

Technical Communication

Unit 1 - Exercise 1

1. What is communication?
2. Explain role and purpose of communication.
3. Explain stages/process of communication or communication cycle.
4. Explain various types of communication.
5. Explain various features of Technical Communication.
6. Differentiate between Technical and General Communication.

1. What is communication?

Look around and you will find people involved in several activities, which involve:

- Informal conversations
- Meetings
- Presentations
- Phone calls
- Tele-conferencing
- Video-conferencing
- Gossiping
- Net surfing
- Chatting and so on....

In short, we need to communicate in order to interact. Communication is one of the essential conditions of social interaction; it plays a key role in our life.

Now let us try to understand what the term 'communication' means.

The word communication has been derived from the Latin word communicare, meaning 'to share, to impart, or to commune (to share your emotions and feelings with someone without speaking).

It's literal meaning is 'giving or sharing information'.

"Communication is a process of sharing information". The word process suggests that communication exists as a flow through a sequence or series of steps.

Communication is a dynamic interactive process that involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and values. It is not passive and does not just happen. We actively and consciously engage in communication in order to develop the information and understanding required for effective group functioning. It is dynamic because it involves a variety of forces and activities interacting over a period of time.

2. Explain role and purpose of communication.

Role and Purpose of communication:

Communication is an essential process for human beings. Thanks to it, we can interact, connect, and transmit information in various ways. Its purposes are manifold and range from sharing knowledge to expressing emotions, establishing relationships, and solving problems.

Understanding the different purposes of communication helps us to grasp the importance of developing effective communication skills in our work and daily lives.

Key Facts

- When we interact, it is crucial to understand that we are all different. For effective communication to take place, we need to know the purpose behind that communication.
- Understanding the purpose of our communication can help us achieve the objectives we desire, whether they are personal, collective, or work-related.
- The purposes of communication are diverse. Effective communication, regardless of its purpose, can contribute to anything from conflict resolution to successfully selling a product.

The Main Purposes of Communication:

The purposes of communication are diverse and accompany us in every aspect of our lives, facilitating human interaction and personal and social development. Firstly, the primary purpose of communication is to transmit information clearly and efficiently. However, there are more purposes and you should keep them in mind to make the most of communication. Mentioned below are 10 main purposes of communication and their significance.

1. Informing
2. Persuasion
3. Leadership
4. Motivating
5. Learning
6. Making Decisions
7. Resolving Conflicts
8. Entertain
9. Building Relationships
10. Understanding Others

1. Informing

One of the most important purposes of communication is informing. Communication is used to convey information, facts, ideas, and knowledge among individuals or groups in almost every aspect of life: family, public space, work, health, education, and more.

This purpose can be reflected in conveying relevant information, sharing knowledge and experiences, disseminating news and events, providing guidance and instructions, educating and disseminating information, and keeping society informed about important matters.

2. Persuasion

Persuasion refers to the ability to influence the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of others through communication. Mastering persuasion is a valuable communication skill, particularly in areas such as marketing or advertising.

It is important to note that persuasive communication should be ethical and based on honesty and transparency. Effective persuasion is achieved through presenting strong and rational arguments, using reliable evidence, and considering the needs and concerns of others.

Persuasion in business world

Persuasion plays a fundamental role in the business world, where effective communication is used to influence consumers' purchasing decisions and achieve success in commercial transactions. Some ways used for persuasion in the business world include:

- **Persuasive advertising:** Advertising employs persuasive techniques to capture consumers' attention and persuade them to purchase a specific product or service.
- **Pricing and promotion strategies:** Persuasion is used in pricing and promotions to influence consumers' buying decisions.
- **Influence at the point of sale:** Persuasion is employed in the sales environment to influence customers' purchase decisions.
- **Persuasive marketing content:** Through the creation of relevant and valuable content, businesses seek to persuade consumers to trust the brand and make informed purchasing decisions.

3. Leadership

Leadership and communication are closely related and are essential for the success of any organization or team. An effective leader must be a skilled communicator and use communication as a powerful tool to influence, inspire, and guide others.

When you are in charge of a team, it is crucial to have effective, open, and direct communication. This helps to avoid misunderstandings and at the same time, motivates the group.

4. Motivating

Effective communication can play a key role in motivating people, whether in a work, educational, or personal environment. Through proper communication, messages that inspire, generate enthusiasm, and promote positive action can be conveyed.

