

CHAPTER 1

Communicating in Your Life

- 1.1 *The Communication Process***
- 1.2 *Overcoming Communication Barriers***
- 1.3 *Reading in the Workplace***



Antonio's Mistake

Antonio Perez, a recent high school graduate, has been working at the law firm of Washington and Kim for almost two months. He loves his job and tries to do his best. Last week, Mr. Kim told Antonio that he is quite happy with Antonio's performance.

Cecile Garcia also works at the law firm of Washington and Kim. Cecile has worked at the firm for almost a year and has the same responsibilities as Antonio. When Antonio has a question about how to do something, he asks Cecile for help. Antonio and Cecile have become friends. They have gone to lunch together several times. Recently, they started seeing each other for dates after work.

Today Antonio is very busy. He is writing a report for Mr. Kim who needs the report by 2:00 p.m. today. Antonio really wants to talk with Cecile, but he knows he should stay focused on his work. The time is already 1:30 p.m., and the report is not finished. However, Antonio cannot resist stopping to talk with Cecile for just a few minutes. While Antonio is in Cecile's cubicle, Mr. Kim walks in to talk with Cecile. Antonio is embarrassed. He excuses himself quickly and returns to his desk to work on the report.

A few minutes later, Mr. Kim arrives at Antonio's desk and asks Antonio whether the report is finished. When Antonio explains that the report is not complete, Mr. Kim is very upset. Mr. Kim says, "Antonio, I am disappointed that you took time to socialize with Cecile when you have not finished the report." Then Mr. Kim turns and walks away.

Questions

1. What was Antonio's first mistake?
2. Should Antonio go and apologize to Mr. Kim? If so, what should he say?
3. Should he go to Mr. Kim and tell him that he was visiting Cecile to ask about a work-related issue even though he was not?

1.1

The Communication Process

OBJECTIVES

After completing Section 1.1, you should be able to:

1. Identify the elements of the communication process.
2. List purposes of business communication.
3. Identify types of business communications.

Key Point

Most messages contain both verbal and nonverbal symbols.

The Communication Process

Communication is the process used to send and interpret messages so they are understood. Talking with teachers and fellow students is a form of communication. Sending an e-mail message, writing a report, and listening to a song are also forms of communication. Communication is important because it allows people to share ideas, ask questions, and enjoy artistic works, such as a poem or movie. Communication allows people to fill social needs—to have contact with others. Without communication, people would not be able to share information and work together to perform daily activities. The elements of the process are defined in Figure 1-1.

Message

A **message** is an idea expressed by a set of symbols. **Verbal symbols** are words used in a spoken or written message. A message sent without words is a nonverbal communication. **Nonverbal symbols** are actions or conditions that express a meaning. Gestures, posture, facial expressions, color, and lighting are examples of nonverbal symbols. Nonverbal symbols add meaning to a message. The tone of voice used by a speaker tells the listener the mood or

Figure 1-1 Each element in the communication process is important.

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS	
Message	An idea composed of a set of symbols, such as words or gestures
Sender	A person who creates and shares a message
Receiver	A person who hears or reads and interprets a message
Channel	The mode used to send a message, such as a letter or speaking to someone
Feedback	The response of a receiver to a message, such as a comment or a nod of the head

attitude of the speaker. The appearance of a letter that has smudges or misspelled words tells the reader that the writer is not careful with written messages.

Sender and Receiver

A **sender** is a person who creates and shares a message. When you write and send an e-mail message, you are the sender. When you ask a friend a question, you are the sender in the communication process.

A person who hears, sees, or reads symbols and interprets a message is the **receiver**. A receiver must interpret the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal symbols used by the sender. The meaning receivers give to messages depends on their backgrounds. Factors such as education, opinions, and emotional states affect how a receiver interprets a message.

Channel

The mode or form used to send a message is called the **channel**. To send messages, people speak and write. To receive messages, people listen and read. Letters and reports are common channels for written messages. Face-to-face conversations and telephone calls are common channels for spoken messages. E-mail and voice mail are common channels for written and spoken electronic messages. All forms of communication are important. However, many people spend more time listening to spoken messages than using any other communication channel.

Key Point

A sender may use more than one channel for a message. For example, a telephone call may be followed by a letter to provide more details.

Feedback

Feedback is the response of a receiver to a message. Feedback can be nonverbal (a smile or a nod of the head) or it can be verbal (a comment related to the message). Any response—even no response—is feedback.

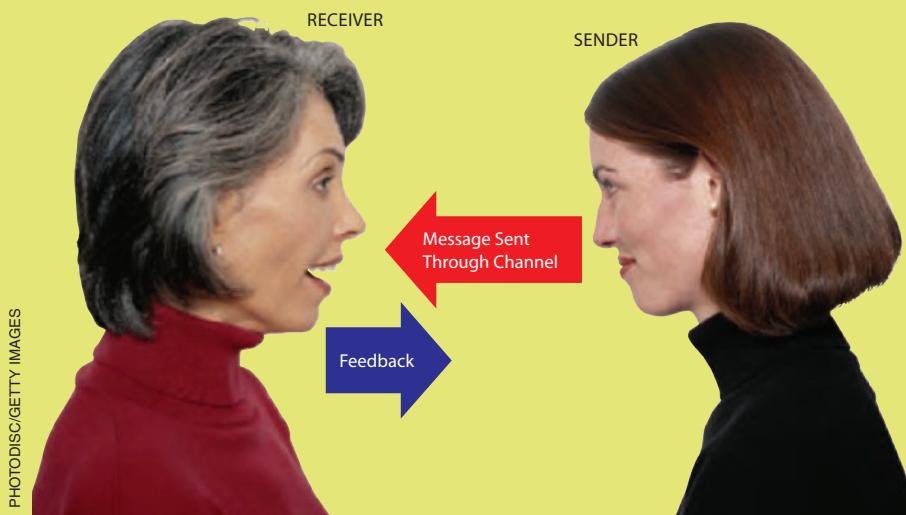
Feedback is important because it helps the sender determine whether the receiver has understood the message. If the receiver looks confused (non-verbal feedback), the sender may need to clarify the message by providing more information.

check point 1

1. What are the five elements of the communication process?
2. What must a receiver do for communication to occur?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

The main components of communication are sender, message, channel, receiver, and feedback.



