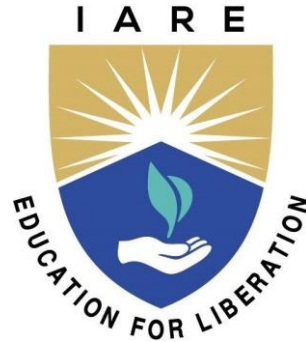# INSTITUTE OF AERONAUTICAL ENGINEERING

(AUTONOMOUS)

Dundigal, Hyderabad - 500 043



## LECTURE NOTES:

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## SOFT SKILLS AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION (AHSC15)

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# 1. MODULE I

## Course Outcomes
**After successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CO 1 | **Apply** soft skills in the development of personality and use them in their daily life. | Understand |
| CO 2 | **Relate** how to listen actively and respond productively to others. | Understand |

## 1.1 Introduction to Soft Skills

Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person's relationships with other people. Soft Skills play a key role in demonstrating how an individual interacts with colleagues, performs work related tasks, communicates and builds relationships. These skills include communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, leadership or problem-solving.

## 1.2 Definition of Soft Skills

The term "soft skills" was created by the U.S. Army in the late 1960's. It refers to any skill that does not employ the use of machinery. For the sake of clarity, the notion of soft skills can be understood by considering its subterms: "Skill": refers to a person's ability to perform certain tasks or the knowledge required to perform those tasks. "Soft": designation illustrates the non-technical nature (as opposed to the "hard" qualifier commonly employed for technical skills). Soft skills have been defined by the World Health Organisation as an: "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

A definition based on review literature explains:

Soft skills as a cluster of productive personality traits that characterize one's relationships in a social environment with other people and the key three abilities/elements are people skills, social skills and personal career attributes.

For Whereas James and James:

Soft skills are a new way to describe a set of abilities or talents that an individual can bring to the workplace, including career attributes such as team skills, communications skills, leadership skills, customer service skills and problem solving skills.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2014 looks at soft skills as:

"Soft skills" are generally understood to include writing skills, oral communication skills, presentation skills, interpersonal skills, priority and goal setting, and lifelong learning skills

For (Heckman and Kautz, 2012; Bancino and Zevalkink, 2007; Andrews and Higson, 2008)

Soft skills are the non-domain-specific skills that help individuals thrive in a professional context

Perrault (2004) defines:

"soft skills" as personal qualitied, attributes or the level of commitment of a person that set him or her apart from other individuals who may have similar education and experience.

Soft skills are related with insights, emotions, feelings, gut-instinct and (some would say) an inner knowing. Because of this they are not taught passively as in the way of "hard skills". Hence soft skills are associated with EQ (Emotional Quotient) and EI (Emotional Intelligence) rather than with IQ.

Soft skills can be said to incorporate all aspects of generic skills that include the cognitive elements associated with non-academic skills. Soft skills are identified to be the most critical skills in the current global job market especially in a fast moved era of technology. The reorientation of education which is one trust of education for sustainability also relates the importance of these so-called - soft skills which includes:

1. Communication

2. Listening

3. Punctuality

4. Organization

5. Teamwork

6. Ability to "read a room"

7. Flexibility

8. Patience

9. Time management

10. Multitasking

11. Attention to detail

12. Responsibility

13. Strategic thinking

14. Problem solving

15. Good decision making

16. Conflict resolution

17. Innovation

18. Social skills

19. Cultural awareness and sensitivity

## 1.3    Significance of Soft skills

Soft Skills play the following important role in making the students employable for modern professions.

1. Soft Skills play a crucial role in making students employable as it makes them flexible, open to change, handle stress at work and to stay globally competitive.

2. They enable students to understand and realize their potential and how best they can come out with flying colours in any situation.

3. They enable students to tackle any adverse situation.

4. They develop positive attitude with which they can influence the team members to achieve greater success in their profissional life

5. They help students in decision making at the time of crisis.

6. They encourage students to be ethical in their ways for long term success and to stick to work ethics and culture of the organisation.

7. They teach student to manage Time and Stress, meet all the deadlines.

8. They equip students with presentation skills which are necessary in the corporate world today. They make an individual work and perform better in teams.

9. They develop communication skills – both written as well as oral forms. Both of these skills are indispensible for an individual's success.

10. Develops good listening skills

11. As one cannot be good communicator, if he is not a good listener.

12. Develop overall personality with mature outlook to function effectively in different circumstances.

13. Develop broad career plans, evaluate the employment market, and identify the organisations to get good placement, match the job requirement and skills set.

## 1.4   Process

There are two methods of learning or improving soft skills. One way is enrolling for formal training, e.g. taking evening classes on Rhetoric, languages, presentation skills, conflict or cultural management. This is a well-proven concept with the advantage of having some kind of certificate at the end of the course, which might come in handy for job applications..

The other way of acquiring soft skills is to look at self-training, usually based on books. As we saw earlier, changing of personal traits often requires long-term practice and therefore self- training might be more useful regarding the improvement of this category of soft skills.

A very pleasant way of self-training one's soft skills is frequent socialising with friends, colleagues and other members of society. This may sound astonishing, but meant here is socialising consciously, i.e. with the purpose in mind to enhance certain soft skills.

Apart from these two there are many other ways to process Soft Skills such as:

1. Be open to feedback.

2. Communicate often.

3. Emphasize teamwork.

4. Build positive relationships.

5. Step outside of your comfort zone.

6. Get ready to learn.

7. Adapt to workplace changes.

8. Observe others.

9. Work through conflict.

10. Take on a leadership role.

11. Arrive to work on time.

## 1.5    Importance of Soft Skills

Most interactions with other people require some level of soft skills. At a company you might be negotiating to win a new contract, presenting your new idea to colleagues, networking for a new job, and so on. We use soft skills every day at work and developing these soft skills will help you win more business and accelerate your career progression. On the other hand, a lack of soft skills can limit your potential, or even be the downfall of your business. By developing strong leadership, delegation, teamwork, and communication abilities, you can run projects more smoothly, deliver results that please everyone, and even positively influence your personal life by improving how you interact with others. Outside of the office, soft skills such as communication are used to build friendship groups and meet potential partners. You might be negotiating the price of your new house renovation, or mentoring your neighbors' children on the weekend. Soft skills are useful both in our professional and personal lives.

## 1.6    Discovering the Self

Finding what soft skills you excel at starts with looking within. To find your soft skills, Nicole Wood, the CEO of Ama La Vida told Glassdoor, "first, gain self-awareness of your strengths and improvement opportunities. Then you can begin to truly harness your strengths and develop your blind spots." She continued that "things like showing empathy, having a strong presence, expressing gratitude, communicating effectively, and managing stress are all critical skills to develop [in order] to get promoted and to be an effective leader."

Identifying your soft skills isn't necessarily something you can do alone, either. Ask friends, colleagues, and even former employers which soft skills come to mind when they think of you. You can also ask them to bring up specific examples of when you used that soft skill well. You might even discover things about yourself that you didn't know before. For example, if you think you're disorganized, but everyone you talk to points to your organizational skills as somewhere you excel, you might want to consider changing that perception of yourself – and including it on your resume!

There are four ways of self discovery-

**1. What are my strengths?**

It helps us to concentrate on our strengths where we can produce actual results It shows where we need to improve our skills or acquire new ones Shows the gaps in our knowledge that can be filled

**2. How do I perform and learn?**

**3. What are my values?**

**4. What should I contribute?**

## 1.7   Setting Goals

Goal setting is the fundamental key to success. Whether it's increasing your intelligence, learning a new skill or rekindling a relationship, setting goals lets us create our future. It also helps us grow and expand, pushing ourselves to transform in ways those we never imagined. In order to feel fulfilled, we need to know and feel like we're working to achieve something. Effective goal setting lets you measure progress, overcome procrastination and visualize your dreams. If you don't know what you want to accomplish, you can't create a plan to get there. Setting goals is the vehicle that will drive you to your desired destination.

**How to set goals**

1. Perform a brainstorming session.

2. Refine your goals

3. Connect your goals to your purpose

4. Create smart goals

**How to achieve your goals-**

1. Visualize your goals

2. Keep yourself accountable

3. Track your progress

4. Celebrate your successes

## 1.8   Positivity

Positivity is the frequent experience of positive emotions such as joy, hope, gratitude, interest, serenity or inspiration. It is the day-to-day pleasant experiences that leave a person feeling happy and satisfied. Evidence shows that increasing positivity in the workplace can provide a major competitive advantage for organizations. People who experience positive emotions at work have higher levels of engagement, organizational citizenship behavior and job performance, and are less likely to experience burnout or engage in counterproductive behavior. Positivity is good for the bottom line and for employees. It is beneficial for organizations because it leads to higher levels of motivation and performance. Positive employees make better decisions, are more creative and more productive, and have better interpersonal skills. Positivity is also good for employees because it enhances well-being and personal success. This, in turn, benefits organizations because employees appreciate their company's efforts to improve their well-being, resulting in greater loyalty and commitment.

