking.

Another important consideration is the selection of your email address. Create a separate, professional email account specifically for your job-hunting needs. There are many free options to register such email accounts.
Questions

1. Do you currently have a Facebook or other social media account? If so, do you have any pictures or messages that you would be embarrassed for your teacher or parent to see?

2. What changes will you make to your online presence to convey the best image possible?

3. If a prospective employer were to view your profile, what word would he or she use to describe your personality based on what is presented?

Debrief
Remind students that it is easy to fall into the misconception that only their friends can see their social media accounts. Their reputation is based in part on their online presence, so it is important to err on the side of caution when online. Ask students to share what they learned about what they need to do to clean up their presence on social networking sites.
Objective 4: Describe how to resolve conflict in the workplace.

Communication is an extremely important skill in the workplace. Miscommunication can often lead to conflict. Unfortunately, the most common response to conflict is to avoid it completely. Avoidance only causes the problem to become bigger. It is best to deal with conflict in a professional way before things get out of hand.

In the online course, you learned about the CALM model of resolving conflict. Let’s review that method.

C stands for clarify. When encountering conflict, you can clarify the issue by asking yourself the following ten questions:

1. What exactly am I upset about? What specifically happened to upset me?
2. What emotions am I feeling? Why do I feel this way?
3. What did I do to contribute to the problem?
4. Is my reaction warranted or am I overreacting?
5. What would a successful outcome to this conflict look like?
6. How would I want to be approached if I was the other party in this conflict?
7. Is it possible that the other person had good intentions that I did not notice?
8. Does this happen frequently, or is it the first time?
9. How does this conflict impact my work?
10. What can I do to increase the chances of a successful resolution?

A is for address the problem. Think about how you will approach the other person and take note of the issue at hand so that you can describe what happened, how you feel, and the negative effects of the disagreement on the workplace.

L is for listen to the other side. Use the active listening skills discussed earlier in this course, and be an empathetic listener by acknowledging the speaker’s concerns and recognizing his or her point of view.

M is for manage your way to resolution of the conflict. Remember to reach an agreement that a problem exists, and then work to come up with a solution that will be best for both sides. Always end your conversation on a positive note.
Exercise: Role Play

With your partner, think of a realistic scenario in a workplace environment in which there is conflict between two people. Walk through each of the steps in the CALM model of conflict resolution. After going through the ten clarifying questions, act out your scenario to come to successful resolution of the conflict.

Use this CALM Model reminder to help:

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Debrief
Tell students that conflict in the workplace is common, but can be overcome with the right actions. Avoiding the problem will only allow the conflict to grow. The CALM model is an effective way to deal with conflict in almost any environment. Encourage students to practice the model with their family or friends.
Objective 5: Discuss how effective communication affects an organization.

When people in an organization communicate well together both inside and outside of the organization, a company is much more likely to be successful. Employees are more likely to be happy and productive, and customers are more likely to speak highly of the organization and provide repeat business. Internally, excellent communication is especially important during times of change to help employees overcome their fears. Communicating in times of change also helps bring about innovation.

To *innovate* means to change by introducing new ideas, products, or methods. When challenges present themselves, innovation is needed to help people contribute new ideas and be able to solve any challenges. When communication is insufficient, an organization might miss out on important insight its employees may have for solving problems.

Internal organizational communication includes supervisors communicating with employees and coworkers communicating with other team members. As work becomes more complex and requires greater coordination, communication and teamwork become even more important.

An essential aspect of team communication is creating an environment that allows for open dialog. It is everyone’s responsibility to communicate effectively with the team.
Exercise: Accepting Change and Innovation

A good way to help others understand and accept change is to discuss the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages) of a change or innovation. This is especially helpful when the change may be perceived as negative across an organization. Read the scenario below, and then create a list of pros and cons that can be communicated to those facing the change.

Creamy Cheese, Inc. is a company that produces dairy products using both cow and goat milk. The company employs over 200 employees in a rural community. After conducting a market analysis, Creamy Cheese, Inc. has decided to stop producing and selling goat milk products. As a result, they will close their goat milking facility. Employees directly involved with producing goat milk products will be reassigned to other duties and will be relocated to a nearby facility. The employees will not experience a change in pay.

What are the possible pros and cons of this change?