Purposes of Communication

People communicate for many different purposes. The focus of your learning in this course will be on business communication. **Business communication** is sending and interpreting messages related to products, services, or activities of a company or an organization. Effective communication is important for business success.

Obtain or Share Information

Information is one of the most valuable resources people and companies have. Communication is used to obtain and share information. One of the main goals of most businesses is to make a profit—to earn more money than is spent operating the business. If a company does not make a profit, it may soon go out of business. To make a profit, a business must understand what its customers want. The employees of a business learn what customers want by communicating. They ask questions and listen to feedback from customers. Employees must also share information to plan and carry out the activities of the business.

Build Goodwill and Image

Goodwill is a positive feeling or attitude toward others. In the business world, goodwill refers to the good reputation or positive image of a company. When employees communicate in a positive and effective way with others, they are building goodwill for the company. When others feel goodwill toward you or a company, they are more likely to share information, grant requests you make, or offer support in other ways. When a company has a positive image, the public is more likely to buy products or services from the company.



Diversity

A sender should consider the receiver's background and experiences when trying to build goodwill.

Persuade

To persuade means to convince others to adopt an opinion or take a certain action. The sender must often convince others of the benefits of taking the action. For example, a company may try to persuade a customer that a particular product is better than other similar products. Advertising often focuses on benefits to the customer of owning the product.

Build Relationships and Self-Esteem

People have various types of relationships with others. Personal relationships include those with family and friends. Work relationships include those with coworkers, clients, and the public. Communicating effectively helps build positive relationships. For example, providing correct and timely information to a client gives the impression that you are competent in your job. This impression strengthens your relationship with the client.

Positive comments or reactions from others increase your self-esteem. Such positive reinforcement causes you to feel good about yourself. That confidence has a positive impact on how you interact with others.

check
point
2

1. List four purposes for business communication.
2. Why are goodwill and a positive image important for business success?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Types of Business Communication

Business employees communicate with people inside the company. They also send messages to customers and others outside the company. Messages sent to people within the company are called internal communication. Messages created within the company and sent to people outside the company are called external communication.

Formal and Informal Communication

Communication within a company can be formal or informal. An e-mail sent by a supervisor to those whom she leads is a formal communication. Informal communication does not follow lines of authority in a company. It can be written or spoken. Talking with fellow employees during lunch is an example of informal communication. Informal communication is usually fast. However, it is not always accurate. Informal communication is sometimes called the **grapevine**.



Repeating rumors about coworkers or business affairs may be unethical.

Information that travels by the grapevine may not be correct.

PHOTODISC/GETTY IMAGES



Key Point

Upward and downward communication are often more formal than lateral communication.

Communication Direction

Communication travels down, across, or up lines of authority. Communication that travels from managers to employees is called downward communication. For example, a policy prepared by company officers and sent to employees is a downward communication.

Communication among peers—people of the same status—is called lateral communication or horizontal communication. A memo from one team member to another is an example of lateral communication. This type of communication usually results in cooperation within a company.

Upward communication refers to messages from workers to managers of the company. When employees convey their ideas to their supervisors, they are communicating upward.

Written and Oral Communication

Written messages can be internal or external. Letters, memos, and reports are common forms of written business communication. Written messages can be composed, edited, and transmitted on computers, for example by e-mail. They can be printed and sent by U.S. mail or interoffice mail.

Written communication is often the best channel for a message for these reasons:

- Written messages provide a record of information exchanged. For example, a price quoted in a written bid cannot be disputed.
- The message can be revised until it is logical and clear. Revision is especially important when complex data must be explained.
- A written message allows the receiver to read the message and refer to it as many times as necessary.

Of all types of communication, oral communication is the fastest. It provides immediate feedback to the sender. Oral communication is used in face-to-face and telephone conversations. Oral messages can be sent by telephone and stored electronically for playback later on a voice mail system.

check point 3

1. Is a letter from the company president to employees an example of an informal communication or a formal communication?
2. Give two reasons why using written communication may be appropriate.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Key Point

Oral communication is fast and allows the receiver to give immediate feedback to the sender.

ETHICS

Protecting Confidential Information

Confidential information is data that should be kept private or secret. Patient health records, employee salaries, and plans for a new product are examples of confidential business information. Employees often read or hear private information in the course of their work. They have a duty to refrain from sharing this information with people who are not authorized to have it. Consider the following situation.

Mary Ann works in the Human Resources Department of a small company. Her friend, Jacob, works in the Marketing Department. As Mary Ann and Jacob are having lunch, Jacob confides that he is very anxious to learn whether he will be promoted to the position of marketing manager. Mary Ann reviewed a list of job promotions this morning. She knows that Jacob's name is on the promotions list. "I wouldn't be too anxious if I were you," Mary Ann says to Jacob. "I think everything is going your way this week."

Has Mary Ann acted in an unethical way? Why or why not? How will Mary Ann feel if the list of employees selected for promotions changes and Jacob is not promoted? How will Jacob feel toward Mary Ann?

