TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION: All Unit Notes

(Important Topics Covered)

Technical communication is a means to document or convey scientific, engineering, or other technical information.

Individuals in a variety of contexts and with varied professional credentials engage in technical communication. Some individuals are designated as technical communicators. These individuals use a set of methods to research and document technical processes or products.

Technical communicators may put the information they capture into paper documents, web pages, digitally stored text, audio, video, and other media. The Society for Technical Communication defines the field as any form of communication that focuses on technical or specialized topics, communicates specifically by using technology or provides instructions on how to do something.

More succinctly, the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators defines technical communication as factual communication, usually about products and services. Whatever the definition of technical communication, the overarching goal of the practice is to create easily accessible information for a specific audience.

Technical communication is a professional task performed by specialized employees or consultants. For example, a professional writer may work with a company to produce a user manual. Some companies give considerable technical communication responsibility to other technical professionals—such as programmers, engineers, and scientists. Often, a professional technical writer edits such work to bring it up to modern technical communication standards.

To begin the documentation process, technical communicators identify the audience and their information needs. The technical communicator researches and structures the content into a framework that can guide detailed development.

As the body of information comes together, the technical communicator ensures that the intended audience can understand the content and retrieve the information they need. This process, known as the 'Writing Process', has been a central focus of writing theory since the 1970s, and some contemporary textbook authors apply it to technical communication. Technical communication is important to most professions, as a way to contain and organize information and maintain accuracy.

The technical writing process can be divided into five steps:

1. Determine purpose and audience

2. Collect information

3. Organize and outline information

 4. Write the first draft

5. Revise and edit Determining purpose and audience

All technical communication serves a particular purpose—typically to communicate ideas and concepts to an audience, or direct an audience in a particular task. Technical communication professionals use various techniques to understand the audience and, when possible, test content on the target audience. For example, if bank workers don't properly post deposits, a technical communicator would: Review existing documentation (or lack thereof)

• Interview bank workers to identify conceptual errors

• Interview subject matter experts to learn the correct procedures• Author new material that describes the correct procedures

• Test the new material on the bank workers

• Similarly, a sales manager who wonders which of two sites is better for a new store might ask a marketing professional to study the sites and write a report with recommendations.

The marketing professional hands the report off to a technical communicator (in this case, a technical editor or technical writer), who edits, formats, and sometimes elaborates the document in order to make the marketing professional's expert assessment usable to the sales manager.

The process is not one of knowledge transfer, but the accommodation of knowledge across fields of expertise and contexts of use. This is the basic definition of technical communication. Audience type affects many aspects of communication, from word selection and graphics use to style and organization. Most often, to address a particular audience, a technical communicator must consider what qualities make a text useful (capable of supporting a meaningful task) and usable (capable of being used in service of that task).

 A non-technical audience might misunderstand or not even read a document that is heavy with jargon— while a technical audience might crave detail critical to their work. Busy audiences often don't have time to read entire documents, so content must be organized for ease of searching—for example by frequent headings, white space, and other cues that guide attention. Other requirements vary according to particular audience's needs.

Collecting information

Technical communicators must collect all information that each document requires. They may collect information through primary (first-hand) research—or secondary research, using information from existing work by other authors. Technical communicators must acknowledge all sources they use to produce their work.

To this end, technical communicators typically distinguish quotations, paraphrases, and summaries when taking notes. Organizing and outlining information before writing the initial draft, the technical communicator organizes ideas in a way that makes the document flow well.

Once each idea is organized, the writer organizes the document as a whole—accomplishing this task in various ways: Chronological: used for documents that involve a linear process, such as a step-by-step guide that describes

• How to accomplish something Parts of an object: Used for documents that describe the parts of an object, such as a graphic showing the

• Parts of a computer (keyboard, monitor, mouse, etc.) Simple to complex (or vice versa): starts with easy ideas and gradually goes into complex ideas

• Specific to general: starts with many ideas, then organizes the ideas into sub-categories

• General to specific: starts with a few categories of ideas, then goes deeper

• After organizing the whole document, the writer typically creates a final outline that shows the document structure.

Outlines make the writing process easier and save the author time.

Writing the first draft after the outline is complete; the writer begins the first draft, following the outline's structure. Setting aside blocks of an hour or more, in a place free of distractions, helps the writer maintain a flow. Most writers prefer to wait until the draft is complete before any revising so they don't break their flow.