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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees will maintain their current rate of pay.</td>
<td>Employees will need to learn new skills but will not receive an increase in pay.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employees will have the opportunity to learn new skills.</td>
<td>Employees will have to relocate to another facility that may be inconvenient for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees will have to relocate to another facility that may be more convenient for them.</td>
<td>The company will be able to focus on one type of milk and make better products.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Debrief

Although change is stressful and could have a negative impact, it is helpful to see the positive aspects of a change. Looking at the pros and cons of a change helps to logically see the positive outcomes of a change in balance with the negative. When we look at a change positively, we are able to be more innovative.
Conclusion
There is no question that effective communication is essential in the workplace. Throughout this lesson, we discussed the importance of spoken communication, listening skills, and written communication. We also discussed appropriate communication as it relates to electronic media and social networking.

In addition, we talked about conflict and how to effectively resolve conflict in the workplace. Finally, we discussed the importance of effective communication and how communication, or lack thereof, can affect an organization.

Now let’s move on to test your knowledge of what you’ve learned so far. You will then have an opportunity to work on a project that will demonstrate your knowledge and skills.
Communicating Effectively

Formative Assessments
Facilitator Guide
Are You Communicating?

Communication is the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. The sender is the person talking; the receiver is the person listening. In school or in the workplace, one of the most important reasons for using good communication skills is in giving and receiving instructions.

This exercise requires a partner. One member of the team will be the sender and will read the instructions provided for this activity. The instructions will be read in their entirety before the receiver is allowed to interrupt with questions. The questions may be answered, but do not completely read the instructions to the listener a second time. The receiver should follow the instructions, using a separate sheet of paper or index card.

**Instructions** (sender will read this out loud):

Write your name in the top right corner of the paper or card. Draw 4 squares, placing an X in each square. Next, draw 4 circles, placing an X in each one. Link the circles to the squares with straight lines. Draw a rectangle outside of the entire design. Place the date on the bottom of the page.

The pair will change roles with the sender becoming the receiver and the receiver becoming the sender. At the conclusion of the activity, each person will evaluate the role played by his or her partner.

**Did the sender:**

- _____ Speak clearly?
- _____ Consider what the listener needed to know?
- _____ Understand the facts being presented?
- _____ Speak at a rate of speed that could be understood?
- _____ Use appropriate tone and body language?
- _____ Provide feedback to the listener when asked for additional information?

**Did the receiver:**

- _____ Concentrate on the message and show that he or she was listening carefully?
- _____ Repeat or paraphrase information that was provided to gain clarity?
- _____ Ask questions?
- _____ Avoid interrupting the speaker?
- _____ Demonstrate an understanding that the message was received?
- _____ Use appropriate non-verbal responses (tone and body language)?
Are You Listening?

Communication is the exchange of information between one or more people. Both the sender of the message and the receiver of the message determine the effectiveness of its exchange.

The role of the receiver in the communication process is just as critical to accuracy as the role of the sender. Listening is an important skill and involves more than simply hearing. Listening is hearing sound, interpreting the sound, and understanding its meaning. As with sending a message accurately, effective listening requires specific strategies.

- Listen with a purpose.
- Concentrate on the message.
- Check for accuracy by paraphrasing what was heard.
- Ask questions to clarify information.
- Organize the information mentally or write brief notes.
- Be aware of nonverbal cues.

How Well Do You Listen?
Communications Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I listen carefully and rephrase information for better understanding.</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I put myself in the speaker’s place in order to better understand the message.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I ask questions if the message is not clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I concentrate on what is being said and avoid outside distractions.</td>
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<td>I control my emotions when receiving information from others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I make eye contact when communicating with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use appropriate body language and nonverbal cues when listening.</td>
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</table>

All of the items on the self-assessment represent good communication skills on the part of the listener. Your goal is to use all of these skills “usually” or “always.” Work toward improving those areas in which you show a need for improvement.

Note to teachers: this is a self-assessment, so there are no wrong answers, but ensure that the formative assessment is complete with each of the rows having a mark in the columns.
Be Assertive!

Being assertive is basic to open and honest communication, whether in the workplace or in other areas of your life. When you communicate assertively, you are able to present your point of view clearly and directly while still respecting the rights of others. Assertive communication is based on mutual respect and results in developing strong working relationships with others.