**Benefits of Positivity**

1. Mental Benefits- Thinking outside the box leads to greater creativity.

2. Social Benefits- People in high-quality relationships cooperate more readily and are more likely to help each other. They exchange more information, are better at coordinating their efforts and have less conflict.

3. Psychological Benefits- They are proactive and problem focused when facing difficulties. The psychological resources that positivity provides not only make people more motivated, but also increase the likelihood that they will achieve their goals.

4. Health Benefits- It helps them to be more effective by enhancing their cognitive and interpersonal abilities and providing them with valuable resources like social support, resilience and good health

## 1.9   Motivation

Several authors have defined motivation in different ways. According to Robert Dublin, "Motivation is the complex set of forces starting and keeping a person at work in an organization." According to Stanley Vance, "Motivation represents an unsatisfied need which creates a state of tension or disequilibrium, causing the individual to march in a goal-directed pattern, towards restoring a state of equilibrium by satisfying the need."

**Importance of Motivation**

1. Cooperation and Goals: Motivated employees cooperate willingly with the management and thus contribute maximum towards the goals of the company.

2. Productivity: Motivated employees attempt to enhance their knowledge and skills. This enables increase in the productivity.

3. High Efficiency: It has been observed that when motivated employees work sincerely towards their given tasks; they develop a sense of belongingness which results in conserving the organizational resources. This results in improvement in efficiency.

4. Job Satisfaction: Higher motivation paves the way for a higher job satisfaction of the employees. A motivated employee yearning for opportunities for satisfying needs becomes loyal and committed towards his work and eventually the organization.

5. Better Relations: The number of complaints and grievances reduce when the employees are motivated .

6. Good Image: If the employees of the organizational are motivated and satisfied with the work environment, the image of the company as a good employer boosts in the industry.

## 1.10 Positive Thinking and attitudes

Positive thinking, or an optimistic attitude, is the practice of focusing on the good in any given situation. It can have a big impact on your physical and mental health.

Positive thinking is everywhere: Manifestation, vision boards and phrases like "No bad days" abound, and it seems that everyone on the planet wants to learn how to think positive.

Positive thinking is an emotional and mental attitude that focuses on the good and expects results that will benefit you. It's about anticipating happiness, health and success instead of expecting the worst. Leveraging the law of attraction, this mindset creates a positive feedback loop that brings even more good into your life

**The Benefits of Positive Thinking**

1. Longer life span

2. Lower chance of having a heart attack

3. Better physical health

4. Greater resistance to illness such as the common cold

5. Lower blood pressure

6. Better stress management

7. Better pain tolerance

**The mental benefits may include:**

1. More creativity

2. Greater problem-solving skill

3. Clearer thinking

4. Better mood

5. Better coping skills

6. Less depression

Positive attitudes can include:

1. It is looking adversity in the eye... and laughing.

2. Getting what you get, and not pitching a fit.

3. Enjoying the unexpected, even when it's not what you wanted originally.

4. Motivating those around you with a positive word.

5. Using the power of a smile to reverse the tone of a situation.

6. Being friendly to those you don't know.

7. It's getting back up when you fall down. (No matter how many times you fall down.)

8. Being a source of energy that lifts those around you.

9. Understanding that relationships are more important than material things.

10. Being happy even when you have little.

11. Having a good time even when you are losing.

12. Being happy for someone else's success.

13. Having a positive future vision, no matter how bad your current circumstances.

14. Smiling.

15. Paying a compliment, even to a total stranger.

16. Tell someone you know that they did a great job. (And mean it.)

17. Making someone's day. (Not just a child's... adult's like to have their day be special, too!)

18. It's not complaining no matter how unfair things appear to be. (It is a waste of time... instead, do something!)

19. Not letting other people's negativity bring you down.

20. Giving more than you expect to get in return.

21. Being true to yourself... always

# 2. MODULE II

## Course Outcomes
**After successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CO 1 | **Apply** soft skills in the development of personality and use them in their daily life. | Apply |
| CO 2 | **Relate** how to listen actively and respond productively to others. | Understand |
| CO 3 | **Classify** the correct usage of English grammar in writing and speaking | Understand |
| CO 5 | **Explain** some of the strategies and challenges for effective speaking skills and make use of pre-reading skills to understand the content of advanced level text books. | Understand |

## 2.1 Developing Interpersonal Relationship through effective soft skills

Interpersonal skills are the skills we use every day when we communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. People with strong interpersonal skills are often more successful in both their professional and personal lives. Interpersonal skills include a wide variety of skills, though many are centered on communication, such as listening, questioning and understanding body language. They also include the skills and attributes associated with emotional intelligence or being able to understand and manage your own and others' emotions. People with good interpersonal skills tend to be able to work well in a team or group, and with other people more generally. They are able to communicate effectively with others, whether family, friends, colleagues, customers or clients. Interpersonal skills are therefore vital in all areas of life at work, in education and socially.

Interpersonal skills are generally considered to include a wide range of skills, such as:

Communication skills which in turn covers:

1. Verbal Communication

2. Non-Verbal Communication

3. Listening Skills

4. Emotional intelligence

5. Team-working

6. Negotiation, persuasion and influencing skills

7. Conflict resolution and mediation

8. Problem solving and decision-making

Let's discuss some of the most common interpersonal skills, which are listed above:

1. Effective verbal communication: Effective verbal communication encompasses good relations at the workspace and home. There are two aspects of effective verbal communication; 'what to say,' and another is 'how to say.' People with good interpersonal intelligence are also intelligent at verbal communication. They can easily ask some questions or express the information with confidence. They also know how to represent their words so that people can easily listen.

2. Effective non-verbal communication: Non-verbal communication is not only about moving our body but also about our facial expressions. For example, Dance: Dance is a form of art where facial expression enhances it. Our body movements will not define it as a complete form of art. People with good verbal communication skills can easily control their body language and spoken words.

3. Good Behavior: Behavior represents human relations. It is defined as the strategy in which people communicate with each other. It includes both verbal and non-verbal cues for effective communication. Unusual behavior can cause distractions.

4. Body language: Body language is the essential interpersonal skills that use non-verbal aspects of communication. Two persons represent different body language for a similar task. We always give some unspoken signals during our conversation with others. Sometimes we are aware, while sometimes not. It includes postures, eye movement, hand movements, facial expressions, voice tone, etc. For example, moving our legs during the conversation shows the disinterest of a person in that conversation.

5. Being an active listener: Listening includes providing responses and reactions to the other person during a conversation, termed as feedback. Feedback to the speaker makes communication a more active process. It can be in any form, such as verbal or non- verbal.

6. Relationship Management: The relationships are the two-way stream. We must be emotionally intelligent to understand the relationships and their importance. We are required to set the boundaries to maintain a healthy relationship.

7. Pitch: Pitch is defined as the frequency at which the vocal cord of the humans vibrates. The pitch determines how we represent our words in a practical, attractive, and easy to understand manner. For example, a low pitch might not be audible to everyone, while a very high pitch may disturb. Hence, pitch maintenance is an essential part of effective interpersonal communication.

8. Emotional intelligence: Emotional intelligence or EQ is the ability to control our own and other emotions. Other factors, such as empathy, motivation, social skills, and self- awareness, also describe emotional intelligence. Studies have shown that people with high EQ generally have better job performance, better mental health, and good relationships with others. Emotional awareness also helps us to understand better the people communicating with us.

## 2.2 Interpersonal barriers

Interpersonal barriers are present outside the individual and affect communication around us. It may occur when any candidate lack sensitivity, confidence, etc.

1. Lack of desire to explore- Some individuals have no interest in exploring ideas, opinions, views, etc. that creates a communication barrier. Sometimes, it also becomes frustrating for others.

2. Lack of participation- It isn't easy to communicate with a person who is not interested in talking. It is considered a significant barrier to interpersonal communication.

3. Cultural barriers- Cultural barriers usually exit between countries, religions, caste, color, etc. at any level in society or an organization. These barriers can also occur between family or family members or groups.

4. Unusual medium- The selection of the channel determines effective communication. Sometimes, it is better to discuss a severe issue face-to-face rather than sending text messages or letters. It can be risky to discuss such issues on text messages or emails because it lacks fast feedback.