Section 1.1 *Applications*

A. *The Communication Process*

Read the paragraphs below. Identify the sender, receiver, message, channel, and feedback in the situation described.

Tom Wilson spoke to his coworker, Alice Wong, by telephone this morning.

Tom: "Good morning, Alice. I am calling to let you know that the meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. today has been rescheduled. It will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the same location."

Alice: "Thanks, Tom. I will make a note of the time change."

B. *Access the Web Site for This Textbook*



INTERNET

A companion web site with information related to the textbook is available. The web site contains data files, vocabulary flashcards, links, and other information that you will use as you complete the activities in this textbook. You will need to visit this site often.

1. Access the Internet. Start your web browser such as *Internet Explorer*[®]. Access the web site at www.cengage.com/school/bcomm/buscomm.
2. When the site appears, click a hyperlink, such as **Student Resources**. Quickly scan the new page to see the information that is provided. Click the **Back** button to return to the welcome page.
3. Locate and access the **Links** information on the site. These links to other sites can be used as you complete activities. Whenever a web site is mentioned in an activity in the textbook, look for the link to that site on this page.
4. Return to the welcome page for the site. Locate and access the student data files on the site. You will download and use these files to complete activities.
5. Return to the welcome page for the site. Add this site to your Favorites or Bookmarks list. Use this Favorites or Bookmarks link whenever you need to access this site for later activities.

1.2 Overcoming Communication Barriers

Communication Barriers

The primary goal of communication is for the receiver to interpret the message as the sender intended. Often that goal is not achieved. **Communication barriers** are things or conditions that interfere with communication. Learning to recognize communication barriers will help you overcome them.

External Barriers

Conditions outside the receiver and the sender that hinder communication are called **external communication barriers**. Poor lighting, heat or cold, humidity, uncomfortable seating, and noise are examples of these barriers.

The appearance of a document can be a barrier to communication. For example, a document can have smudges or contain many spelling errors. You may become so distracted with the appearance of the document that you fail to comprehend its contents.

A “closed” climate within a company can be a barrier to communication. In such a climate, decisions are often made without input from employees. Workers may stop offering suggestions because they believe that making them is useless. In an “open” climate, ideas and information are welcomed, and communication flows easily. Workers believe that managers want to hear their ideas. This climate makes communication easier.

Internal Barriers

Conditions within a receiver or sender that hinder communication are called **internal communication barriers**. People have different educational backgrounds, experiences, and biases that affect how they send and receive messages. For example, a person who knows many technical terms may use the terms in a message. If the receiver does not know the terms, the message may not be interpreted correctly.

Lack of motivation or interest on the part of the receiver can hinder communication. A receiver who is interested in the topic will listen and take part in the discussion. A receiver who is not interested may not contribute or listen.

OBJECTIVES

After completing Section 1.2, you should be able to:

1. List the two types of barriers to communication and identify examples of each.
2. Describe how senders and receivers can overcome communication barriers.

Key Point

Communication barriers interfere with successful communication.

check
point
4

1. What is an external communication barrier? Give examples.
2. What is an internal communication barrier? Give examples.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Overcoming Barriers

Communication is a two-party process between senders and receivers. Both senders and receivers can take steps to help overcome communication barriers. Each party has important duties in the communication process.

The Sender's Duties

Because the sender begins the communication process, he or she selects the channel for the message. The sender also selects the verbal and nonverbal symbols that make up the message. Therefore, the sender has these duties:

1. Analyze and understand the receiver, using a process called audience analysis
2. Analyze and understand the message environment
3. Select symbols that the receiver will understand and select a channel
4. Encourage and interpret feedback

Audience Analysis

Audience analysis is the process used to create a profile of the intended receivers of a message. All receivers are different, unique individuals. However, receivers can share common traits or experiences. Knowing factors about the receiver helps the sender create a message the receiver will understand. For example, suppose the receivers for a message are all medical doctors. Knowing this fact allows the sender to use medical terms that would not be appropriate for a message sent to a general audience.

When preparing an audience analysis, consider the factors listed below.

- Age and gender
- Background, education, and experience
- Interests and concerns
- Attitudes
- Emotional state

Figure 1-2 shows questions you can answer to create an audience profile.

Figure 1-2 Audience Profile

AUDIENCE PROFILE QUESTIONS	
Age and Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the age of the receiver?• What is the gender of the receiver?
Background, Education, and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I interacted with this receiver before? If so, what is our relationship?• Does the receiver have experience or education that relates to the topic of the message? If so, how much?• How much education does the receiver have?
Interests and Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the concerns and needs of the receiver?• Does the receiver have a particular motive in this situation?• Does the receiver have a certain outcome in mind?
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the beliefs, biases, values, and viewpoints of the receiver?• What will make a positive impression? a negative impression?• What ideas, if any, can be used to communicate effectively with the receiver?
Emotional State	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will the message make the receiver happy? sad? pleased? upset?• Will the message affect the receiver at all?• Will the receiver's mood enhance his or her willingness to receive the message?• If not, do I have time to delay sending the message?

Key Point

A receiver's emotional state can affect how a message is interpreted.

After answering the questions about your receiver, you are ready to adjust your message based on the audience profile. Though you may not realize it, you probably have used audience analysis in the past. For example, have you ever postponed giving someone a message because that person was in a bad mood? If so, you used audience analysis to make your decision. You considered the receiver's emotional state when deciding to delay the message.

Message Environment

Another factor a sender should consider is the message environment.

Message environment refers to the physical and social setting in which a message is sent or received. Being aware of the environment can help you overcome barriers.