In any relationship, you need to be able to let others know your thoughts and feelings. At the same time, you need to be considerate of the thoughts and feelings of others.

The best approach in developing assertive communication skills is to use “I” messages. If you explain your position by beginning with “I”, then you are focusing on how you feel. If you begin your sentence with “you”, then you are putting the other person’s thoughts and actions at the center and placing that person immediately on the defensive. For example, if a coworker habitually arrives late for work and causes you extra responsibilities, don’t attack the individual by saying, “You are always late and it causes extra work for me.” Instead, say, “I feel that your tardiness is causing an additional workload for me, and I would appreciate you trying to improve the situation.”

Other assertive tips:

- Use body language that displays confidence including good posture and eye contact.
- Use a direct but pleasant tone.
- Don’t forget to listen. It is important to understand the other person’s point of view as well.

Assertiveness Exercise

In each of the following scenarios, which example demonstrates a more assertive response?

Your coworker has left his tools on the floor in an area where others walk, causing a safety hazard.

1. You are always leaving tools scattered about. You must stop.
2. I think that leaving your tools scattered on the floor is a safety hazard for others. It would help us all if you put things away.

You had a meeting scheduled for 9:30 this morning with a coworker who ends up arriving at 9:50 with no explanation or apology for being late.

1. I thought our meeting was set for 9:30. I have other appointments so we’ll have to hurry our discussion.
2. You are late and we won’t have enough time to work on the project we were supposed to discuss this morning.
Dealing with Conflict

Employers want to hire individuals who can work well with others. However, any time that people work together, there is the potential for conflict. A productive workforce depends on cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork. Below are four unproductive ways of dealing with conflict.

- **Avoidance** - Ignore the problem and hope it will go away.
- **Poor Me** - Complain to your coworkers about the person with whom you are having problems, but don't attempt to resolve your issues with the person.
- **Anger** - Have emotional outbursts that do little to solve the problem at hand and mostly make everyone uncomfortable.
- **Revenge** - Look for a way to even the score between you and the person who bothers you, and do things to make the other person look bad.

Read the scenario below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Karin just cannot seem to get along with her coworker, Ron. Karin is a business analyst and Ron provides technical support to everyone in the office. Any time Karin approaches Ron with a technical issue, Ron immediately tenses up and is visibly frustrated. He usually ends up yelling at Karin for failing to do something correctly on her computer and then storms off when he fixes the problem. Karin gets so stressed out by Ron’s behavior that she has begun asking other people for technical support. She talks to her coworkers about how grumpy Ron is and how she can’t wait until he retires.

In what ways is Karin dealing with conflict unproductively?

Instead of Karin being able to talk openly with Ron, she is being unproductive by talking about him to other coworkers. If she doesn’t feel that she can address the problem directly with Ron, she should go to a supervisor.

In what way is Ron dealing with conflict unproductively?

Ron is dealing with conflict unproductively by not being empathetic and putting himself in Karin’s shoes. Just because he is more knowledgeable with computers doesn’t give him the right to treat her poorly including yelling at her.

What could they both do differently to have better communication in the workplace?

They could both be more empathetic and put themselves in the other person’s shoes.
Detecting Emotion

Initially when we hear the word communication, we often think of verbal communication. However, nonverbal communication, or communication without words, is also an important part of communication. You have most likely heard the phrase, “actions speak louder than words.” While this phrase has several different meanings, one meaning is that your actions sometimes communicate more than the words that you say.

Nonverbal communication is expressed through:

- eye contact
- gestures
- body position and posture
- personal appearance, such as clothing style
- facial expression

Look at the pictures below and see if you can detect the emotion expressed.

1. Emotion: __________
2. Emotion: __________
3. Emotion: __________
4. Emotion: __________

Effective Communication

Organizations need workers who can communicate well with others. In the workplace, people have to interact with other employees, supervisors, and customers. The ability to communicate effectively with those around us is an important job skill.

Read the scenario that follows, and then select the response that demonstrates an effective approach to communicating in this situation. Use the space provided to explain why you chose your response.