Generating positive motivation through communication is a fundamental aspect in spaces where people share a work team. Therefore, here are some tips for using motivation wisely:

- Share the vision and purpose of what you want to communicate.
- Provide positive and constructive feedback.
- Use communication as a means of recognizing employees.

5. Learning

Communication is a fundamental means of acquiring knowledge, exchanging ideas, and sharing information. Through effective communication, we can learn from others, gain new perspectives, acquire skills, and expand our knowledge in various fields.

The purpose of communication in learning is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, promote the exchange of ideas, develop skills, foster reflection and self-evaluation, and enable collaboration and collective learning.

6. Making decisions

Communication plays a crucial role in the decision-making process, whether at an individual level or in a group context. Through communication, we can exchange information, discuss different options, evaluate alternatives, and reach agreements that help us make informed and effective decisions.

Essential factors in decision-making

Some key aspects of communication, understood as a means for decision-making, are:

- **Information exchange:** Communication allows us to obtain and share relevant information for the decision-making process.
- **Generation of ideas and options:** Through communication, we can generate ideas, propose different approaches, and explore various options to address a situation.

- Joint evaluation and analysis: Communication provides us with the opportunity to analyze and evaluate different options and their implications.
- Consensus-building: Communication is essential for reaching agreements and building consensus in the group decision-making process. Through effective communication, involved parties can express their opinions, discuss, and negotiate to find common ground.
- Implementation and follow-up: Communication also plays an important role in decision implementation and result monitoring.

7. Resolving conflicts

Conflicts are inevitable in human interactions. However, when we use communication assertively, we can resolve them. In the following table, we will provide you with tips for resolving conflicts through assertive communication:

Advice	Description
Active listening	Pay attention and show genuine interest in what the other person has to say.
Practice empathy	Try to understand the emotions and perspectives of the other person.
Communicate clearly and respectfully	Express your ideas and feelings clearly, avoiding aggressive or accusatory language.
Avoid defensive language	Focus on the problem and avoid blaming or attacking the other person.
Focus on the problem, not the people	Avoid personal attacks and maintain focus on resolving the conflict.
Seek collaborative solutions	Work together to find mutually acceptable solutions.

8. Entertain

Communication is not limited solely to transmitting information or expressing emotions. In many personal and professional situations, communication serves as a means to entertain and have fun.

Additionally, entertainment also plays an important role in the media and entertainment industry as a whole. Television programs, movies, music, theater, live shows, and other forms of artistic expression heavily rely on the ability to entertain the audience. Therefore, this purpose is equally or even more important than those where communication is focused on resolving conflicts and sharing ideas.

9. Building relationships

One of the fundamental purposes of communication is to build strong and meaningful relationships. Through communication, we establish connections with others, whether they are personal, professional, or social relationships. Effective communication allows us to:

- Get to know and understand people
- Establish bonds of trust
- Develop empathy
- Strengthen the ties that bind us

Effective communication also helps us to resolve conflicts, overcome misunderstandings, and build mutual agreements. By expressing our needs and listening to the needs of others, we can find joint solutions and establish common ground.

10. Understanding others

Communication allows us to delve into the perspective of others, understanding their ideas, feelings, and needs. Through the exchange of words, we seek to establish a connection that enables us to comprehend and appreciate the diversity of human thoughts and experiences.

By striving to understand others, we promote empathy and mutual understanding, building a more inclusive and collaborative society. This provides us with the opportunity to break down barriers, overcome prejudices, and find common ground, creating an environment conducive to personal growth.

Conclusion

The purpose of communication encompasses a wide range of objectives, all of which are fundamental in our daily interactions. Whatever the purpose may be, communication plays a central role in our personal and professional lives.

Having and working on effective communication is a powerful tool that helps us build bridges, foster mutual understanding, and promote collaboration to achieve personal and collective success.

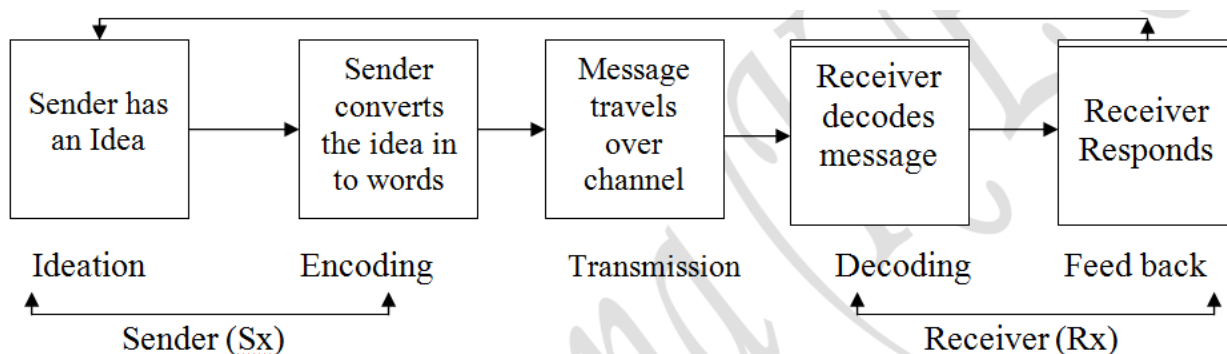
3. Explain stages/process of communication or communication cycle.