5. Attitude barriers- The attitude barriers can arise due to individual habits, attitudes, overconfidence or behavior. Such barriers lack in mutual understanding between people.

6. Language Barriers The language barriers determine the difficulty of understanding the message between individuals or a group of people. It means

that our language can become barriers if others do not understand our words, signs, or expressions.

**How to develop Interpersonal skills?**

Interpersonal skills are easy to learn and develop. Let's discuss the method to develop and improve our interpersonal communication skills.

1. Create a positive outlook

2. Have a control over the emotions

3. Be confident

4. Help everyone

5. Focus on communication skills

6. Managing people around us

7. Stand for self

8. Avoid interrupting others

9. Reduce the physical barriers

10. Avoid distractions

11. Show the speaker that we are listening

## 2.3    Listening

Listening is a receptive language skill which learners usually find the most difficult. This often is because they feel under unnecessary pressure to understand every word. The listener has to get oriented to the listening portion and be all ears. The listener is also required to be attentive. Anticipation is a skill to be nurtured in Listening. In everyday life, the situation, the speaker, and visual clues all help us to decode oral messages. In due course of listening, be in a lookout for the signpost words. Thirdly one should be able to concentrate on understanding the message thoroughly. Listening Skills could be enhanced by focusing on making the students listen to the sounds of that particular language. This would help them with the right pronunciation of words. To equip students with training in listening, one can think about comprehending speeches of people of different backgrounds and regions. This intensive listening will ultimately help a student to understand more on the accents to be used and the exact pronunciation of words.

**Definition**

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is a skill of critical significance in all aspects of

our lives–from maintaining our personal relationships, to getting our jobs done, to taking notes in class, to figuring out which bus to take to the airport.

Regardless of how we are engaged with listening, it is important to understand that listening involves more than just hearing the words that are directed at us.

**Listening is not the same as Hearing**

Hearing refers to the sounds that you hear, whereas listening requires more than that: it requires focus. Listening means paying attention not only to the story, but how it is told, the use of language and voice, and how the other person uses his or her body. In other words, it means being aware of both verbal and nonverbal messages. Your ability to listen effectively depends on the degree to which you perceive and understand these messages.

## 2.4    Different Stages of Listening

The listening process involves five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Basically, an effective listener must hear and identify the speech sounds directed toward them, understand the message of those sounds, critically evaluate or assess that message, remember what has been said, and respond (either verbally or nonverbally) to information they have received.

1. Receiving

2. Understanding

3. Remembering

4. Evaluating

5. Responding

## 2.5    Essentials of listening skills

A conversation requires concentrated listening. Many people assume they know how to listen. However, these people may be mistaking just hearing for effective listening. Listening does require hearing, but it also requires interpretation and understanding – in other words, two-way communication.

Listening effectively enables you to better understand and interpret what someone is saying. For example, you will know what your manager needs from you only if you listen attentively. This can help you improve productivity and avoid mistakes. The ability to listen effectively also means opening your mind to new experiences. You learn constantly and other people's thoughts, knowledge, or ideas will inspire your thinking and encourage you to be more innovative.

## 2.6 Different types of listeners

You can group different types of listeners into four main categories:

1. Non-listeners A non-listener does not intend to listen to you, does not hear, and does not make an effort to pay attention. The non-listener would rather do all the talking. As a result, this person constantly interrupts the speaker and always attempts to have the last word. Non-listeners are generally not liked because their lack of effort shows a lack of respect for what others have to say.

2. Superficial listeners A superficial listener hears what you are saying but does not grasp the point you are making. A superficial listener listens only for the basic meaning of the spoken words and takes no notice of body language, voice tone, and other subtle forms of communication. Most often, superficial listeners are busy thinking about what they want to say next.

3. Logical listeners Logical listeners try to hear what you are saying and to comprehend the meaning of the actual words. However, they do not understand your intent or the meaning behind your words. Because they do not receive messages from vocal intonation, body language, or facial expressions, they miss important components of what a speaker is trying to communicate. Logical listeners need to concentrate more on the nonverbal communication accompanying speech.

4. Active listeners Listening actively requires concentration and emotional effort. Active listeners will not judge you as you speak but will try their best to understand what you are saying and why you are saying it. In other words, they will respect your point of view. They will listen for the intent and emotions behind the words so that they can better understand your line of thought.

## 2.7 Effectiveness of listening

In today's high-tech, high-speed, high-stress world, communication is more important than ever, yet we seem to devote less and less time to really listening to one another. Genuine listening has become a rare gift—the gift of time. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At work, effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time. At home, it helps develop resourceful, self-reliant kids who can solve their own problems. Listening builds friendships and careers.

Here are eight tips to bring effectiveness to your listening.

## 2.8  Barriers to Listening

As pointed out earlier, listening is not easy and there are several obstacles that stand in the way of effective listening, both within and outside the workplace. These barriers may be categorized as follows.

1. Physiological Barriers: Physiology means the state of human body and mind. Physiological barriers of communication occur due to the physical condition of sender or receiver which might even be physical disabilities. It includes sensory dysfunction and other physical dysfunctions.

2. Physical Barriers: Physical barrier is the environmental and natural condition that acts as a barrier in communication in sending message from sender to receiver. Organizational environment or interior workspace design problems, technological problems and noise are the parts of physical barriers. These are referred to distraction in the environment such as the sound of an air conditioner, cigarette smoke, or an overheated room, which interfere with the listening process. They could also be in the form of information overload.

3. Attitudinal Barriers: Attitudes are commonly formed by an individual's opinions or personal feelings on a subject or person and can be difficult to alter. When attitudinal barriers override the sense of professionalism in a workplace, it can become difficult for a group to engage in productive communication.

4. Wrong Assumptions: The success of communication depends on the both the sender and receiver. It is wrong to assume that communication is the sole responsibility of the sender or the speaker and those listeners have no role to play. Such an assumption can create a barrier to listening.

5. Cultural Barriers: Wherever we live, you are going to be influenced by the attitudes, customs, and practices of the people around us. Those basic elements are the definition of culture. When a person of one culture encounters the beliefs and resulting actions of another culture, a clash can occur. This is known as cultural barrier.

   Accents can be barriers to listening, since they interfere with the ability to understand the meaning of words that are pronounced differently. Another type of cultural barrier is doddering cultural values. The importance attached to listening and speaking differs in western and oriental cultures. Generally,

6. Gender Barriers: Communication research has shown that gender can be barrier to listening. Studies have revealed that men and women listen very differently and for different purposes. Women are more likely to listen for the emotion behind a speaker's words, when men listen more for the facts and the content. Example: a salesperson giving a demonstration of a new

type of office equipment may be asked by two colleagues if the equipment will work without problem and respond by saying "sure". A male user may take this at face value, whereas the female user may detect some hesitation in his voice. This is because the male users listen for the content of the message, whereas the female users listen for the tone of the message.

7. Lack of Training: Listening is not an inborn skill. People are not born good listeners. They must develop the art of listening through practice and training. Lack of training in listening skills is an important barrier to listening, in the Indian context.

8. Bad Listening Hobbits: Most people are very average listeners who have developed poor listening habits that are hard to said and that act as barriers to listening. For example, some people have the habits of "faking" attention, or trying to look like a listener, to impress the speaker and to assure him that they are paying attention. Others may tend to listen to each fact and, as a result, mis out on the main point.

9. Bringing in Emotions: Emotions erect barriers to effective communication. A listener's senses are not likely to be functioning at their optimum level when he or she is angry. Likewise, it is not possible to understand or appreciate what the speaker is saying if the listener is excessively sad.

10. Fear Fear is a great barrier to listening. People who are afraid during a conversation are not likely to listen. They become defensive and tend to argue.

    Tips to overcome fear: Be aware that fear can only worsen the situation. Listen to what the other person is about to say without fear. Keeping calm will give you mental strength to face any situation. Taking a deep breath helps in overcoming fear.

## 2.9    Listening comprehension

Listening is the one skill that you use the most in everyday life. Comprehension means the ability to understand completely and be familiar with a situation, facts, etc. Listening comprehension is the basis for your speaking, writing, and reading skills. To train your listening skills, it is important to listen actively, which means to actively pay attention to what you are listening to. Make it a habit to listen to audio books, podcasts, news, songs, etc. and to watch videos and films in the foreign language. The following are the methods to achieve effective listening of comprehension.