Jonah, Mario, and Keisha are part of a call center team that answers a phone bank for customer support. Each person can be on calls, and waiting calls are to be taken by the next available team member. Mario consistently takes his time between calls so that he can avoid taking as many calls as his coworkers. Jonah and Keisha have discussed this with each other, but they don’t seem to know the best way to improve the situation so that Mario takes a greater share of the responsibility. They should:

A. continue to complain to each other, but avoid dealing with the situation directly.
B. complain to the department supervisor so that she can deal with the problem.
C. discuss the situation openly with Mario, explaining that as a team they have certain goals and expectations that need to be met as a unit.

Why did you choose the response that you chose?

Teachers, look for responses that show that the student understands that talking directly with Mario is the best first course of action. If that does not work, then they could go their supervisor. Simply complaining to one another and not taking action will not help solve the problem.
Electronic Etiquette

Electronic messaging is likely the most common form of communication in today’s workplace. Even if we work in close proximity to our coworkers, many exchanges that previously were made face to face or by telephone are now conveyed through email, chat, text, or other electronic methods of communication. The use of electronic networks has made it easy for the global workplace to develop and operate.

As with all forms of communication, electronic communication has its own set of rules. Some of these may be specific to the individual company, but there are also general rules that apply in all situations.

- Use business email for business purposes. Rarely will a company allow email to be used for sending personal notes and conducting personal business.
- Follow the rules of grammar including using complete sentences and appropriate punctuation.
- Avoid trendy abbreviations and slang.
- Write a descriptive subject line.
- Always sign your email with complete contact information.
- Consider your audience as you would with any written or spoken communication.
- Use your incoming email as a guide to your responses. If the email arrives with formalities, respond similarly. Be as polite in your responses as you would in conversation.
- Edit your responses before sending including proofreading for conciseness, grammar, and spelling.
- Use the appropriate messaging medium for responding to messages. If you receive a voice mail, call back. If you receive a question by email, respond by email. There are exceptions to this rule including if someone requests a phone call or other method of communication, or if conflict arises, in which case, face-to-face is the best way to respond.

How would you respond?

Jim has received an email from an angry customer. He quickly responds using both an angry tone and abusive language. He sends the email without proofing and doesn’t include his name. How could Jim have responded differently in this situation?

Jim should have waited before responding to an angry message. He should have known that “flaming” the angry customer would only make things worse. Of course he should also proofread and follow all formalities of writing with his email, but he should not have sent an angry response at all.
## Email Me

After face-to-face and phone conversations, email is one of the most frequent ways employees communicate with each other. How you present yourself in writing is extremely important to how your coworkers perceive your level of professionalism. Being able to communicate via email in a professional manner and having proper etiquette will affect your entire career.

Email is a common pitfall for many people. Since email communication is frequently used in the workplace, we often forget the basic rules of workplace communication. When it comes to email, the same rules we use for other written communication apply.

### Email Etiquette Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I write concisely and professionally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use all rules of proper business writing including using active voice instead of passive voice. I use correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I check my facts to ensure accuracy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use plain text formatting. If I use HTML, I select legible colors and fonts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I address the recipient appropriately including the use of To, Bcc, and Cc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I err on the side of formality, especially with salutations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not overuse Reply All.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prevent email flaming whenever possible. If I feel angry or upset, I wait one hour before sending or responding to an email message.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not copy the chain of command unless it is protocol.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I answer promptly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I won’t be able to respond for some time, and it is an urgent matter, I respond to let the sender know that I received the message and that I am working on the response.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use an appropriate subject line and correct the subject line when needed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use the high priority message option sparingly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When attaching documents, I limit the file size to 1MB (5MB for high speed connections) and ensure a descriptive file name and appropriate file format.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not write in ALL CAPS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I delete the message thread when the topic changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respond at the top of a message thread, and I avoid embedding responses within a thread unless it is a long list of questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid the use of acronyms, excessive punctuation, and emoticons. 😊</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not forward viruses, hoaxes, jokes, or chain letters.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not reply to SPAM, but I do remove myself from unwanted solicitations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always end my email by typing a closing and my name.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I use a signature, I ensure that it is appropriate and brief.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t send anything via email that I wouldn’t want published in the newspaper.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work on the areas where you selected “No” to improve your email etiquette.
Getting Along with Others

Employers want to hire individuals who can work well with others. When there is an atmosphere of courtesy and respect for one another, the workplace is a pleasant place to be. Stress is low and productivity is high when people get along.