Typically, the writer should start with the easiest section, and write the summary only after the body is drafted.

The ABC (abstract, body, and conclusion) format can be used when writing a first draft of some document types. The abstract describes the subject, so that the reader knows what the document covers. The body is the majority of the document and covers topics in depth.

Lastly, the conclusion section restates the document's main topics. The ABC format can also apply to individual paragraphs—beginning with a topic sentence that states the paragraph's topic, followed by the topic, and finally, a concluding sentence.

Revising and editing

Once the initial draft is laid out, editing and revising can be done to fine-tune the draft into a final copy. Four tasks transform the early draft into its final form, Adjusting and reorganizing content on topics that need more attention, shorten other sections—and relocate certain paragraphs, sentences, or entire topics. Editing for style Good style makes writing more interesting, appealing, and readable. In general, the personal writing style of the writer is not evident in technical writing. Modern technical writing style relies on attributes that contribute to clarity: Headings, lists, graphics

- Generous white space

- Short sentences

- Present tense

- Active voice (though some scientific applications still use the passive voice)

- Second and third person as required

Technical writing as a discipline usually requires that a technical writer use a style guide. These guides may relate to a specific project, product, company, or brand. They ensure that technical writing reflects formatting, punctuation, and general stylistic standards that the audience expects. In the United States, many consider the Chicago Manual of Style the bible for general technical communication. Other style guides have their adherents, particularly for specific industries—such as the Microsoft Style Guide in some information technology settings.

Technical communication is written and oral communication for and about business and industry. Technical communication focuses on products and services—how to manufacture them, market them, manage them, deliver them, and use them. Technical communication is composed primarily in the work environment for supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, vendors, and customers. As either a professional technical communicator, an employee at a company, or a consumer, you can expect to write the following types of correspondence for the following reasons (and many more).

THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION The National Commission on Writing concluded that "in today's workplace writing is a 'threshold skill' for hiring and

promotion among salaried . . . employees. Survey results indicate that writing is a ticket to professional opportunity, while poorly written job applications are a figurative kiss of death" ("Writing: A Ticket to Work" 2007, 3). Technical communication is a significant factor in your work experience for several reasons. Business Technical communication is not a frill or an occasional endeavor. It is a major component of the work environment. Through technical correspondence, employees

• Maintain good customer–client relations (follow-up letters).

• Ensure that work is accomplished on time (directive memos or e-mail).

• Provide documentation that work has been completed (progress reports).

• Generate income (sales letters, brochures, and fliers).

• Keep machinery working (user manuals) .

• Ensure that correct equipment is purchased (technical descriptions).

• Participate in teleconferences or videoconferences (oral communication).

• Get a job (resumes).

• Define terminology (online help screens).

• Inform the world about a company's products and services (Internet Web sites and blogs).

Letters are the most important means of written communication, the most numerous and the most personal.

They are also very important for any organization or individual for the purpose of giving or seeking information.

Modern technological developments have not diminished their importance. As an executive goes up the ladder of his career he has to spend more and more of his time in handling correspondence.

Needless to say that the success or failure of an organization depends to a large extent on its correspondence. It is, therefore, obligatory for an executive to learn the art of writing effective letters. Let us have a look at the salient features of an effective letter.

1- Simplicity: it must be kept in mind that the writer of a letter is a person communicating with another person. It is, therefore, the polite, personal touch that proves to be more effective than the stiff, detached style generally associated with business correspondence.

To highlight this point some typical expressions used in business correspondence are given below along with reasons for objection and suggested

2- Clarity of Goal: Both in thought and expression we have to be clear in our correspondence. Every letter is a reflection of the writer's mind. He should be therefore clear about what information he is seeking or wishing to give. All facts and figures must be stated in the simplest possible language. It means that there is no scope for ambiguity and flowery language in business letters.