Key Point

When in a meeting or other group setting, turn off your cell phone or set it to alert you silently to calls so as not to be a distraction to others.



Diversity

Appropriate times and places for discussing business vary by culture. Do research to ensure that you will behave appropriately when meeting with people from other cultures.

The message environment affects how listeners receive a message.

When selecting a physical location where you will speak to listeners, consider questions such as:

- Is the location quiet and free of distracting noise?
- Is the location comfortable with appropriate temperature, light, and seating?
- Is the location one in which interruptions are unlikely?

When considering the physical environment, the sender must ask this question: Is the environment such that the message will be understood and will receive the desired reaction? If the answer is yes, the message should be sent. If the answer is no, the message should be delayed, if possible, until a more favorable time. For example, when your supervisor is in a bad mood, this might not be a good time to make suggestions on how to improve procedures.

Another factor of message environment is the social setting. For example, an office party is not typically a good place to discuss serious business matters. However, a business lunch is a good time to offer new ideas. When an important project is behind schedule, your manager may be worried about whether the team will complete it on time. This may not be a good time to ask your manager about planning a company picnic. The sender should analyze the message environment and then react accordingly.

Symbol and Channel Selection

After considering the audience and the message environment, the sender is ready to select the words and nonverbal symbols for the message. Each verbal and nonverbal symbol has a meaning to the receiver. If any of





Diversity

Words and other symbols may have different meanings to people of different cultures.

these meanings differ from those of the sender, this can be a barrier to communication. Therefore, the sender should select words and other symbols carefully.

The sender must select a channel for the message. The channel used should be one that has the best chance for successful communication. For example, suppose the receiver reads the sender's language well but speaks it poorly. In this case, a written message would be the best channel.

Seeking Feedback

Interpreting feedback can help senders overcome barriers. For example, feedback can show that a listener does not understand the message. The sender can take steps to improve communication. The sender could do one of the following:

- Use different words or symbols to make the message clear.
- Use a different example that relates to the listener's experiences.
- Eliminate noise or other distractions.
- Correct problems with temperature or lighting that make it hard for the listener to focus on the message.

Senders should let receivers know that they are sincerely interested in the receiver's needs and concerns. This increases the sender's chances of getting honest feedback.

check point 5

1. What factors should you consider when creating an audience profile?
2. How can getting feedback help a sender?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

The Receiver's Duties

The receiver has a duty to aid the communication process by trying to overcome barriers. The receiver often has more control over her or his part of the process than does the sender. Basically, the receiver's duties are to read and to listen effectively.

Reading

Reading is the process of seeing and interpreting written words and other symbols. Focusing and ensuring understanding are the keys to effective reading. Receivers should try to overcome external and internal barriers that can interfere when reading.

Key Point

The receiver's duties are to read and to listen effectively.

Key Point

When preparing to read, select a location that is quiet and free of outside distractions.



Diversity

Employers may need to provide assistance for workers who are hearing impaired. Interpreters and special telephone equipment can assist hearing-impaired employees.

Readers should select a quiet location that is free from distractions.

- To overcome external barriers when reading:
- Select a location that is quiet and free of outside distractions.
 - Make sure the lighting is appropriate for reading.
 - Select comfortable seating.
 - Set the heat or air conditioning to a comfortable temperature, if possible.

A reader's mental state or physical well-being can affect the ability to focus on a message. To overcome internal barriers when reading:

- Clear your mind of distracting thoughts.
- Attempt to ignore tiredness, minor aches, or physical discomforts.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Avoid letting biases or previous experience prevent you from considering other viewpoints.

Listening

Listening is the process of hearing and focusing attention to understand an oral message. Gaining information from listening can be more challenging than from reading. You can read a passage again if you become distracted and do not focus on the message. When listening, you may have only one opportunity to hear the message.

Receivers should try to overcome external and internal barriers that can interfere with listening. As when reading, control the physical environment as best you are able. Select a location that is quiet and free of outside distractions. Select comfortable seating. Set the temperature at a comfortable level. To overcome internal barriers, try to clear your mind of other thoughts and



focus on the message. Avoid letting biases or previous experience prevent you from considering other views or new ideas.

If possible, give feedback to the sender when you do not understand a message. Ask questions that will help clarify your understanding. Be sure to ask questions at an appropriate time. In a group setting, wait until the speaker offers to answer questions or asks for feedback. In a one-to-one conversation, wait until the speaker pauses to comment or ask a question.

To check your understanding of a message, restate the main points of the message in your own words. This is called paraphrasing. When in a group setting, paraphrase silently when there is a pause in the message. In a one-to-one conversation, you could paraphrase when the speaker asks if the message is clear. If a message is not understood, paraphrasing will bring this to light. The speaker can then try to clarify the message.

Key Point

At an appropriate time, ask questions that will help clarify your understanding of the message.

check point 6

1. What are a receiver's duties in the communication process?
2. Why may understanding a spoken message be more challenging than understanding a written message?

Check your answers in Appendix C.

READING SKILLS

Checking Understanding

Reading skills are important for success at school, on the job, and in personal activities. Later in this chapter, you will learn more about the importance of reading in the workplace. In this and other chapters, you will learn and practice ways to improve your reading skills.

In this section, you learned that paraphrasing is a good way to check your understanding of a message. Open the *Word* file *CH01 Reading* from the student data files. Read the message once at a comfortable rate. Without looking at the message further, restate the main points of the message in your own words. Look at the message again to see if you listed all the main points correctly.