Regardless of your position in the organization, you need to show the same courtesy and respect to all. Everyone has skills to contribute, and every role is important. When someone makes a mistake, a big part of getting along is putting oneself in the other person’s shoes, which means being empathetic. Empathy is the ability to understand and to be sensitive to the feelings of another person.

Applying Excellent Communications Skills

Read the following scenario. From the list provided, select the characteristics that are exhibited in Vincent’s behavior.

Vincent is a sales representative for the advertising department of a radio station. He calls on customers and then submits the purchase orders to Ben, an administrative assistant for the station. Ben has made an error by failing to invoice one of Vincent’s customers. It is a problem for the company, but Vincent is especially angry because it impacts his sales commissions. Vincent storms into Ben’s office and loudly complains about the mistake, telling Ben how incapable he is and that Ben doesn’t deserve to have his job.

Circle the items in the list below that best describe the characteristics demonstrated by Vincent:

- Fair
- Empathetic
- Respectful
- Discourteous
- Helpful
- Uncooperative
- Courteous
- Rude
- Professional

Has Vincent exhibited professional communication skills?  Yes  No  X
Handling Constructive Feedback

Part of working in collaboration with others is being able to exchange useful information regarding how best to reach your work team’s goals. Often that means hearing suggestions about improvements that you could make in your own work. Sometimes this is referred to as constructive criticism or feedback.

You need to be able to listen to both managers and coworkers in a way that enables you to continuously improve on the job. If you begin every task thinking that it will turn out perfectly, you will soon find out just how wrong you are. We all make mistakes, and we all can improve. We need to be open to learning and building on the skills we possess.

Read the scenario that follows, and then use the list to indicate the characteristics that are described by Marco’s behavior in handling the feedback that he receives from Ellen.

Ellen and Marco work together in a production area. They are both responsible for inserting batteries into toys that then proceed to the packaging department. Marco usually outpaces Ellen in the number of products he completes and readies for packaging, but lately he has shown lack of interest in the work and has been lagging far behind. This will be a reflection on both of them, so Ellen feels that she needs to offer feedback.

Ellen approaches Marco about the problem, explaining with genuine interest that she has noticed his lack of interest and how it has affected his job performance. She asks if there is anything that she can do to help him. Marco replies in a raised voice that he doesn’t need help from her or anyone else. He defends his work and productivity level and cuts the conversation off entirely.

Circle the following characteristics that are demonstrated by Marco’s reaction:

- Professional
- Disrespectful
- Team-oriented
- Uncooperative
- Collaborative
- Defensive
- Unprofessional
- Respectful
- Positive
Learning to Listen

There are three modes of listening: combative listening, passive listening, and active listening. Of these, the one you need to master in order to become an effective communicator is active listening.

**Combative listening** takes place when we listen only to look for flaws in the other person's point of view. When we do this, we are mostly interested in advancing our own point of view or in delivering our message. We pretend to listen, all the while planning our comeback strategy.

**Passive listening** takes place when we truly try to hear the other person's point of view. However, with passive listening, we do not yet provide feedback to verify whether we have understood.

**Active listening** is the most important listening technique. When we use active listening, we provide feedback to verify whether or not we have understood the sender. In order for you to be an active listener, you need to rephrase what someone says back to the person to confirm that you've understood the message. The good thing about active listening is that it helps you reduce the emotions that can otherwise block clear thinking.

Read the statements below and determine which type of listening each best fits. Place an “X” in the appropriate column to indicate your response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Combative</th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“You need to…”</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t have time…”</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I bet that was difficult…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Just so I understand…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’m so sorry to hear that…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It sounds like you are very frustrated…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tell me more…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I disagree…”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Me, Myself, and I

In all relationships, you need to be able to let others know your thoughts and feelings. At the same time, you need to be considerate of the thoughts and feelings of others.

The best approach in developing effective communication skills is to be assertive and use “I” messages. If you explain your position by starting with “I”, then you are focusing on how you feel. If you begin your sentence with “you”, then you will likely put the other person on the defensive. For example, if a coworker habitually arrives late for work and causes you extra responsibilities, don’t attack him or her by saying, “You are always late and it causes extra work for me.” Instead, say, “I feel that you not arriving on time for work is causing an additional workload for me and I would appreciate it if you would try to improve the situation.”