3- Public Relation Aspect: Besides aiming at the immediate goal, business correspondence is also deeply concerned with the image of the company in the eyes of the public. People form images about companies from many sources, and correspondence is a major factor 10 among them. All effective correspondence has the broad objective of enhancing the company's public relations. -

4- You-attitude: The most effective business letters are those that show the writer's interest in the receiver. It means that the writer has to view things from the reader's point of view so as to get a favorable response from him. Communication experts, therefore, advise us to shift our focus from "I" and "We" to "You" and "Your". A Comparison of the following examples show the difference in attitudes. We-attitude You-attitude We have received your letter of June Thank you for your letter of June15 15

5- We have shipped the two dozen steel Your two dozen steel racks should racks you ordered reach you soon/with this letter. I have five year's experience as a Five year's practical experience as a sales executive sales executive will enable me to push up your sales.

6- Courtesy: When we adopt the "you-attitude" for mutual benefit it is natural that our tone becomes courteous. It involves writing directly to our reader, avoiding the outdated cold style and also excluding elements of anger and preaching that very often spoil communication. 6- Persuasion: Persuasion is the main function of business communication. It is most evident in effective business letters. The basic purpose of an effective letter is to influence, or to sell an idea to the reader(s).

7- Sincerity: Sincerity means that our readers must believe what we say. They must be convinced that we are genuinely in mutual profitsharing and well-being. Words of exaggeration like 'extraordinary', 'sensational', and 'revolutionary', 'greatest', 'amazing' etc. must be avoided in letters.

8- Positive Language: A wise communicator tries, as far as possible, to use positive language. Use of positive language becomes all the more important in a business letter, the primary aim of which is to build up the best of human relations and to earn business. Positive words stir up positive feelings. That is why it is advisable to avoid using negative words like 'failure', 'refuse', 'sorry', 'no', 'do not', 'mistake', 'loss', 'damage',etc. It should be our effort to find positive substitutes for them.

9- Coherence: Effective letters present information in logical order by careful use of linking devices, use of pronouns that are reference words, and repetition of key words. Linking

devices like 'besides', 'therefore', 'likewise', 'however' etc. and the pronouns like 'this', 'that', 'these' give a logical progression to the thought content of the writer. Repetition of key words gives the content of the letter a forceful thrust. A skilful writer knows which words to repeat.

10- Care for Culture: In international correspondence we have to be specially careful in choice of words so as not to offend the receiver who may be having a very different cultural background. We should avoid use of culturally derived words, slang, colloquialisms and as far as possible, even idioms and phrases. To write a letter in simple, general service list words that are universally understood and acceptable.

11- Tactful Approach: An effective letter is a tactfully planned letter. A business letter is not always a simple, straightforward statement of a situation or giving out of some information. There may be a problem. There may be not a good news to convey. The writer has to decide how best to approach the problem or to convey the bad news.

The Lay-Out of a Business Letter Introduction:

A business letter is supposed to have a lay-out that impresses. Its physical appearance, that includes the quality of the paper, the arrangement of the typed/printed, the way it is folded and kept in the envelope, the envelope itself with the addressee's name and address, stamping – everything communicates and passes through the receiver's mental filter. As has been said, a letter's appearance is a part of its message. Before we discuss each of the points / parts of a business letter let us have a look at the two most commonly followed lay-out conventions.

The first-indented form follows the old, established British conventions of writing letters and paragraph construction.

Each paragraph can be easily identified because there is some space left in the beginning. This is also the way most of us are taught to write paragraphs in the earliest stages of our learning. The second – block form – is of recent origin, primarily because of the American practice of paragraph writing. Now, of course, it is being followed all over the world. No doubt it looks more presentable, and is easier to handle.

Formats for Typing Block Style

Date

Name of Recipient

Title/Department Company

Street Address City, State, and Zip Code RE

Dear Name:

Subject:

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

Sincerely,

(Handwritten Signature)

Writer's Name Title dm

 (typist's initials—If the writer is also the typist, you may omit this notation.)

PS: Formats for Typing Indented Style

Date

Name of Recipient

 Title/Department Company Street Address City,

 State, and Zip Code

Dear Name:

 Subject: _____

_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____

_____

_____

Sincerely, (Handwritten Signature)

Writer's Name

Title

Memoranda

 Introduction: A memorandum (known as 'memo' in short form) is by definition, " a written statement that you prepare specially for a person or committee in order to give them information about a particular matter".

In an organization it takes the form of "a short official note that you write to a person or to several people, especially people who you work with." It has been derived from the Latin word 'memorare' changed to 'memorandus' (notable), and means literally 'to mention' or 'tell'.