1. Set the purpose

2. Set the stage

3. Provide follow up

## 2.10   Speaking

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. We must consider that the level of language input (listening) must be higher than the level of language production. In primary school's elocution and recitation are main sources to master the sounds, rhythms, and intonation of the English language through simple reproduction. The manifestations of the language in games and pair work activities are encouraging source to learn to speak the language. This assists the learners to begin to manipulate the language by presenting them with a certain amount of choice, albeit within a controlled situation. This skill could be improved by understanding para-linguistic attributes such as voice quality, volume and tone, voice modulation, articulation, pronunciation etc. This could also be further enhanced with the help of debates and discussions.

**Definition:**

Speaking is an act of making vocal sounds. We can say that speaking means to converse or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language. To speak often implies conveying information. It may be from an informal remark to a scholarly presentation to a formal address. Speaking skills are the skills that give us the ability to communicate effectively. These skills allow the speaker, to convey his message in a passionate, thoughtful, and convincing manner.

**Essentials of Effective Speaking skills:** The Essentials of Effective Speaking are

1. The audience is not the enemy The reason why many people avoid public speaking is because they have a fear of it, which is partially feared of an unknown and possibly hostile audience. Just remember that the audience is not the enemy. Do not try to get rid of your fear; strap up it and consider it a constant companion which keeps you trying to do your best. The audience will forgive an occasional mistake; Just remember to locate some friendly faces out there, those people who seem to be nodding and in general getting enthusiastic about your message. If you do happen to make a mistake, locate those friendly faces! Just remember that because you see somewhat who seems not to be enthusiastic, it could be a combination of culture, personality, or occupation that does permit them to show it as openly as others.

2. Write your speech word for word Good speaking begins with good writing; good writing depends on good editing. For example, Gettysburg Address, delivered by Abraham Lincoln during American Civil War, this consists of 10 sentences that took a total of 2 minutes to deliver. There is an apocryphal story about how it was cobbled together by Lincoln on the back of an envelope on his way to give the speech: that is simply not true, because we have several drafts of his speech which prove otherwise. What is interesting in reading the drafts is not what was included in the speech; it was how much was taken out. Every word has a purpose.

3. Bring life to your words with colorful images and examples This is where style becomes apparent. Choose those words which evoke the audience's own imagination so that they start to experience what you are saying, rather than just hearing it.

4. Six words that can change the way you speak: Make a Point; Tell a Story The speaker should have a point in his/her speech; rather than explain that point to audience, He needs to have them discover it through experiencing it as part of the story he tells.

5. Six emotions that will connect with any audience: happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, disgust, and fear Choose words which not only create an image but evoke at least one of the emotions listed above. When people empathize with you, they are more willing to accept your message that you want to convey in your speech.

6. Do not underestimate the power of laughter When we laugh, we relax. When we relax, our minds are more receptive to learning.  A professional joke-teller is a comedian; you do not have to be a comedian to make people laugh. Just ask yourself what makes you laugh. Take a notebook with you or a digital recorder and if you see something that makes you laugh, write it down and make a "humor file." In fact, this technique works with the six emotions listed above. Then have this on hand so that you can insert these into a speech into a place where they will have the most impact.

7. Do not tell us, take us Rather than describing the incident like a reporter, take us as an eyewitness to the event by acting it out with movements, gestures, vocal inflections that put us right there in the middle of the action.

## 2.11   Barriers of Speaking skills:

It does not matter how effective you are in communicating with others, sometimes you may face communication barriers. Communication barriers are defined as the factors that break or interrupt a communication process.

They are roughly classified as two – a) Listening barriers and b) Speaking barriers

**Listening Barriers:**

1. Interrupting the speaker with improper body language and meaningless questions.

2. Less concentration on speaker's facial expressions and not keeping eye contact with the speaker

3. Provoking the speaker to conclude the topic as soon as possible.

4. Giving the impression that the speaker is wasting his/her time with his speech

5. More concentration on distracting material which is not a part of the ongoing discussion

6. Going ahead of the speaker and concluding his/her ideas

7. Less memory power – this makes you out of the subject being discussed

8. Asking too many questions to prove your attentiveness

**Speaking Barriers:**

1. Rough and unclear data or information about the topic

2. Inconsistent communication – Missing the flow and going too fast or too slow

3. Unclear pronunciation – abrupt sentences or words

4. Miscommunication or not understanding the listener

5. Using negative words – Meaning of some words may differ from region to region and culture to culture.

## 2.12    Effectiveness of speaking skills:

1. Ability to inform, persuade, and direct: Ability to inform, to persuade, and direct. Business managers, educators, military leaders, lawyers, and politicians, among others, seek to develop their speaking skills to such a level that they are transformed into master communicators. Speaking clearly and confidently can gain the attention of an audience, providing the golden opportunity for the speaker to make the message known.

2. Ability to stand out from the rest: When one thinks of speaking skills, one tends to think of it as a common skill. Think again. The ability to stand before others and speak effectively is not an ordinary ability. Many people are deathly afraid of public speaking; others have little ability to form thoughts into sentences and then deliver those words in a believable way.

3. Career enhancement: Speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional aspirations. Speaking skills can enhance one's personal life, thereby bringing about the well- rounded growth we should all seek.

## 2.13 Reading

Reading is a learning skill. It helps you improve all parts of the English language – vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and writing. It helps to develop language intuition in the corrected form. Then the brain imitates them, producing similar sentences to express the desired meaning. Using skimming or scanning technique to read quickly is highly effective. While reading underlining of key words is a must. Reading Skills help the students grasp the content and draw conclusions. The students should also make it a point to familiarize themselves with the jargons and new words by making reading a habit be it reading newspapers, articles, books, magazines etc.

**Definition**: Reading is a method of communication that enables a person to turn writing into meaning. It allows the reader to convert a written text as a meaningful language with independence, comprehension, and fluency, and to interact with the message.

**Techniques of Reading** Reading is a great habit that can change human life significantly. The ability to read is as important today as it ever was. It can entertain us; amuse us and enrich us with knowledge and experiences narrated. There exist some reading techniques, which if mastered at a growing stage can help us, be better and far more comprehensive readers. The four main types of reading techniques are the following:

1. Skimming 2. Scanning 3. Intensive 4. Extensive

1. Skimming – Reading for the gist of a text This reading technique is used for getting the gist of the whole text lead. We generally use this technique at the time of reading newspaper or magazine. Under this technique, we read quickly to get the main points, and skip over the detail. It is useful in getting a preview of a passage before reading it in detail or reviving understandings of a passage after reading it in detail.

   Gist is the general meaning or purpose of a text, either written or spoken. Reading a text for gist is known as skimming. Before answering detailed comprehension questions on a short story, learners read it quickly for gist, and then match the text to a picture that summarizes what happens in the story.

2. Scanning – Reading for specific information Scanning through the text is a reading strategy that is used for getting some specific points by looking at the whole text. For highlighting the important points of a book, the readers can skim through the summary or the preface or the beginning and ending chapters of that book. For example, this technique is used for looking up a name from the telephone guidebook.

3. Intensive Reading – You need to have your aims clear in mind when undertaking intensive reading. If you need to list the chronology of events in a

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long passage, you will need to read it intensively. This type of reading has indeed beneficial to language learners as it helps them understand vocabulary by deducing the meaning of words in context. It moreover, helps with retention of information for long periods of time and knowledge resulting from intensive reading persists in your long-term memory.

4. Extensive reading Extensive reading involves reading for pleasure. Because there is an element of enjoyment in extensive reading it is unlikely that students will undertake extensive reading of a text they do not like. It also requires a fluid decoding and assimilation of the text and content in front of you. If the text is difficult and you stop every few minutes to figure out what is being said or to look up new words in the dictionary, you are breaking your concentration and diverting your thoughts. The followings are some techniques of reading used in different situations:

1. Active Reading Style

2. Detailed Reading.

3. Speed Reading

4. Skimming small sections.

## 2.14   Writing

Writing provides a learner with physical evidence of his achievements and he can measure his improvement. It helps to consolidate their grasp of vocabulary and structure and complements the other language skills. It helps to understand the text and write compositions. It can foster the learner's ability to summarize and to use the language freely. To write flawless language one should excel in the Writing Skills with the help of various methods. Importance should be given to composition and creative writing. One should also focus on coherence and cohesiveness when it comes to writing a language.

With these four skills addressed equally while learning English, the learners can be assured of having good communication skills, a great necessity in today's competitive world.

**Definition** Writing is a medium of human communication that represents language and emotion with signs and symbols. It consists of letters or characters that serve as visible signs of ideas, words, or symbols.

## 2.15   Effectiveness of Writing

**Five Keys to Effective Written Communication**

Of course, you might have the opportunity to write other types of correspondence as fitness professional. So how do you make sure you clearly communicate

your purpose regardless of the document? No matter which type of writing you do, "get your general ideas on paper or the computer screen—this is your first draft," says Vogel. "Now go back and edit."