Other assertive tips:

• Use body language that displays confidence including good posture and eye contact.
• Use a direct, but polite and pleasant tone.
• Don’t forget to listen. It is important to understand the other person’s point of view.

Rewrite the statements below to have a more assertive approach to communication.

1. You always make me feel like I do everything wrong.
   I feel like you don’t think I can do anything right.

2. You are never on time for meetings. Now we are going to be late.
   The meeting starts at 10:00. Since you are late, we will need to hurry to make it on time.

3. This project cannot be completed by the deadline, so you are just going to have to extend the deadline or I won’t be able to get it done.
   I do not think I will be able to complete the project by the deadline.

Please consider extending the deadline.
Nonverbal Expression

Nonverbal communication is essentially communication without words. Although you may not realize it, you communicate more nonverbally than you do verbally. Nonverbal communication is not unique to humans. If you have a pet, try watching the ways the pet communicates with you nonverbally. Dogs wag their tails to express happiness. Cats rub against your legs to express love or a need for something. Birds flap their wings vigorously to alert danger. Bulls and horses stomp the ground to express anger or frustration.

In humans, nonverbal communication is expressed in a variety of ways including:

- eye contact
- gestures
- body position and posture
- personal appearance, such as clothing style
- facial expressions

Read the statements below. Describe how you would express the statement to someone without using words.

1. What time is it?
   Tap wrist. Furrow brows.

2. I do not know.
   Shrug shoulders.

3. You are annoying me.
   Cross arms. Roll eyes.
Resolving Conflict

Part of working in collaboration with others is to be able to exchange useful information regarding how best to reach your work team’s goals. Conflicts over how best to achieve goals are bound to occur from time to time. Resolving them effectively is the key, and the same teamwork and collaboration skills apply, including:

- cooperation
- respect
- courtesy
- communication
- fairness
- politeness

The table below includes a list of behaviors that work well in situations involving a conflict of ideas or opinions. Use this list as a self-assessment to determine the behaviors you normally use when conflict arises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When dealing with conflict, I</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make sure I understand the issue and the facts involved in the conflict.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep the problem separate from the person(s) involved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am polite, calm, and courteous, even when discussing points of disagreement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen carefully to other positions being presented.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am clear and concise in presenting my own point of view.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate a willingness to cooperate in order to resolve problems or disagreements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note to teachers: this is a self-assessment, so there are no wrong answers, but ensure that the formative assessment is complete with each of the rows having a mark in the columns.
Sending a Message

Communication plays an important role in determining how well people work together. Employers want to hire employees who already possess great communication skills. Therefore, it is essential for us to develop and use excellent communication skills to show potential employers that we have the foundation to become productive employees.

As you learned in the online course, in the communication cycle, the sender is the person talking and the receiver is the person listening. The sender must present information in an appropriate manner of delivery and the receiver must correctly interpret the meaning of the message and the intention of the sender. Take some time to complete the self-assessment below. Be honest with your responses.

How well do you send a message?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak clearly using vocabulary that can be easily understood by others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider the listener before providing information to others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make sure that I confirm the facts of the information that I am sharing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use a rate of speed in speaking that is easy for others to follow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I control my emotions when speaking with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make eye contact when communicating with others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use appropriate body language and nonverbal cues when speaking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note to teachers: this is a self-assessment, so there are no wrong answers, but ensure that the formative assessment is complete with each of the rows having a mark in the columns.
Social Communication

Verbal communication is communicating with words. Although it may sound like it, no pun intended, verbal communication includes more than just spoken words.

Verbal communication includes:

• written communication, such as letters, texts, or email
• communicating on the telephone
• using social media such as Facebook and Twitter

Just as there is a proper way to communicate with our spoken words, there are rules of etiquette for other types of verbal communication. And, for the most part, the same general rules apply to all types of verbal communication such as:

• Be professional.
• Be respectful.
• Be honest.
• Do not say, write, or post anything that you may regret later.

Read the scenario below and select the response that you feel is best. Explain your response.

JaHanna works at a department store in the mall. She was supposed to work tonight, but told her supervisor she could not come in due to a family emergency. Later that night, JaHanna attended a Halloween party hosted by one of her friends. The next day she posted pictures of she and her friends at the party on Facebook. JaHanna failed to remember that she is a Facebook friend with a few of her coworkers and her supervisor. The next time JaHanna reported to work, she was fired.