 To achieve its purpose a memo is written in easy-to-understand language. Its style is like that of reports: objective, matter-of-fact, and lucid. No attempt is made to make an emotional appeal to the reader or to create a psychological impact on him.

Plain and direct statements of facts are all that is required. A memo plays a very useful role in an organization. It ensures quick and smooth flow of information in all directions. It also enables officers to maintain good business relationships. A memo will come to your aid when you wish to avoid coming into personal contact with certain colleague. Another useful function of a memo is to establish accountability. Since it is a record of facts and decisions, you can return to it in future if there is a need to find out who went wrong and at what stage.

The Memo

Format: A memo format is a form of written communication, but it is not a letter. Its format, therefore, is also different from that of a letter. Most companies have their own printed memoranda sheets with the main company heading and also the heading of the department or section and often one or two colored sheets attached which can be torn off as copies for filing. The following essential items of information must be given in a memo:

(i)   the designation of the receiver,
(ii)   the designation of the sender,

(iii)   date, and

(iv)   subject.

Example:

Ahmad Hussein Ahmad

Old Mazda, Tourist Club,

 Abu Dhabi

TEL: - 00971 2 6778988

29 August 1997

Ms. Rania Hamad

Editorial Manager

Otaiba Book Ltd

Dear Ms Rania,

Assistant Editor/Desk Editor

I wish to apply for the above post, advertised in Gulf News. . Currently I am working in a new small publishing company, Notions, that specializes in highly designed, high-quality non-fiction books. Since I started here I have been the only full-time employee working on all editorial aspects of the books. Answering directly to the Publishing Director and the Editorial Director, I have a very wide range of responsibilities including: editing on screen in Quark and Microsoft Word, liaising with the designers and freelance editors, checking manuscripts at the film stage, managing the stationery budget, as well as signing off books,. I have been at Notions for over a year, and I have learnt a great deal, but there is no longer the scope to use all my knowledge and experience. I am seeking a position that offers responsibility for the full range of publishing and editorial skills, as well as the opportunity to meet and work with a range of people.

I like to think that I bring enthusiasm and adaptability to my work. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this letter and my enclosed curriculum vitae. The telephone number I have given is my home one and all calls are answered. I look forward to hearing from you. Yours sincerely,

 Ahmad Hussein

 The Successful CV

Report Writing

The distinctions between formal and informal reports are often blurred. Nevertheless, a formal report is usually written to someone in another company or organization. Occasionally it is written for a senior manager in the same company, or for someone with whom the writer has little regular contact.

Usually it is longer than an informal report and requires more extensive research. Unless you are a consultant, you are unlikely to be asked to write a formal report often. When you are, there may be a lot riding on it— including your reputation. The purpose of this chapter is to show you how to write a formal report and how to put together the kind of proposal that often precedes it.

The Four R's of Planning

As emphasized earlier, the first step in planning any piece of correspondence is to think about the reason for writing and about the receiver. For a long, formal report you need to add two more R's to your planning sheet: restrictions and research. Assessing the Reason for Writing and the Receiver, formal reports are usually less personal than informal ones.

They omit the contractions of personal conversation and tend to name fewer individuals. Traditionally, formal reports have tried to give a sense of objectivity by omitting the personal

As a result, passages were often convoluted and difficult to read. While I-free reports are still the practice in some circles, business writers are increasingly using I in formal reports to produce clearer and more forceful writing. (In informal reports, personal pronouns are not only tolerated but recommended.) However, avoid "I think" or "in my opinion" phrases when you can complete the thought without them:

Determining Restrictions

What are the limitations on the resources that will be available to help you with the report?

1. Financial What will be your budget? What expenses will be involved and is the budget adequate to cover them?
2. Personnel Will you have the services of a good typist or illustrator? Will outside help be required?

3. Time What is your deadline? Create a realistic time line on a graph with the various stages of the report plotted on it at specific dates—so many days or weeks for research, organizing, writing, editing, and final production.

The larger the task, the more important these self-imposed dates become. In allocating time, you may be wise to leave a margin of error for delays, whether from bureaucratic mix-ups or postal problems.

Deciding on Research

Before beginning your research, explore the subject itself to avoid taking too narrow a path and overlooking important alternatives. Good questions are an effective stimulus for seeing different perspectives on an issue. Here are some ways to start: ·

Brainstorming By you or with a colleague, blitz the subject. Jot down all the questions you can think have that relate to the topic, in whatever order they occur. Don't be negative or rule anything out at this point.