When editing, consider the following factors: Key 1: Use a Professional Tone. Your readers will form an opinion of you from the content. Create a professional, positive tone by using simple, direct language. Adopt a "you-attitude" versus an "I-attitude," to show that you're sincere in your focus on the reader rather than on yourself as the writer.

Key 2: Know Your Audience. The intended readers of your correspondence can vary. You must consider their backgrounds, technical expertise, and educational levels as well as their mindsets and possible reactions to your writing.

Key 3: Organize Your Information Clearly. Arrange your thoughts so that your correspondence can be read quickly and comprehended easily. Organize the information based on your purpose. For example, when writing instructions, organize your information in sequential, or step-by-step, order. For incident reports, write in chronological order, explaining how the events unfolded. When sharing news and information, use the "6Ws"—who, what, when, where, why and how— to guide you.

Key 4: Use the Right Format. Format refers to how your correspondence is laid out on paper or online. Usually, writers choose their formats based on the method of delivery—letter, memo, or e-mail. Each type has distinct format conventions (guidelines) for including and placing elements such as the date, addressee, subject line, salutation, message body, closing line, signature block and company letterhead or logo.

Key 5: Use Visual Elements Carefully. Visual elements—such as font size and type; underlined, italicized or bold text; and bulleted or numbered lists—help emphasize key points and make your correspondence more effective.

## 2.16   Characteristics of Effective Language

There are six main characteristics of effective language. Effective language is:

1. concrete and specific, not vague, and abstract

2. concise, not verbose

3. familiar, not obscure

4. precise and clear, not inaccurate, or ambiguous

5. constructive, not destructive

6. Appropriately formal

**Techniques for writing precisely** Writing precisely means to write in exact terms, without vagueness. Here are some techniques for writing precisely.

1. Use Active Voice

2. Avoid Vague Nouns

3. Use Words, Not Their Definitions

4. Avoid Noun Strings

5. Convert Nouns to Verbs

6. Reduce Verb Phrases to Simple Verbs

7. Replace Complex Words with Simple Ones

## 2.17   Public Speaking

The ability to speak before a group of people is a valuable asset as well as an important talent. Public speaking and speech delivery is not an all-comers affair. The skills and strategies needed to deliver a speech are needed to be acquired by everyone irrespective of the person's field of endeavor. It is often said that there is nothing more important to one's education than knowing how to express oneself. Public speaking is easy if the public speaker allows it to be.

Public speaking is all about sharing information, ideas or opinions on a particular issue of interest and importance to your audience. In other words, the major task of a public .speaker is to hold his audience's interest and attention on a given topic for a stipulated period of time.

The art of public speaking holds many practical benefits that go far beyond delivering a project presentation or holding a successful meeting.

**Developing your communication skills and learning to speak in public:**

1. Opens up new opportunities for career advancement

2. Positions you as an authority

3. Sets you apart from your competition

4. Attracts the right customers to your business

5. Presents technical or business information effectively

6. Produces a faster sales cycle

7. Allows you to effectively market your business or promote your products to larger audiences

8. Improves internal communication

9. Helps you to easily assume leadership and train others

10. Increases employees' productivity

11. Prepares you for spontaneous speaking challenges (e.g. delivering a speech at short notice)

12. Establishes greater credibility and helps your clients' loyalty

13. Motivates and persuades other people to reach and attain professional goals

14. Makes you a desirable guest on local, regional and national conferences, seminars and public speaking events

**Methods**

Public speeches can be broken down into five basic elements, usually expressed as: 1.Who is saying? 2.What to? 3.Whom? 4. Using what Medium? 5. With what Effects?"

## 2.18   Strategies and Tips of Public Speaking

1. Practice beforehand.

2. Make eye contact to create a connection with your audience.

3. Use the volume of your voice to instill passion.

4. Change the tone of your voice, so you don't sound monotonous.

5. Be prepared, use note cards

6. Use gestures to emphasize your point.

7. Take your time, don't rush.

8. Keep visuals simple.

9. A great story will paint a picture for the audience.

10. Be confident!

11. Remember: The audience doesn't know you're nervous.

# 3. MODULE IV

## Course Outcomes

**After successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**

| CO 4 | **Demonstrate** the significance of verbal and non-verbal communication in academic and non-academic platforms... | Understand |
|---|---|---|

## 3.1 Interpersonal Communication-Verbal and Nonverbal Etiquette:

Etiquette is a term that refers to the conventions and norms of social behaviour. They are accepted codes of conduct with respect to interpersonal communication. Some example forms of etiquette with respect to communicating with others might include: Looking into someone's eyes as you talk with them. Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information between people. Effective communication is based on the verbal and nonverbal communication cues from the sender of the information and the people who are receiving the message. Verbal communication is the act of conveying information through the spoken word.

Spoken or Verbal Communication, which includes face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media. Non-Verbal Communication, covering body language, gestures, how we dress or act, where we stand, and even our scent. There are many subtle ways that we communicate (perhaps even unintentionally) with others.

Put simply, interpersonal communication is the exchange of information among people. Information can include thoughts, ideas, feelings, and more. This communication occurs both verbally — with words — and non-verbally, encompassing facial expressions, gestures, body language, and tone of voice. In the workplace, interpersonal communication occurs in a variety of forms: in team meetings, on client calls, in memos and emails, during performance reviews, while giving employee feedback, and even casually over lunch or during water-cooler chats.

Our individual interpersonal communication skills have been in development since we began communicating as children, and these skills vary from person to person. However, we can take steps to improve our ability to communicate, and we'll explore various techniques to do this later in the article.

## 3.2   Types of interpersonal communication

There are four types of interpersonal communication — oral, verbal, nonverbal, and listening — and mastering each of these is key to success in the modern workplace.

1. Oral communication

   This refers to any form of spoken communication, such as public speaking, phone calls, podcasting, or speaking up during a staff meeting.

   It involves your word choice, tone and pitch of your voice, talking speed, and even your use — or lack thereof — of filler words like "uh, "um," and "like."

   Research shows our ability to communicate orally is even more important to helping us land a job than we may realize.

   A 2015 study published in the Association for Psychological Science found that candidates were rated as more competent and intelligent — and were ranked as more hireable — when evaluators heard the candidates make their pitch instead of simply reading their written statements.

2. Verbal communication

   This encompasses all types of written communication, including emails, reports, Slack messages, texts, presentation slides, and more.

   But it isn't just words alone — it also entails the various methods that we use to enhance verbal communication and make our meaning clear, such as employing GIFs and emojis.

   With today's increasingly remote workforce, it's more important than ever for employees to possess strong verbal communication skills.

   The ability to write clearly can even help us land a job more easily and get promoted faster. In fact, a Grammarly study that analyzed 100 LinkedIn profiles found that professionals with fewer grammatical errors achieved higher positions and were more likely to be promoted.

3. Nonverbal communication

   This is any type of communication that doesn't involve words. It encompasses everything from body language and hand gestures to eye contact and even what you're wearing and what's visible in the background of your Zoom call.

   To get a sense of just how important nonverbal communication is, consider how easily you can change the meaning of a message by using air quotes or even simply saying "Have a nice day!" in a friendly way versus with a sarcastic tone.

Communicating with a visual component, such as in a video call, is a great way to ensure that nonverbal communication cues aren't lost during transmission.

4. Listening

   Listening is a key part of communication that doesn't involve just hearing what someone says, but also actively understanding what they say.

   You'll often hear people tout the importance of "active listening" or showing a speaker that they have your attention and you're interested in what they have to say.

   Aspects of active listening involve making eye contact, nodding your head, taking notes, and saying things like "mm-hmm" to indicate understanding.

