# Quiz – What kind of communicator are you?

1. When you start to speak at meetings, your colleagues tend to…
2. squirm in their chairs because they see you’re so nervous.
3. follow along and pepper you with questions.
4. stare at their phones or laptops.
5. perk up and laugh at your jokes.
6. You have to make a presentation, so you spend the day before…
7. thinking about phoning in sick.
8. rehearsing and preparing notes.
9. preparing slides with 300 words on each one.
10. not worrying about it.
11. The idea of speaking to a journalist makes you feel…
12. nervous—what if you say the wrong thing?
13. skeptical—the media are always trying to trap you.
14. annoyed—why do you need to speak to them?
15. flattered—they care about what you have to say.
16. You would consider a TV interview to be successful as long as you…
17. didn’t say anything embarrassing or incorrect.
18. remembered (and delivered!) your talking points.
19. looked authoritative in front of the camera.
20. connected with the interviewer.
21. Your approach to writing a briefing note or report is to…
22. procrastinate, because you’re in a cold sweat each time you try to start.
23. check CC for templates or previous notes to use as a guide.
24. do a bunch of research and squeeze it all in, like you did in school.
25. procrastinate, because how hard is it to turn a slide deck into a report anyway?
26. Typical feedback you get on your writing is that…
27. it is always in an academic style.
28. you’re good at synthesizing information and meeting readers’ needs.
29. it’s heavy on the detail, which weighs down busy readers.
30. it’s not clearly organized so your key message is hard to find.

## Result categories

### You’re the Nervous Nellie (mostly A responses)

Professional communication in any form makes you uneasy. You dread having to speak in public because you fear stumbling over your words or forgetting your lines. What if the panel moderator asks you a question you don’t have an answer for? What if an editor or manager asks for a complete rewrite of your report? You’re very good at your job, but you worry that won’t come across when you’re put on the spot, so you default to “safe” writing or presentation patterns that have worked in the past.

Pro Tip: You aren’t alone. Most people get anxious about speaking in public and no one writes a perfect report on the first try. But if you plan ahead, prepare thoroughly and practise diligently, you will improve your odds that things will go the way you want them to. Communicating effectively is a learned skill. You’ll get better and become more confident with experience.

### You’re the Ever-Ready (Mostly B responses)

Your mantra is, “Always be prepared!” You think about what you want to say ahead of time, make notes and anticipate any questions or critiques that might come your way. If you’re preparing for a presentation, you try to scout the location ahead of time and check that all the technology is working. Writing or speaking in public might give you a slight twinge of anxiety, but you use it to stay focused and sharp.

Pro Tip: Don’t get too tied to your script or first draft. Be flexible so that you can keep your audience interested and engaged. If you’re using PowerPoint, create slides with simple charts, graphics and photos to illustrate your points. If you can’t think of a way to illustrate what you want to say, keep the text on your slides to three bullets.

### You’re the Professor (Mostly C responses)

You are the subject matter expert and confident in your ability to convey what you know. You have the facts, figures and vocabulary to make a compelling argument, but you risk coming across as pedantic or overloading your readers with more information than they need. When presenting your material, you want to appear authoritative and impartial, so you prefer stand in place, hands in your pockets or on the podium.

Pro Tip: Speaking in public is a performance. Your audience will be focused on you and the enthusiasm, warmth and confidence you project, so give some thought to this as you prepare. Your voice, facial expressions and gestures are non-verbal signals that convey your interest in the material you are presenting. Also, be sure to know your audience and adjust your message accordingly. Give them only what they need to act, and use accessible language.

### You’re the Improviser (Mostly D responses)

You are comfortable in front of an audience and when writing about your topic of expertise. You don’t need to rely on speaking notes, which allows you to engage with the audience and be natural. You know to speak at a moderate pace and use humour when appropriate. Similarly, when you sit down to write a report, you let the words pour onto the page and worry about structure later.

Pro Tip: Even if preparation is not your style, you should still jot down a quick outline of the points you want to make about your purpose or goal and how you will take your audience there. If there’s the option, record your presentation and review it carefully afterward. Every single presentation or report will teach you something about your delivery and your process that you can improve upon.