· Tree Diagram Assume that the subject is the trunk and add as many large and small branches as you can to represent the different aspects of the subject. Again, think of the branches as questions.Tree diagramming can be useful by itself or as a second stage of random brainstorming.

· Journalist's Approach In researching a story, journalists consider the W's of reporting:Who? What? When? Where? Why? For your research planning, try asking the same five questions and add another: How? Use the basic questions to formulate other subquestions.

· The 3C Approach A more thorough way to explore a topic is to ask questions about three areas:

. Components How can the subject be divided? How many different ways are there to partition it?

· Change What are the changed or changing elements of the subject? What are the causes or effects of certain actions? What trends are there?

· Context

What is the larger issue or field into which this subject fits? How have others dealt with the problems associated with the subject?

Main Section

Although the sections will vary according to the subject, the basic principles of organizing are the same as for informal reports. For readers who will be interested or pleased, use the direct approach.

Here is the most common model:

Summary

Introduction

Recommendations and/or Conclusions

Discussion of Findings

A less common variation of this direct approach is useful when there is a lengthy list of recommendations:

Summary

Introduction

Summary of Recommendations

Discussion of Findings

Details of Recommendations

When readers will be displeased or skeptical, the indirect approach will lead them gradually toward the conclusions or recommendations:

Summary

Introduction

Discussion of Findings

Conclusions and/or Recommendations

The indirect approach is sometimes used in government and consulting circles, even when the readers are interested. The trend is toward the direct approach, however, especially for busy readers. The preceding suggestions are not an ironclad prescription for every report.

You may want to change or add some sections. You may also have to adapt the following advice about what to put in each section. Let ease of understanding be the guide.

Summary

A summary for a formal report—often called an executive summary—is really a condensation of the most important points. Unlike the introductory summary that begins most short informal reports, the summary for a formal report is put on a separate page with a heading. It's not an introduction to the report, but a synopsis—the report 200 condensed. It's a convenience for the reader and may be the only part that senior management reads, but the report can make sense without it. For this reason, it's best to write the summary after you have completed the body of the report. The summary doesn't have to give equal weight to all sections of the report. It often has only a brief account of the background or methodology, and may even omit them if they are unimportant. By contrast, it usually pays most attention to the conclusions or recommendations.

On rare occasions, if the list of recommendations is lengthy, the title may be simply "Summary of Recommendations." Generally in a summary it's best to follow the order of the report.That is, if the report takes the direct approach, so should the summary.

Similarly, if the report has an indirect order, the summary should be indirect. In the interest of brevity: · use lists where possible; · omit examples, unless the example is a key finding; · stick to the facts, avoiding unneeded references to the report itself. For example, instead of saying, "The Findings section reveals . . ." simply put a heading, "Findings," and list the facts. Since there is a subtle psychological barrier to turning a page, especially for a reader who is extremely busy, try to keep the summary to a single sheet. If this seems an impossible task for a complicated or lengthy report, remember Winston Churchill's instruction to the First Lord of the Admiralty in the midst of the Second World War: "Pray state this day, on one side of a sheet of paper, how the Royal Navy is being adapted to meet the conditions of modern warfare" (Ogilvy, 1983, p. 35). Is your task more difficult than this one?

Introduction

This section may have a heading other than "Introduction," depending on the focus, and may have several subsections. It can include several or all of these topics:

Purpose As in an informal report, a one-sentence explanation may be enough.

 Background Many report writers make the mistake of giving too much background. Include only the information needed to put the report in perspective. If explaining the reasons for the report, a total history is rarely needed.

Focus on those conditions that have influenced the purpose and design of the report. If you do have to include a lot of material, you should probably have a separate section on background.

• Scope Here you define the topic precisely and reveal any assumptions you have made affecting the direction or boundaries of your investigation. If there are constraints or difficulties that limit the study in some way, say what they are.

By doing so, you will help forestall criticisms that you didn't cover the area properly.