## 3.3   Body language:

Body language is the use of physical behaviour, expressions, and mannerisms to communicate nonverbally, often done instinctively rather than consciously. All of your nonverbal behaviours—the gestures you make, your posture, your tone of voice, how much eye contact you make—send strong messages. Communication is made up of so much more than words. Nonverbal cues such as tone of voice, gestures and posture all play their part. A simple example of body language is a relaxed facial expression that breaks out into a genuine smile – with mouth upturned and eyes wrinkled. All people express their body language in one of four ways: a light and bouncy movement, a soft and fluid movement, a dynamic and determined movement, or a precise and bold movement. Each of those movements have different meanings and coincide with one of the 4 Energy Types. Body language provides an amazing amount of information on what other people are thinking if you know what to look for. And who hasn't wanted to read people's minds at some point? You already pick up on more body language cues than you're consciously aware of. UCLA research has shown that only 7% of communication is based on the actual words we say. As for the rest, 38% comes from tone of voice and the remaining 55% comes from body language. Learning how to become aware of and to interpret that 55% can give you a leg up with other people. When you're working hard and doing all you can to achieve your goals, anything that can give you an edge is powerful and will streamline your path to success. Talent Smart has tested more than a million people and found that the upper echelons of top performance are filled with people who are high in emotional intelligence (90% of top performers, to be exact). These people know the power that unspoken signals have in communication, and they monitor body language accordingly. Next time you're in a meeting (or even on a date or playing with your kids), watch for these cues:

1. Crossed arms and legs signal resistance to your ideas. Crossed arms and legs are physical barriers that suggest the other person is not open to what you're

saying. Even if they're smiling and engaged in a pleasant conversation, their body language tells the story. Gerard I. Nierenberg and Henry H. Calero videotaped more than 2,000 negotiations for a book they wrote on reading body language, and not a single one ended in an agreement when one of the parties had their legs crossed while negotiating. Psychologically, crossed legs or arms signal that a person is mentally, emotionally, and physically blocked off from what's in front of them. It's not intentional, which is why it's so revealing.

2. Real smiles crinkle the eyes. When it comes to smiling, the mouth can lie but the eyes can't. Genuine smiles reach the eyes, crinkling the skin to create crow's feet around them. People often smile to hide what they're really thinking and feeling, so the next time you want to know if someone's smile is genuine, look for crinkles at the corners of their eyes. If they aren't there, that smile is hiding something.

3. Copying your body language is a good thing. Have you ever been in a meeting with someone and noticed that every time you cross or uncross your legs, they do the same? Or perhaps they lean their head the same way as yours when you're talking? That's actually a good sign. Mirroring body language is something we do unconsciously when we feel a bond with the other person. It's a sign that the conversation is going well and that the other party is receptive to your message. This knowledge can be especially useful when you're negotiating, because it shows you what the other person is really thinking about the deal.

4. Posture tells the story. Have you ever seen a person walk into a room, and immediately, you have known that they were the one in charge? That effect is largely about body language, and often includes an erect posture, gestures made with the palms facing down, and open and expansive gestures in general. The brain is hardwired to equate power with the amount of space people take up. Standing up straight with your shoulders back is a power position; it appears to maximize the amount of space you fill. Slouching, on the other hand, is the result of collapsing your form; it appears to take up less space and projects less power. Maintaining good posture commands respect and promotes engagement, whether you're a leader or not.

5. Eyes that lie. Most of us probably grew up hearing, "Look me in the eye when you talk to me!" Our parents were operating under the assumption that it's tough to hold someone's gaze when you're lying to them, and they were right to an extent. But that's such common knowledge that people will often deliberately hold eye contact in an attempt to cover up the fact that they're lying. The problem is that most of them overcompensate and hold eye contact to the point that it feels uncomfortable. On average, Americans hold eye contact for seven to ten seconds, longer when we're listening than

when we're talking. If you're talking with someone whose stare is making you squirm–especially if they're very still and unblinking–something is up and they might be lying you.

6. Raised eyebrows signal discomfort. There are three main emotions that make your eyebrows go up: surprise, worry, and fear. Try raising your eyebrows when you're having a relaxed casual conversation with a friend. It's hard to do, isn't it? If somebody who is talking to you raises their eyebrows and the topic isn't one that would logically cause surprise, worry, or fear, there is something else going on.

7. Exaggerated nodding signals anxiety about approval. When you're telling someone something and they nod excessively, this means that they are worried about what you think of them or that you doubt their ability to follow your instructions.

8. A clenched jaw signals stress. A clenched jaw, a tightened neck, or a furrowed brow are all signs of stress. Regardless of what the person is saying, these are signs of considerable discomfort. The conversation might be delving into something they're anxious about, or their mind might be elsewhere and they're focusing on the thing that's stressing them out. The key is to watch for that mismatch between what the person says and what their tense body language is telling you.

**Bringing It All Together** The bottom line is that even if you can't read a person's exact thoughts, you can learn a lot from their body language, and that's especially true when words and body language don't match.

**Grapevine:** The meaning of grapevine communication is communication held without following a recommended structure in an organization is informal. In other words, to hear something through the grapevine or on the grapevine is to learn about something via an informal source or hearsay, from another person; it may refer to an overheard conversation or anonymous sources of information. The four types of grapevine communication are single strand chain, gossip chain, probability chain and cluster chain. The informal transmission of information, gossip, or rumour from person to person. I heard through the grapevine that she has a new job. When you hear from a friend-of-a-friend that your neighbour might be getting divorced, this is an example of a situation where you hear the news through the grapevine. The grapevine creates a sense of unity among the employees who share and discuss their views with each other. Thus, grapevine helps in developing group cohesiveness. The grapevine serves as an emotional supportive value. The grapevine is a supplement in those cases where formal communication does not work. Grapevine is an informal channel of business communication. It is called so because it stretches throughout the organization in all directions irrespective of the authority levels. Man as we know is a social animal. Despite existence of formal channels in an organization, the informal channels tend to develop when

he interacts with other people in organization. It exists more at lower levels of organization. Grapevine generally develops due to various reasons. One of them is that when an organization is facing recession, the employees sense uncertainty. Also, at times employees do not have self- confidence due to which they form unions. Sometimes the managers show preferential treatment and favour some employees giving a segregated feeling to other employees. Thus, when employees sense a need to exchange their views, they go for grapevine network as they cannot use the formal channel of communication in that case. Generally during breaks in cafeteria, the subordinates talk about their superior's attitude and behaviour and exchange views with their peers. They discuss rumours about promotion and transfer of other employees. Thus, grapevine spreads like fire and it is not easy to trace the cause of such communication at times. Postures: In humans, one of the means of communication is the posture of the body, in addition to facial expressions, personal distances, gestures and body movements. Posture conveys information about: Interpersonal relations. Personality traits such as confidence, submissiveness, and openness. Improving your posture will give the impression that a person is interested and focused. The importance of body language is not only limited to formal communication. Changing any negative nonverbal cues will increase your self-confidence and self-esteem.

Posture is how you hold your body. There are two types: Dynamic posture is how you hold yourself when you are moving, like when you are walking, running, or bending over to pick up something. Static posture is how you hold yourself when you are not moving, like when you are sitting, standing, or sleeping. Posture & Nonverbal Communication:

What you say is more than the words that come out of your mouth. Posture and how you move your body are important elements of nonverbal communication, which can affect how you are perceived by others. Being aware of your posture can help you make the right impression in many areas of your life.

1. Open Posture:

   Open posture portrays friendliness and positivity. In an open position, your feet are spread wide and the palms of your hands are facing outward. The University of Northern Iowa College of Business Administration notes that people with open postures are perceived as being more persuasive than those with other postures. To achieve an open posture, sit or stand up straight with your head raised, and keep your chest and abdomen exposed, advises the article "Body Language." Combine this pose with a relaxed facial expression and good eye contact to come across as approachable and composed. During conversation, keep your body facing toward the other person.

2. Closed Posture:

   Crossing your arms across your chest, crossing your legs away from someone, sitting in a hunched forward position, showing the backs of your hands and clenching your fists are all signs of closed posture. The University of

Northern Iowa College of Business Administration notes that a closed posture may give the impression of boredom, hostility or detachment.

3. Confident Posture:

If you want to come across as confident, even if you are feeling anxious, stressed or nervous, make subtle changes to your posture. Pull yourself up to your full height, hold your head high and keep your gaze at eye level, advises body language expert Judi James tells Fran Creffield in "5 Body Language Signals and What They Mean." Pull your shoulders back and keep your arms and legs relaxed by your sides.

4. Postural Echoing:

Judi James highlights the important of postural echoing, or "mirroring," when trying to attract someone in the "The Guardian." This is a subtle but highly effective flirting technique. Observe and imitate the other person's style and pace of movement. For example, if the other person leans against the wall, do the same. If you want to know if you are on the same

5. Gestures: A gesture is a form of non-verbal communication or non-vocal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages, either in place of, or in conjunction with, speech. Gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body. When speakers talk, they gesture. Gesture can play a role in communication and thought at many timespans. We explore, in turn, gesture's contribution to how language is produced and understood in the moment; its contribution to how we learn language and other cognitive skills; and its contribution to how language is created over generations, over childhood, and on-the- spot. We find that the gestures speakers produce when they talk are integral to communication and can be harnessed in a number of ways. (1) Gesture reflects speakers' thoughts, often their unspoken thoughts, and thus can serve as a window onto cognition. Encouraging speakers to gesture can thus provide another route for teachers, clinicians, interviewers, etc., to better understand their communication partners. (2) Gesture can change speakers' thoughts. Encouraging gesture thus has the potential to change how students, patients, witnesses, etc., think about a problem and, as a result, alter the course of learning, therapy, or an interchange. (3) Gesture provides building blocks that can be used to construct a language. By watching how children and adults who do not already have a language put those blocks together, we can observe the process of language creation first hand. Our hands are with us at all times and thus provide researchers and learners with an ever-present tool for understanding how we talk and think.