Section 1.2 *Applications*



CRITICAL
THINKING

A. Overcoming Communication Barriers

For each situation described below, indicate whether the barrier to communication is internal or external. Tell how the sender or receiver might overcome the barrier in each situation.

1. The receiver is feeling slightly ill.
2. The receiver is peering out a window that overlooks a beautiful lake and snowy mountains.
3. The air conditioning is broken, and the room is extremely hot.
4. The computer system is down, and no e-mail messages can be sent.
5. The sender of a message is distracted with worry about her sick child.

B. Audience Analysis

Assume that you are planning to deliver a message to the members of your class. The purpose of the message is to persuade the listeners to try your favorite hobby or sport. Create an audience profile of the class. Include information from the following categories in the profile of class members.

- Age and gender
- Background, education, and experience
- Interests and concerns related to the topic
- Attitudes related to the topic
- Emotional state

If you do not know some of your classmates very well, you may not be able to cite information for all the categories. This is often the case when a sender creates an audience profile. Include information you know or can conclude from observing classmates. For example, you can often tell whether a person is happy, sad, frustrated, or mad from observation.



TEAMWORK

C. External Communication Barriers

Work with a classmate to complete this activity. Consider your current setting, whether in the classroom or another location. Make a list of the external communication barriers present in this setting. For each barrier, note whether a person in this setting is able to control or eliminate the barrier.

1.3 Reading in the Workplace

Importance of Reading

Information Age is the name given to the present period in history. This time is also called the *Digital Age*. Both names reflect a focus on the importance of information to personal and business success. Much of the information available today is in digital form. This is an electronic format that can be processed by computers. A recent report, “The Expanding Digital Universe: A Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth Through 2010,” addresses information growth. The report indicates that in 2006 the amount of digital information reached 161 billion gigabytes. This amount is about 3 million times the information in all books ever written.¹

With so much information available, reading is very important. In fact, any career or job you choose will require reading. You must be able to read effectively to interpret messages from coworkers and customers, follow instructions, and complete procedures. Doing research and using data to make decisions and solve problems also require reading.

Reading and the Job Search

One important instance of reading related to your career will be reading job postings. You will need to read job announcements and descriptions to locate jobs in which you are interested. You will need to read and follow directions for submitting information and applying for the jobs you choose to pursue.

The process of applying for many jobs is handled online. Figure 1-3 shows the USAJOBS web site, the official site for the U.S. government. Users can visit the site to search for jobs in particular areas. Users can also apply for jobs online. Many companies and organizations post job openings on their web sites. Job seekers can also read job postings in newspapers and industry magazines.

Finding a job that is right for you is the first step in a successful career. Reading will help you find that job.

OBJECTIVES

After completing Section 1.3, you should be able to:

1. Explain why reading is important for workplace success.
2. Describe ways reading is used in the workplace.
3. Practice strategies to improve reading skills.

+ Ethics

When applying for a job, give honest and complete information to the employer.

¹“The Expanding Digital Universe: A Forecast of Worldwide Information Growth Through 2010,” by International Data Corporation, accessed February 6, 2008, available from <http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/expanding-digital-exec-summary.pdf>.

Figure 1-3 USAJOBS is the official job site of the U.S. government.

Source: USAJOBS, United States Office of Personnel Management, accessed February 6, 2008, available from <http://jobsearch.usajobs.gov/jobsearch.asp>.

The screenshot shows the USAJOBS homepage with a search bar and navigation links. Below the search bar, there's a section for 'Job Search Results' with filters for 'Radius/Zip' and 'Search within'. A specific job listing for an Accountant at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Los Angeles is displayed, detailing the position requirements, pay plan, appointment term, and salary information.

Closing	Job Summary	Agency	Location	Salary
4/6/2008	Accountant TOUGH WORK. VITAL MISSION. Challenge yourself! You have the power to help combat drug trafficking. Be a part of DEA. It's tough work, but a vital mission. Whatever your background or expertise, you ... [more]	Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration	US-LA-Los Angeles, CA	\$2,286.00+

Vacancy Ann.#: F-DEA-LA-08-0045-0EU
Who May Apply: Public
Pay Plan: GS-0510-12/13
Appointment Term: Permanent
Job Status: Full-time
Opening Date: 1/23/2008
Salary: From \$2,286.00 to 111,283.00 USD per year

Reading on the Job



Ethical employees focus on work activities while at work. They do not read personal e-mails and other material.

Once you find a job, you will need to read for many reasons. You will read for background information, to locate specific data, and to learn new procedures. You will also read to gather data for use in making decisions or solving problems. In some cases, you will need to share the information you read with coworkers or clients. The paragraphs that follow describe a few situations in which reading on the job is important.

Staying Informed

Although every job requires reading, some jobs involve more reading and paperwork than others. In any job, however, you will want to read about your company. Newsletters, magazines articles, the company web site, and other sources will help you learn about the company. Being informed about the company and its activities will make you a better employee.

Technology and methods of doing things in business and other fields change on an ongoing basis. You may need to read journals, newsletters, or articles to keep current in your field. You may also need to take seminars or continuing education courses that will involve reading. Staying aware of current methods will help you in your present job and may prepare you for a higher-level position or a job in a related field.

Following Procedures

Many jobs require workers to perform various procedures. You will need to read instructions or procedures manuals to learn or review the steps to follow. For example, an office worker may be assigned to oversee the use and upkeep of an office copier. The worker will need to read the copier manual to learn how to perform tasks, such as changing the toner or ink and clearing paper jams. An engineer may use computer software to design buildings. When a new version of the software is released, the engineer will need to read the software manual or help files to learn procedures for using the software. In both examples, reading helps the worker complete tasks and be a more effective employee.