Stages/Process of communication or Communication cycle.

As we know, communication is a dynamic interactive process. It consists of five stages as mentioned below:

- 1) Ideation
- 2) Encoding
- 3) Transmission
- 4) Decoding
- 5) Feedback / Response

Let us understand the different stages of communication as shown in the figure below:



1) Ideation:

Process of communication begins with ideation which refers to the formation of idea or selection of message. It consists of the 'what' of communication and is concerned with the content

of the specific message to be presented. The scope of ideation is generally determined by the sender's –

- Knowledge
- Experience
- Abilities
- Purpose of communication
- Context of the communicative situation

Messages generally have two kinds of content-

- a) **Logical** – Such messages consist of factual information.
- b) **Emotional** – Such messages consist of feelings and emotions.

2) Encoding:

It is the second step in communication. It is the process of changing the information into some form of logical and coded message. It involves –

- a) Selecting a language
- b) Selecting an appropriate communication form
- c) Selecting a medium of communication

a) Selecting a language:

Selecting the right language is essential for effective coding, verbal messages need a common language code, which can be easily decoded by the receiver.

b) Selecting an appropriate communication form:

Selection of the appropriate communication form largely depends on the sender – receiver relationship, and need and purpose of the communication. Various communication forms can be –

- Interpersonal face to face communication.
- Group Communication
- Speaker – audience communication
- Telephonic Communication
- Written Communication (Reports, Proposals, Memos, Letters, Emails etc.)

c) Selecting a medium of communication:

It involves making the right choice out of many available options. There are three basic options for sending interpersonal messages i.e. speaking, writing and non-verbal signs & symbols (body movements, facial expressions, touching patterns, speech mannerisms).

3) Transmission:

It refers to the flow of message over the chosen channel. It involves choosing the -

- Proper time (When to communicate)
- Proper place (Where to communicate)
- Proper way (How to communicate)

Channels of transmission can be internet, fax, telephone, courier service, Television, P&T etc.

4) Decoding:

Decoding is the process of converting a message into thoughts. It is important to note that it is the message that is transferred, as meaning cannot be transferred from one person to another. The receiver has to assign meaning to a message in order to understand it. The process of decoding involves interpretation and analysis of a message. Decoding involves reading and understanding of the written communication and listening and understanding of the oral communication.

5) Feedback / Response:

Response is the last stage in the communication process. It is the action or reaction of the receiver to the message. Response is the key to communication. It helps the sender know that that message was received and understood.

4. Explain various types of communication.

- 1) Technical Communication
- 2) General Communication
- 3) Verbal Communication
- 4) Non-verbal Communication

1) Technical Communication:

Technical communication may be defined as the transmission and reception of facts, figures, ideas and all sorts of scientific and technical information by professionals of various fields such as engineering, medicine, science, research, education and space etc.

“Technical writing is the practical writing that people do as part of their jobs”, write Pauley and Riordan.

Technical written communication is related to trade and commerce and also to the science, medicine, space and engineering professions. Technical writing includes all official documents such as reports, proposals, technical articles, instruction manuals and brochures etc. issued to the juniors or superiors by the technocrats. In government and non-government units, schools and hospitals people today need technical writing which enables them to maintain their operations.

2) General Communication:

Literary and other types of writings related to life in general or life as a whole such as Poems, Essays, Novels, Stories, Day to Day gossips etc. are known as General Communication.

3) Verbal Communication:

Verbal communication is a type of communication where we use spoken and written words to share our message and information with others. In other words, whenever we use words to express ourselves, our feelings, and our thoughts, we are verbally communicating. Usually it's practiced during video conferences, phone calls, presentations, one-on-one conversations, and meetings.

It also includes written words, typing, printing, writing for sharing of information.