6. Facial Expressions: A facial expression is one or more motions or positions of the muscles beneath the skin of the face. Facial expressions are a form of nonverbal communication. They are a primary means of conveying social

information between humans, but they also occur in most other mammals and some other animal species. Body language involves a host of nonverbal cues or signs such as body movements, facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures in communication.   Reading these signs is an important part of communication. The importance of body language is that it assists us in understanding and decoding what the person is saying. Examples of gestures include frequent and even wild hand gestures, finger pointing, arms waving in the air, raking fingers through their hair, invasion of personal space in order to send a message of hostility.

The 7 universal facial expressions are happiness are sadness, fear, disgust, anger, contempt and surprise. A smile to show happiness or agreement. A frown to let someone know you are unhappy. A lowering of your brows to show someone you are angry or frustrated. A raise of the eyebrows to ask a question or emphasize a word.

1. Proximity in Communication: Proximity is all about a person's positioning and their space in relation to others. Various factors impact how closely we sit or stand next to someone. The distance is normally determined by social and cultural norms and the unique patterns of those interacting. Proximity is communicated, for instance, through the use of space, distance, touching, and body position. The use of space, the physical distance between people, and the options for touch are closely related and culture specific. Personal distance is common in communication between friends. Proximity allows people the opportunity to get to know one other and discover their similarities—all of which can result in a friendship or intimate relationship. Proximity is not just about geographic distance, but rather functional distance, or the frequency with which we cross paths with others.

2. Conversation skills: Conversation skills are about being able to talk and listen well. This involves: starting conversations – for example, with a greeting like 'Hello' or a question. knowing how to get attention in the right way – for example, by saying 'Excuse me' using eye contact. Conversations are key to language development, the exchange of thoughts and ideas and listening to each other. People learn by hearing each other's thoughts while observing facial and body expressions that show emotions.

## 3.4   5 Communication skills you can't ignore

1. Listening: Listening is one of the most important aspects of communication. ...

2. Straight talking: Conversation is the basis of communication, and one must not neglect its importance.

3. Non-verbal communication.

4. Stress management.

5. Emotion control.

**The Rules of Conversation**

1. Conversation is a Two-Way Street The first and most important rule of conversation is that it is not all about you, but it's not all about the other person either. A monologue, in either direction, is not conversation. Try to achieve a balance between talking and listening in any conversation. This is where social media makes life difficult. We're used to broadcasting our views, and then responding if others comment. That can feel like the start of a conversation but, when you're face to face, it's not polite to start by broadcasting your views.

   Instead, try asking a question to establish common ground. For example: "What do you do?", or even "Isn't the weather beautiful?" This signals your intention to share the conversation. Top Tip! Everyone likes to be listened to, and to be asked for their views. If the conversation flags, or you feel that you are talking more than you should, useful questions include: "What do you think about this?" If you are not getting much response, try something like: "But perhaps you don't follow [current subject]. What are you interested in?"

2. Be Friendly and Polite Smiling, and being nice, will take you a long way in conversational terms. Everyone would rather chat to someone friendly and pleasant. But what are the practical elements of this? Build rapport: You can build rapport by establishing some common ground and by simply smiling and using positive and reinforcing body language.

**Non-Verbal Communication:**

1. Be nice: Don't say unpleasant things about anyone. After all, the person you're talking about could be your new acquaintance's best friend. And even if they're not, your new acquaintance may not relish discussion about someone behind their back (and neither should you). See our page on Friendliness for some ideas.

2. Try to avoid contentious topics on first acquaintance: It's fine to talk politics once you know someone a bit better. When you first meet someone, though, it's better to stick to neutral ground, which is why so many people talk about the weather. This is where 'small talk' comes in.

   **The Importance of 'Small Talk'**

   'Small talk' is, broadly, inconsequential 'chit-chat' about minor or uncontentious issues such as the weather, recent news items or jobs. Some people

purport to despise small talk as being unimportant, or trivial, but it serves a useful function of allowing you to build rapport and establish common ground without having to invest too much emotion in the conversation. This may be particularly important for introverts. However dull you find some-one, it is best not to say so! Just bring the conversation to a polite close, perhaps by saying something like "I must just go and catch so-and-so before they go. It's been really nice to chat to you", or "Please excuse me, I promised to help with x and I see they need me now".

3. Respond to What They are Saying: To respond genuinely to what someone has just said means that you have to listen. You can't just switch off, and think about what you're going to say next. However, if we're honest, most of us would admit that we often do just that. It's important to focus on the other person, and what they're saying. You also need to take into account their body language. If you find it difficult to think of something to say in response, try using some 'filler' sentences, such as: "That's just so interesting, you're really making me think hard!" or "Goodness, that's challenging, I need to think about this. I've never thought about it that way." Not only does that give you a bit of time to think about the subject under discussion, but it's a compliment to the person you're speaking with, which is always good.

4. Use Signalling to Help the Other Person: When a conversation is flowing well, it moves naturally from one person to the other. However, if one or both are finding it more of a struggle to 'chat', you may find it helpful to use 'signals' to show the other person that it is their turn to talk. The most common type of signal is questions. These may be either open or closed. Closed questions invite a yes/no answer. In conversation, they might include "Don't you agree?", and "Are you enjoying the party?" They are not really inviting the other person to do more than nod and agree, rather than to share the conversation. Open questions invite more information. They open up the conversation to the other person, and invite them to participate. For this reason, in conversation, they are often called 'invitations'. Open questions often start 'How. . . ?' or 'Why ?'

5. Create Emotional Connections: Of course, it is perfectly possible to con-duct a conversation entirely at the level of small talk, with nothing important being said. But conversation is also a way to explore whether you wish to know someone better and build a relationship with them. It can therefore be useful to understand how to use conversation to create and build emotional connections. The key is sharing appropriate information. That means being prepared to be open about what interests you, what makes you into you as a person, and inspiring the other person to share too.

**Top Tip!**

This 'sharing' doesn't have to be big stuff. It can be as simple as: "It's so lovely having this beautiful sunshine. It meant I could go canoeing this weekend and we had such a beautiful paddle." That leaves the field open for the other person to say: "Oh, do you canoe? I used to paddle too. Where did you go?" "Yes, it's lovely weather. I went for a walk myself. It's great to be outside, isn't it?" or even "I find the heat difficult myself, but the children loved having the paddling pool out." All different responses, but all sharing an emotional connection with the other person and keeping the conversation flowing.

6. Critical Thinking:

   Critical thinking is the analysis of available facts, evidence, observations, and arguments to form a judgment. The subject is complex; several different definitions exist, which generally include the rational, sceptical, and unbiased analysis or evaluation of factual evidence. Critical thinking is a core academic skill that teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students to question or reflect on their own knowledge and information presented to them. This skill is essential for students working on assignments and performing research. It's also an invaluable skill in many workplace scenarios. Critical thinking is the ability to make informed decisions by evaluating several different sources of information objectively. As such, critical thinkers possess many other essential skills, including analysis, creativity, problem-solving and empathy.

7. Teamwork: Teamwork is the collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or to complete a task in the most effective and efficient way. This concept is seen within the greater framework of a team,  which is a group of interdependent individuals who work together towards a common goal. Teamwork is generally understood as the willingness of a group of people to work together to achieve a common aim. For example, we often use the phrase: "he or she is a good team player". This means someone has the interests of the team at heart, working for the good of the team. It's widely accepted that teamwork is a Good Thing. You'll hear few sensible people saying, "Teamwork? Pah! What a waste of time!" But what is it about teamwork that makes promoting it a key priority for HR, and for organisations generally? Knowing the value of teamwork can help HR make a strong case to management on various policy issues, from learning and development to workplace culture. So here are the key reasons teamwork is so important in the workplace.

1. Teamwork is efficient work

   A key pillar of the industrial revolution, a foundation of modern civilisation, was the division of labour. And that's just another way to say teamwork. Employee teamwork enables your workforce to: Split difficult tasks into simpler

ones, then work together to complete them faster Develop specialised skills, so that the best person for each task can do it better and faster In a nutshell, teams make work more efficient. That can lead to better productivity, reduced costs, greater profitability, and many other benefits.