JaHanna failed to consider:

a) the benefits of good spoken communication.

b) the consequences of being dishonest.

c) privacy settings on social networks.

Although privacy settings on social networks are important, the real reason that JaHanna was fired was because she lied about having a family emergency. The fact that she was caught on Facebook is not as important as her dishonesty.
Voices of an Organization

An organization’s ability to communicate effectively has a major impact on productivity, customer satisfaction, profit, and morale. It is important that an organization create an environment of open and honest communication. Employees should never be afraid to share feedback with their company or feel as though their opinion doesn’t matter. An organization’s failure to communicate with its employees can be detrimental to its success.

Read the scenario below, and then answer the questions that follow.

Bennett works for a large ice cream company as a truck driver. He is responsible for delivering ice cream to regional distribution centers. He notices the company’s factory waste is beginning to overload the local waste treatment plant. If the company did not find a solution to the problem, they would have to shut down the factory until they did. Growing up on a pig farm, Bennett knows that pigs would love the rich ice cream waste. He figures the company could buy a few pigs, donate them to local farmers, and have the waste delivered to the pigs. The problem would be solved.

But, Bennett wasn’t the person responsible for solving the waste problem. Nobody ever asked for his opinion and he didn’t even know how to submit his suggestion. He decided to let the people who make the “big bucks” figure out how to solve the problem.

How will Bennett’s decision to keep to himself affect the organization?

- Productivity will be impacted if the factory has to shut down. He and others could lose their jobs.

What can the organization do to create an environment of open communication?

- Create a means for employees to submit suggestions and encourage them to do so. They could also implement an incentive program for suggestions that save the company money. Everyone should have a voice in an organization.
**What is the Message?**

Effective communication is more than just saying or writing the correct words. Communication involves much more than just words.

Unspoken communication, the subtle messages conveyed without words that are transmitted and received in every face-to-face encounter is body language. Posture, facial expressions, and gestures are all part of body language. The nonverbal signals we send communicate our attitudes, feelings, and emotions. From the moment we meet someone, we judge the individual by what we see and how the person makes us feel.

The following is a list of gestures and postures with the message each transmits. Keep in mind that these interpretations vary for different cultures, and that some body language gestures have multiple meanings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGAGED</th>
<th>AGGRESSIVE</th>
<th>REJECTED</th>
<th>LISTENING</th>
<th>DEFENSIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Leaning forward</td>
<td>• Leaning forward</td>
<td>• Moving back</td>
<td>• Head tilted</td>
<td>• Arms crossed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open body</td>
<td>• Hands on hips</td>
<td>• Arms folded</td>
<td>• Lots of eye contact</td>
<td>• Feet pointing in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open arms</td>
<td>• Finger pointing</td>
<td>• Legs crossed, thigh on knee</td>
<td>• Nodding</td>
<td>• Hands clenched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open hands</td>
<td>• Fists clenched</td>
<td>• Head down</td>
<td>• High blink rate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EAGER</th>
<th>ATTENTIVE</th>
<th>LET ME SPEAK</th>
<th>DECEPTIVE</th>
<th>UNINTERESTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Open legs</td>
<td>• Standing</td>
<td>• Finger tapping</td>
<td>• Avoids eye contact</td>
<td>• Staring into space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sprint position</td>
<td>• Arms behind back</td>
<td>• Foot tapping</td>
<td>• Looking up and to the left</td>
<td>• Slumped posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feet under chair</td>
<td>• Smiling</td>
<td>• Staring</td>
<td>• Hands touching face, nose, or throat</td>
<td>• Doodling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• On toes</td>
<td>• Open feet</td>
<td>• Leaning forward</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foot tapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you understand body language?

What is the message if:

A sales clerk smiles in greeting?

Attentive [x]      Deceptive [ ]

A person stares into space while you are speaking?

Aggressive [ ]   Uninterested [x]

A person stands with hands clenched while speaking with you?

Defensive [x]      Rejected [ ]

A person speaks rapidly with a raised stance, leaning forward?

Uninterested [ ] Eager [x]
Communicating Effectively

Summative Assessment
Facilitator Guide
Test Your Knowledge

1. In most cases of unsuccessful communication:
   a. the speaker is concerned with the listener’s feelings.
   b. the speaker is focused only on his or her own message.
   c. the speaker is a good listener.
   d. the listener is a good speaker.