4) Non-verbal Communication:

It's the transfer of information from one person to another person without the use of words or spoken language. Nonverbal communication can occur in a variety of ways, including through facial expressions, gestures, and body posture or position.

It can be implemented intentionally and unintentionally when communicating. For example, a person can smile unintentionally when he hears an interesting piece of information or a pleasant idea and express happiness.

5. Explain various features of Technical Communication.

1. Accuracy
2. Brevity
3. Clarity
4. Objectivity
5. Impersonal Language
6. Simplicity and Utility

1. Accuracy:

Accuracy demands exactness and precision.

Accuracy is of two types:

- a) Accuracy of Information, Data & Statistics
- b) Accuracy of expression means grammatical, punctuation, spelling, accent, intonation, correctness and non-verbal mannerisms.

Characteristics of precision:

- 1) Use simple and familiar words
- 2) Exact word and phrases
- 3) Avoid difficult words and complex jargons
- 4) Check facts for accuracy of information
- 5) Avoid grammatical errors

2. Brevity:

“Brevity is the soul of wit”, said Shakespeare.

Brevity means being economical in word usage, pruning away useless words. We should avoid repetition and redundancy.

Never use two words when one word is sufficient.

e.g.

- 1) Maria lives in a city called Bangalore, in a suburb called Indira Nagar.
- 2) Maria lives in Indira Nagar suburb of Bangalore City.

Techniques of Brevity:

- 1) Avoid wordiness
- 2) Avoid using wordy phrases and expressions.
- 3) Do not include unnecessary details
- 4) Avoid exaggerations.
- 5) Use jargons with wisdom.
- 6) Use active voice.
- 7) Avoid repetition.
- 8) Revise the document thoroughly before submission.

3. Clarity:

Clarity in writing means the ability to state our thoughts without any ambiguity.

There can be two types of clarity:

Grammatical and Conceptual

Grammatical Clarity:

It means that there should be no ambiguity because of inaccurate grammar.

- 1) One of the aid to clarity is adequate punctuation.

e.g : Let’s eat Friend. Let’s eat, Friend.

- 2) Pronoun reference- the pronoun should be placed near to the noun.

e.g. He took out his handkerchief and his pen, then wiped his forehead, blew his nose, and put it back into his pocket.

Conceptual Clarity:

The reader should be able to easily empathize with what we write.

Techniques of Clarity:

- 1) Grammatical Clarity--Proper punctuations, pronoun reference,. etc.
- 2) Use direct language
- 3) No scope for Roundabout construction and Indirect expressions
- 4) Avoid Exaggeration, Artificial eloquence
- 5) Avoid ambiguity.- use specific words and phrases and arrange the **Word Order** of your sentences carefully.
- 6) If you must abbreviate, define the term in its first occurrence, and ***put abbreviations in parentheses.***
- **7) *Italicize first occurrence*** of unfamiliar terms and define them right away.

4. Objectivity:

The speaker or writer is not concerned with subjective comments and personal feelings.

The concentration is on an objective and impersonal presentation of facts.

How to achieve Objectivity:

Use factual words

Avoid hasty generalizations

Avoid personal pronouns and expressions

5. Impersonal – Formal Language:

- 1) Use formal words
- 2) Use appropriate scientific words.
- 3) Avoid informal words.
- 4) Use standard words and phrases.

6. Simplicity and Utility

- It should be easy to understand and free of errors.
- It should be clear as to what is to be done of the given information.

6. Differentiate between Technical and General Communication.

Sl. No.	Attribute	Technical Communication	General Communication
1	Definition	Writing which is done as part of job is called Technical writing.	Literary and other type of writings related to life in general or life as a whole.
2	Purpose	Aims at imparting information, persuasion instructions, processes and explanations.	It aims at amusing, entertaining and inspiring the reader.
3	Style	Objective and impersonal in style	Subjective and Personal in style without any specialized technique.
4	Language	Accurate and precise	Poetic, decorative and bombastic
5	Audience	Meant for a specific audience	Audience is not specific as it relates to life in general
6	Vocabulary	Technical vocabulary and jargons are used	Familiar words or words of common use are included
7	Form	It may be written or oral done in professional arena.	It is mostly oral in form
8	Reply	In technical writing, a reply is expected from reader	In general writing reader does not send a reply to the writer.
9	Nature	Technical writing is based on facts	General writing is highly imaginative
10	Examples	Reports, proposals, business letters, brochures,	Poems, Essays, Novels, Stories, Day to Day gossips