In some jobs, an employee's safety may depend on reading and following procedures correctly. For example, employees must read material safety data sheets when working with or near dangerous chemicals to avoid injury.

Key Point

Employees must read and follow procedures carefully to avoid injury when working with hazardous materials.

Handling Transactions

Exchanging goods or services for payments is the basis of most business affairs. Workers must read to verify that transactions are completed as planned. For example, Angela Jones works in the Warehouse Department of a small company. She reads packing slips that come with shipments of goods or products. Then Angela compares the packing slip with the goods actually received. Next she reads the order for the goods and compares it to the packing slip. If all three agree, the order has been filled correctly. If not, Angela must take steps to correct the problem.

DIGITAL VISION/GETTY IMAGES



**Workers in the
Warehouse
Department must
read orders and
packing slips.**



Diversity

Companies operate in a global marketplace with customers from around the world.

Employees must communicate effectively to serve customers from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Connie Chang works in the Accounting Department for the same small company. Part of her job is to read invoices (bills) for items the company has bought. She must read the goods received list and compare it with the invoice to be sure the company is being charged correctly.

Providing Customer Service

Ramon Garcia works in the Shipping Department of his company.

Ramon must read the orders received from customers and pack the goods for shipment. Filling orders correctly is very important for keeping customers satisfied and ensuring future orders. Ramon must also read the procedures provided on when to use various shipping services to fill orders.

Reading also plays a role in keeping customers happy after the sale.

Customer service associates must read e-mails and letters from customers to answer questions and provide other support.

Making Decisions and Solving Problems

One of the most important purposes of reading in the workplace is to gain information for making decisions or solving problems. Figure 1-4 gives a few example situations.

Figure 1-4 Information gained by reading is critical for making decisions.

READING TO MAKE DECISIONS AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

- Read to understand material from several sources on a certain topic. Make a recommendation as requested by your manager.
- Read several accounts of how a product failed to perform properly to find the underlying cause of the problem.
- Read research reports and market forecasts to help decide whether to produce a new product.
- Read employee evaluations and manager comments to select a person for promotion to a higher-level job.
- Read information on employee benefits, such as health care plans, to help you choose appropriate options.

**check
point**
7

1. Explain how reading is important for workplace success.
2. Describe four ways reading is used in the workplace.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Improving Reading Skills

To be an effective reader, you must read at an appropriate rate, understand what you read, and remember what you read. Reading speed can be improved with practice. Expanding your vocabulary can help you improve your reading comprehension (understanding of what you read).

Types of Reading

Basically, there are three types of reading: skimming, scanning, and careful reading. Different reading speeds are appropriate for each type of reading.

Skimming is looking over material quickly to locate specific data. For example, you may skim a ten-page report to find one paragraph about improving customer service. When the data is located, read the material carefully at a comfortable rate.

Scanning is an attempt to get a basic understanding of the objectives and the important points of the material you are going to read. To scan, read main headings, subheadings, and the first sentence of each paragraph. Look at figures and read their captions. Scan lists and numbered items since they often add depth to content. When you scan, read very quickly. You will read more slowly when carefully reading the material.

Careful reading is used when trying to understand and remember the material that is read. In the workplace, you need to exercise careful reading much of the time.

Key Point

Different reading speeds are appropriate for scanning and for careful reading.

NETBookmark

Several web sites provide free reading tests online. Go to a search engine such as Google™. A link to Google is provided on the web site for this book that is shown below. Search for *speed reading test*. Go to one of the sites in the search results and take a free test to find your reading speed.

1. What is your reading speed as shown by the free online test?
2. How does your score compare with the speeds discussed in the text on page 24?

www.cengage.com/school/bcomm/buscomm

Improving Speed and Comprehension

Key Point

Both reading speed and comprehension are important for effective reading.



Diversity

When reading messages from people for whom English is a second language, assume that the formal, dictionary definitions of words apply.

Many people read at an average speed of from 200 to 350 words per minute. With practice and improved vocabulary, readers can improve to 350 to 800 words per minute. Exceptional readers may read at 1,000 words per minute or more. Reading speed must be balanced with comprehension. Reading quickly but not understanding or remembering what you have read is fruitless. Seminars, books, and computer software designed to improve reading speed and comprehension are available. However, with dedicated effort, you can do much on your own to improve your skills. To improve the speed and comprehension of careful reading, follow these tips:

- Select a location that is conducive to reading. If a room is not comfortable or has distractions, you cannot focus on what you are reading.
- Scan the item you are to read. Getting an overview of the information will help improve your understanding of the material.
- Use a dictionary to look up words you do not know. Building your vocabulary will help improve your reading speed and comprehension.
- If you are a word-for-word reader, try to learn to read in groups of words. Silently pronouncing each word slows reading speed. Try to grasp the meaning of phrases and clauses without focusing on individual words.
- Find the main idea in every paragraph. The rest of the sentences in a paragraph usually provide additional details about the main idea.
- Recognize the order of events in a situation. This understanding will allow you to reconstruct the entire situation.
- Take notes or highlight information while reading. Study your notes to help you recall what you read.
- To check your understanding and create a frame of reference, compare the information you read to what you already know.

Reading Skills exercises, such as the one on page 17, are found throughout this textbook. Completing these exercises will help you improve your careful reading skills.

check point 8

1. What is scanning when reading? How does scanning help improve reading comprehension?
2. Describe three things you can do to help improve your careful reading skills.

Check your answers in Appendix C.

Section 1.3 **Applications**

A. Purposes for Reading on the Job

For each situation described below, indicate the primary purpose for reading.