2. The most common response to conflict is:
   a. crying.
   b. guilt.
   c. avoidance.
   d. laughter.

3. Jai’s employee, Rita, has asked to meet with him regarding a recent situation that upset her. What is the best way that Jai can show Rita he understands her?
   a. smiling as Rita speaks
   b. avoiding eye contact with Rita
   c. sending an email summarizing what Rita said
   d. summarizing what Rita said to him when she is done speaking

4. Communication is likely to increase in difficulty when there are significant differences in the __________ of the speaker and audience.
   a. experiences
   b. styles
   c. ages
   d. fatigue levels
5. In workplace communication, it is not appropriate to use:
   a. technical terms or acronyms.
   b. **slang or swearing.**
   c. vocabulary that may be difficult for others to understand.
   d. personal work experiences to explain a situation.

6. When faced with learning a new work process, asking questions of a supervisor is a good practice because it shows that you:
   a. are comfortable with your boss.
   b. **want to understand instructions clearly.**
   c. can find ways to waste time on the job.
   d. have good nonverbal communication skills.

7. Communication is an essential workplace skill because it increases an employee’s:
   a. **ability to receive and follow instructions.**
   b. ability to get promoted.
   c. ability to get to work on time.
   d. ability to read complex material.

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**Match the Definitions**

8. Noise ____c____
   a. an emotional and hostile response that is sent electronically

9. Flaming ____a____
   b. the correct or acceptable way of communicating electronically

10. Netiquette ____b____
    c. anything that is a barrier to communication and prevents you from understanding the message
Communicating Effectively

Project Based Learning Activity
Facilitator Guide
Application: Project-Based Learning

Procedure: Ask students to work in teams of three to four on this project to determine the most appropriate methods of communicating their message. Once the first part of the assignment is completed, students are to work individually to draft their messages, and then back in teams provide feedback to one another. Examples provided are for instructor use only and should not be provided to students.

Background Information
Due to lack of government funding, the City of Jiminez is required to reduce their budget by 20 percent. The city commissioners have decided to accomplish this budget reduction by reducing employee benefits for all city employees.

Your Task
First, work in your team to determine the most appropriate methods of communication for the city commissioners to communicate these changes to the employees. You must select at least three methods of communication and provide justification as to why each method is appropriate. After you have done so, work individually to create a draft for each form of communication. For example, if you choose email communication, create a draft email that communicates the benefit changes to city employees. If you choose verbal face-to-face communication, write a draft of the information to be included in the face-to-face communication. For social media, create a draft tweet, post, or blog. For closed circuit television, write a script. Feel free to choose some other method of communication, but be sure to provide justification as to why it was chosen. Finally, provide feedback to one another on your draft messages by reviewing at least two of your team members’ messages.

Methods of Communication Chosen and Justification

1. __________________________________________
   Why? __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________
   Why? __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________
   Why? __________________________________________
Criteria for Feedback of Team Member Messages

1. The message was clear.
2. The message did not contain any spelling, grammatical, or other errors.
3. The message was written in a way that would not cause emotional distress.
4. The message was accurate.

Example: Social Media
Tweet: Attention all City of Jiminez employees! Benefits are changing Jan.
1. Click for more info: www.tinyurl.com

Example: Email
To: All City of Jiminez Employees
From: City of Jiminez City Commissioners
Re: New Fiscal Year Budget

Dear Employees:

Due to lack of government funding, the City of Jiminez commissioners have been asked to develop ways to reduce the city budget by 20 percent. After much discussion with Jiminez citizens, city employees, and cities in similar situations, we have determined that the only way to achieve the reduction without any job loss is to modify employee benefits.

We know that this decision will significantly impact all city employees. The city’s Office of Human Resources is available at any time to answer any question regarding the changes to your benefits. In addition, you may find more information regarding the changes on the city’s website at www.cityofjiminez.gov/employees.

We appreciate your understanding during this difficult economic time.

Sincerely,

Joan Franklin, Mayor
City of Jiminez
### Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student worked in a team to choose at least three appropriate methods of communication and provide logical justification for selecting each method.</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student created a draft for each communication method.</td>
<td>2 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students provided feedback to one another on their draft messages.</td>
<td>1 point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td>4 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>