Front Section

Title Page Centre the information and arrange it so that it extends downward over most of the length of the page. Include:

• the title of the report, in bold type or in capital letters

• the name and title of the intended reader

• the name of the writer and the writer's title (or the name of the firm, if the report is by an outside consultant)

• the date

Letter of Transmittal

A letter of transmittal is a covering letter, given in letter or memo form, depending on whether it is going to someone outside or inside the writer's organization. It provides the extra personal touch that formal reports generally lack. A covering letter is usually brief and follows this pattern:

• an opening statement, "transmitting" the report to the reader and stating its title or purpose (for example, "Here is the report you requested on . . .")

 • a brief outline of the major conclusions or recommendations

• a statement of thanks for any special help received from other employees

• a goodwill close that looks forward to future discussion or opportunities to help Of course, a letter of transmittal can contain more or less than this model.

Occasionally, a fairly extensive summary of the report in the covering letter will substitute for a summary at the beginning of the report. Sometimes, if the writer is an outside consultant hired for the job, the letter of transmittal expresses appreciation for the opportunity of working on the task. Whatever it says, however, the letter should have a personal, conversational tone.

Table of Contents

This is useful if the report is over five pages. It follows the letter of transmittal and has no page number. It may be labeled "Table of Contents" or simply "Contents." List the sections of the report in a column on the left, using the same system of numbering used in the body of the report.

If the report has subsections, list these as well. (Subsection headings may be indented a few spaces from the section headings.) In a column at the right of the page, list the appropriate page numbers. If the report itself contains a number of tables or figures, list them with an appropriate label—for example, "List of Tables."

Interview Strategies

Interviewing is the phase of the job search process where you go from being an applicant on paper to a real, 3-dimensional person.

In one way or another, you are being evaluated on your verbal communication skills through this face-to-face (or phone) interaction. Employers want to see if you match up to the qualifications described in your résumé and they want to see if you have good interpersonal communication skills to get a sense of how you would function as part of their team.

Interviews are often intimidating for job seekers who feel the pressure of being evaluated and feel uncomfortable with the interview format. While the nervousness may never go away, effectively preparing for the interview can make you feel more confident, and, with practice, you will be better able to stay in the moment and treat the interview like a conversation. This chapter will focus on general interview preparation, but know that different disciplines and industries have different interviewing techniques.

For instance, the technical interview or "code day" has become standard for many computer science-related fields.

You should always do research on standard practices in your industry, but also keep in mind that interviews can be surprising. In fact, some employers try to surprise interviewees to get a sense of how they think and react in unfamiliar situations. Part of your challenge is to stay open-minded and relaxed so you can project confidence, even in unexpected or unfamiliar situations. Preparing for the Interview Good preparation before an interview is based on understanding who your audience is—understanding the employer and the industry.

This is not the type of information that you can memorize the night before. Take time as much time as you can to read and absorb information from a variety of sources to get a thorough sense of the company—not just the basic information you find on the "About" page of their website,

but the tone and personality they broadcast in social media, their achievements, their community involvement, etc.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

In addition to revealing your knowledge of the company, these questions are also an opportunity for you to figure out if the employer and the company culture is a good fit for you. Think carefully about what matters to you, what would allow you to do your best work, and try to ask questions that will give you insight into those factors.

• What are the primary tasks or responsibilities for a person in this position?

What does a day in this job look like?

 Is travel required? Overtime?

• What is the orientation or training process?

• What are the goals/priorities for a person in this position? How will success be measured?

 • What is the company's assessment and review process?

• Does the company support professional development activities?

• How does this position fit within the team/department? What is the reporting structure?

 • Does this position function alone or within a team setting?

 • How would you describe the company culture or team dynamic?

• What is this company's approach to management?

• What are the company's overall goals and priorities and how do those affect someone in this department/position?

Body Language & Interaction

As a general rule, it's important to be observant and take your cues from the interviewer. Reflect their tone and pay attention to the dynamic they set—are they very formal and profession or more conversational? It's okay to make small talk, but you want to follow the lead of the interviewer. Shake hands.

Most of the time, these professional interactions will begin with a handshake. Be prepared with a firm (but not too firm!) and confident handshake. It never hurts to practice! Be conscious of your posture.

You will want to sit up straight (no leaning or lounging) and avoid crossing your arms in front of your chest (it can seem defensive or withdrawn). Make eye contact. Look at the interviewer while they ask you questions and give them non-verbal cues—smiling, nodding—when appropriate. Make it clear that you understand what they're saying, that you're listening.