1. A new employee wants to learn general information about the company
2. A salesperson needs to know answers to a customer's questions
3. A worker needs to know how to operate a new piece of machinery
4. Company managers must review sales figures to see whether a product rebate is resulting in increased sales and decide whether to continue the program
5. An accounts payable associate needs to know whether the correct payment discount has been taken when paying a bill

B. Practicing Reading Skills

When you begin a new job, you will need to complete forms related to payroll and taxes. One of these is Form W-4, which lists tax exemptions.

1. Open and print the *Word* file *CH01 Form W-4* found in the student data files. This file contains Form W-4 for 2008. (The student data files are found on the companion web site or may be provided by your instructor.)
2. Scan the information on page 1 of the form. What three types of information are provided on page 1? Scan page 2. What two worksheets are shown on page 2?
3. Skim the information at the top of page 1 to find the section that describes a head of household. Read that section carefully. Write a summary of who may be a head of household in your own words.
4. Skim the information at the top of page 1 to find the section that discusses nonwage income. What are the two examples of nonwage income given in this section?
5. Skim page 2. Who should use the Two-Earner/Multiple Jobs Worksheet?
6. Read carefully the directions in the Personal Allowances Worksheet section. Complete the Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate using your personal information and following the directions you have read.

Chapter **Summary**

1.1 The Communication Process

- The elements of the communication process are the message, the sender, the receiver, the channel, and feedback.
- The purposes of business communication are to obtain or share information, build goodwill and image, persuade, and build relationships and self-esteem.
- Business communication can be formal or informal and written or oral.
- Business messages can be used for upward, downward, or lateral communication.

1.2 Overcoming Communication Barriers

- Communication barriers are things or conditions that interfere with communication. Communication barriers can be internal or external.
- To help overcome barriers, the sender can analyze and understand the receiver and the message environment.
- The sender should select an appropriate channel and symbols that the receiver will understand.
- Encouraging and interpreting feedback are important duties of the sender.
- To help overcome barriers, the receiver can read and listen effectively.

1.3 Reading in the Workplace

- Reading is important for career success. Any career or job you choose will require reading.
- Reading is used for many purposes in the workplace, such as to locate specific data, learn new procedures, and gather data for use in making decisions or solving problems.
- To be an effective reader, you must read at an appropriate rate, understand what you read, and remember what you read.
- Reading speed and comprehension can be improved with practice.

Vocabulary

Open the *Word* file *CH01 Vocabulary* from the student data files. Complete the exercise to review the vocabulary terms from this chapter.

audience analysis	internal communication barriers
business communication	listening
channel	message
communication	message environment
communication barriers	nonverbal symbols
confidential information	reading
external communication barriers	receiver
feedback	scanning
goodwill	sender
grapevine	verbal symbols

Critical Thinking Questions

1. In the communication process, who has the greater responsibility—the receiver or the sender? Justify your answer.
2. Of the four forms of communication (speaking, writing, listening, and reading), which form is the most important to you? Explain why.
3. When you send a message and receive no feedback, how do you interpret this response?
4. Do internal or external barriers affect your communication skills the most? Explain your answer.
5. Describe a situation in which you used reading to learn a new process or procedure. Would improved reading skills have made the learning easier?
6. Identify a job that you may like to have in the future. Describe how reading skills could help you be successful in that job.



CRITICAL
THINKING

Chapter **Applications**

A. The Communication Process

Identify the element of the communication process (message, sender, receiver, channel, or feedback) described in each situation.

1. A person who is reading an e-mail
2. The content of a letter
3. The use of a memo to send a message to a coworker
4. A person who uses a computer to relay a message over a network
5. The smile of someone listening to a speaker

B. The Purposes of Communication

Indicate the purpose of each business communication described below.

1. A customer newsletter article describing improved customer service
2. A memo to a coworker describing the parts needed for a new product
3. A letter to a client urging the client to buy a product
4. An e-mail to a coworker thanking him for helping you with a project

C. Communication Direction

Indicate whether each message described below is upward, lateral, or downward communication.

1. A memo to a coworker with the same job as yours
2. A report from a department supervisor to a vice president
3. An e-mail from a supervisor to all department employees
4. A telephone call from a manager to an administrative assistant

D. Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

Indicate whether each message contains verbal or nonverbal symbols or both.

1. A telephone call to a supplier
2. No verbal response to a spoken message
3. An e-mail
4. A written report sent to a company president

E. Internal Barriers

1. Analyze yourself as a communicator. Identify internal barriers that are a challenge for you as you speak, write, listen, or read.
2. Write a paragraph explaining why you find these barriers challenging. Describe steps you can take to help overcome these barriers.



CRITICAL
THINKING

F. Reading for Safety

Reading and understanding safety procedures is very important. You probably have a school handbook or notices posted in your school that contain valuable information for how to proceed in an emergency.

1. Skim your school handbook (or posted notices) to find the section that deals with a fire emergency. Read this section carefully.
2. In your own words, explain the steps you should take in a fire emergency.



REAL WORLD

G. Reading about Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are things or conditions that hinder communication. Practice your reading skills while learning more about communication barriers.

1. Open an Internet search engine. Search for articles using the keywords *communication barriers*.
2. Open and scan several articles shown in the search results list. Select one article to read carefully.
3. Read the article carefully and answer the following questions.
 - What is the title of the article or web page?
 - What is the web page address where the article can be found?
 - Who is the author of the article (if an author is given)?
 - Does the article discuss internal communications barriers, external communication barriers, or both types of barriers?
 - What are the main points of the article?



INTERNET

Editing Activities

1. Open and edit the *Word* file *CH01 Editing* from the student data files, and correct all spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors. (The student data files are found on the companion web site (www.cengage.com/school/bcomm/buscomm) or may be provided by your instructor.)

CASE STUDIES

A. *Contacting a Customer*

As a sales representative with your company, you want to send a message to an important customer, Mr. Park. He is a good friend of the company's president and regularly orders supplies from your company. In your opinion, the two of you have a very good relationship. However, the last time you visited him, he seemed impatient with you. You got the feeling that he was anxious to get back to his work. Now, two days after your visit, your company launches a sales campaign. Many of the products that Mr. Park purchases from you are on sale. The prices are good, but the sale will last only two weeks.

1. Should you contact this customer?
2. If yes, will you contact him by letter? by e-mail? with a personal visit? with a telephone call? Justify your answer.

B. *Handling Sensitive Information*

Maria works for a large, local company. She is an administrative assistant to the director of the Human Resources Department, the person who hires new employees. Many people come into her office every week. She loves her work and really admires the director. Recently, several men and women have come into the office and interviewed for an area sales manager position. One of the men who interviewed for the position was a person whom she knew when she worked for another company. Unfortunately, she knows that this man was fired because he provided false information to make himself and others within his district look good.

1. If you were in Maria's position, what would you do? Would you tell the director or would you not get involved?
2. If you choose to tell the director, should you share this sensitive information in an e-mail? a memo? a face-to-face conversation? Why would you use the channel you chose?

CAREER CASE STUDY



Communication for Health Science Careers

Since her childhood, Julia Rodman has wanted to be a nurse. Four years ago, after a lot of schooling and work, her dream came true. She graduated from Stone Creek College with a degree in nursing. After a short time, Julia realized that her job would be more secure if she were a registered nurse (RN). Julia went back to school. Two years ago, she completed her RN training.

Last week, a member of the hospital's administration called Julia into her office to discuss a new job opportunity—head nurse for the second floor. As Julia thinks about the job opportunity, she wonders if she has the skills necessary for the new position. She enjoys talking and working with patients and is a successful RN—partly because of her interpersonal skills. Julia wants a second opinion. She has come to you and asked, "What do you think I should do?"

1. In Julia's present job, how are communication skills important?
2. In the new position offered to her, are communication skills important? Justify your answer.
3. How do the communication skills required for the two positions differ?
4. Should this difference be an important consideration in Julia's decision? If so, why?

Appendix C

Checkpoint Answers



Chapter 1 Answers

Checkpoint 1

1. The communication process involves five elements: a message, a sender, a receiver, a channel, and feedback.
2. A receiver must interpret the meaning of the verbal and non-verbal symbols used by the sender.

Checkpoint 2

1. Four purposes for business communication are to obtain or share information, to build goodwill and image, to persuade, and to build relationships and self-esteem.
2. When people feel goodwill toward a company, they are more likely to share information, grant requests, or offer support in other ways. When a company has a positive image, the public is more likely to buy products or services from the company.

Checkpoint 3

1. A letter from the company president to employees is an example of a formal communication.
2. Reasons why using written communication may be appropriate include:
 - Written messages provide a record of information exchanged. For example, a price quoted in a written bid cannot be disputed.
 - The message can be revised until it is logical and clear. Revision is especially important when complex data must be explained.
 - A written message allows the receiver to read the message and refer to it as many times as necessary.

(Students are to provide two reasons.)

Checkpoint 4

1. Conditions outside the receiver and the sender that hinder communication are called external communication barriers. Poor lighting, heat or cold, humidity, uncomfortable seating, and noise are examples of these barriers.
2. Conditions within a receiver or sender that hinder communication are called internal communication barriers. Examples are a receiver's background, education, biases, and emotional state.

Checkpoint 5

1. When creating an audience profile, you should consider the receiver's age, gender, background, education, experience, interests, concerns, attitudes, and emotional state.
2. Interpreting feedback can help senders overcome communication barriers.

Checkpoint 6

1. The receiver's duties in the communication process are to read and to listen effectively.
2. A written message may be read several times if needed to gain understanding. A spoken message might be heard only once with no opportunity to ask questions.

Checkpoint 7

1. Reading is important for workplace success because any career or job you choose will require reading. You must be able to read effectively to interpret messages from coworkers and customers, follow instructions, and complete procedures. Doing research and using data to make decisions and solve problems also require reading.
2. Ways reading is used in the workplace include reading to stay informed, follow procedures, handle transactions, provide customer service, and gather data for use in making decisions and solving problems.

Checkpoint 8

1. Scanning is an attempt to get a basic understanding of the objectives and the important points of the material you are going to read. Scanning helps improve reading comprehension by giving you an overview of the material you plan to read.
2. Answers will vary. Three things you can do to help improve your careful reading skills may be any of these:
 - Select a location that is conducive to reading. If a room is not comfortable or has distractions, you cannot focus on what you are reading.
 - Scan the item you are to read. Getting an overview of the information will help improve your understanding of the material.
 - Use a dictionary to look up words you do not know. Building your vocabulary will help improve your reading speed and comprehension.
 - If you are a word-for-word reader, try to learn to read in groups of words. Silently pronouncing each word slows read-

ing speed. Try to grasp the meaning of phrases and clauses without focusing on individual words.

- Find the main idea in every paragraph. The rest of the sentences in a paragraph usually provide additional details about the main idea.
- Recognize the order of events in a situation. This understanding will allow you to reconstruct the entire situation if necessary.
- Take notes or highlight information while reading. Study your notes to help you recall what you read.
- To check your understanding and create a frame of reference, compare the information you read to what you already know.

This page contains answers for this chapter only.

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