2. Teams self-monitor When one person does a task alone, they have total autonomy — but if that person starts to work slowly or ineffectively, who will set them straight? Nobody, that's who. In teamwork, many people have responsibility for the same goal. Most significantly, teammates observe and depend on the quality of each other's work. When one team member's performance dips, the others have the knowledge and motivation to help them improve. Without management intervention, effective teams can often regulate their own performance.

3. Teams innovate faster For any task or problem, there are usually countless solutions. When one employee tackles a project, they might be able to think of a few different ideas given time. But when a team tackles a problem, the project benefits from multiple perspectives, skillsets, and experiences all at once. A team approach can therefore lead to faster, deeper innovation.

4. Teammates learn from each other Imagine you have a workforce of 10 designers all working in separate rooms. Each designer works to their own strengths and suffers from their own weaknesses, with nobody to teach or learn from. Now put them all in the same room, on the same project. Working together, they'll soon learn each other's strengths and correct each other's mistakes. And everyone's performance will improve.

5. Teamwork can create healthy competition But what happens to that same team of 10 designers a year down the line, when they've learnt all they can from each other? They'll soon start to compete with one another, to prove their ability and chase promotion or other incentives within your organisation. Provided the right challenge and rewards are in place to promote competition, team performance can keep improving.

6. Teamwork promotes strong working relationships

   Finally, when employees work together and succeed as a team, they form bonds that can turn into trust and friendship. It's human nature. And it's great for your organisation, since employees who like and trust each other are more likely to: Communicate well with each other Support and motivate each other Work cooperatively It's little wonder successful organisations value teamwork so highly.

/sectionGroup Discussion:

Group discussion or GD is a type of discussion that involves people sharing ideas or activities. People in the group discussion are connected with one basic

Group discussion is an important activity in academic, business and administrative spheres. It is a. systematic and purposeful interactive oral process. Here the exchange of ideas, thoughts and feelings. take place through oral communication. Group Discussion (GD) normally comprises 10 to 15 participants at a time. The Group Discussion process commences by the declaration of the topic to the group, which is followed by giving preparation time of 3 to 5 minutes to everyone. Sometimes, more than 5 minutes' preparation time may be given only in the case that the topic is based on a case-study and requires longer statements. As the preparation time comes to an end, the selection panel indicates the group to start off the discussion, and from then on plays the role of a silent observer, which means that they will not moderate or mediate the discussion. The group members have the liberty to discuss the topic as they view appropriate without any kind of suggestion from the panel. The panel does not specify the number of speakers and anybody can start or end the discussion. Even the time limit can be flouted. The average duration of most Group Discussions is about 15 minutes (minus the preparation time). In some special cases (such as IIFT), the Group Discussion may continue for more than 30 to 45 minutes. Please Note: The longer the Group Discussion (GD) gets on, the extra seriously the panel looks at the quality of the content of the candidate. The panel typically is of 3 or 4 panellists, who will monitor numerous facets of the participants' content and delivery. Note that the panellists have the liberty to end the Group Discussion if they want to or can extend it for as much as they feel like. It is not the participant's job to keep time or worry about the Group Discussion ending in 15 minutes. The Group Discussion can end in either of the two ways: First, the panel may abruptly end the Group Discussion Second, they may ask a participant (or more than one participant) to summarise the Group Discussion.

If a participant is asked to summarise the Group Discussion, they need to be aware of what summary means. Summary cannot be outside the Group Discussion and they will have to stick to the points discussed. It is also common that the quietest participant is given a chance to summarize the Group Discussion so that he/she may present their views as well. The summarization, however, must be impartial.

**WHY IS GD CONDUCTED?**

Group Discussion is important and every MBA pursuing student knows the value of it. Candidates in the final year are well informed about it. Group discussion plays a massive role in the interviewing process. To understand the place of Group Discussion, you need to understand the point of view of an interviewer or a panellist. How it is important for a candidate and how to go about preparing for it. Don't forget to read about some of the most asked MBA interview questions and why they are famous for all interviewers. A Group Discussion round is conducted to test the ability of a candidate's interactive skills. A group discussion is a situation where you interact with people you have ideally never interacted before; it is more like swimming in a soup. You will be judged on how you get along with them and how well you are able to put your point across without being demeaning or mean or rude. It also checks whether you can be a part of a team or not or

are you a people's person? It is best if you practice for Group Discussion while preparing for the entrance exam as it gives you ample time to be aware of yourself with current affairs and different prominent topics. Also work on your soft skills, eye contact and body language.

## 3.5   Impact of Stress:

Stress is any change in the environment that requires your body to react and adjust in response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Stress is a normal part of life. Many events that happen to you and around you and many things that you do yourself put stress on your body. You can experience good or bad forms of stress from your environment, your body, and your thoughts. react to stress. Substances tend to keep the body in a stressed state and cause more problems. Consider the following: Forty-three percent of all adults suffer adverse health effects from stress. Seventy-five percent to 90% of all doctor's office visits are for stress-related ailments and complaints. Stress can play a part in problems such as headaches, high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, skin conditions, asthma, arthritis, depression, and anxiety. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) declared stress a hazard of the workplace. Stress costs American industry more than 300 billion dollars annually. The lifetime prevalence of an emotional disorder is more than 50%, often due to chronic, untreated stress reactions. Measurement and Management of Stress: The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Stress responses can be measured with self-report measures, behavioural coding, or via physiological measurements. These responses include emotions, cognitions, behaviours, and physiological responses instigated by the stressful stimuli. Today, most health researchers agree that stress is critical to human health and aging. Population-based studies that have measured perception of, or exposure to, stressors have documented its effects on health. Stress management is a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's level of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of and for the motive of improving everyday functioning.

# 4. MODULE V

## Course Outcomes

**After successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**

| CO 6 | **Develop** various written communication strategies of cover letter writing, resume writing, E-mail writing and report writing. | Apply |
|------|------|-------|

## 4.1 Interpersonal Skills: What are the features of effective Writing?

The five Features of Effective Writing are focus, organization, support and elaboration, grammatical conventions, and style.

1. Thesis Focus Focus is the topic/subject/thesis established by the writer in response to the writing task. The writer must clearly establish a focus as he/she fulfills the assignment of the prompt. If the writer retreats from the subject matter presented in the prompt or addresses it too broadly, the focus is weakened. Writers may effectively use an inductive organizational plan which does not actually identify the subject matter at the beginning and may not literally identify the subject matter at all. The presence, therefore, of a focus must be determined in light of the method of development chosen by the writer. If the reader is confused about the subject matter, the writer has not effectively established a focus. If the reader is engaged and not confused, the writer probably has been effective in establishing a focus.

2. Organization Organization is the progression, relatedness, and completeness of ideas. The writer establishes for the reader a well-organized composition, which exhibits a constancy of purpose through the development of elements forming an effective beginning, middle, and end. The response demonstrates a clear progression of related ideas and/or events and is unified and complete.

3. Support and Elaboration Support and Elaboration form the extension and development of the topic/subject/thesis. The writer provides sufficient elaboration to present the ideas and/or events clearly. Two important concepts in determining whether details are supportive are the concepts of relatedness and sufficiency. To be supportive of the subject matter, details must be

related to the focus of the response. Relatedness has to do with the directness of the relationship that the writer establishes between the information and the subject matter. Supporting details should be relevant and clear. The writer must present his/her ideas with enough power and clarity to cause the support to be sufficient. Effective use of concrete, specific details strengthen the power of the response. Insufficiency is often characterized by undeveloped details, redundancy, and the repetitious paraphrasing of the same point. Sufficiency has less to do with amount than with the weight or power of the information that is provided.

4. Grammatical Conventions

   Grammatical conventions involve correctness in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. The writer has control of grammatical conventions that are appropriate to the writing task. Errors, if present, do not impede the reader's understanding of the ideas conveyed.

5. Style Style is the control of language that is appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context of the writing task. The writer's style is evident through word choice and sentence fluency. Skillful use of precise, purposeful vocabulary enhances the effectiveness of the composition through the use of appropriate words, phrases and descriptions that engage the audience. Sentence fluency involves using a variety of sentence styles to establish effective relationships between and among ideas, causes, and/or statements appropriate to the task.

## 4.2   Organizing Principles of Paragraphs in Documents

We know that a paragraph is a collection of sentences and it has one main idea. Remember! It is always better to start a paragraph with a Topic Sentence as it conveys what the writer is going to reflect in his paragraph. We also call it a Central Reference and the sentences revolve around it. Thereafter, add some supporting sentences. It means adding more information about the topic. Then, end up with a concluding sentence. This will be your compact paragraph. The paragraph may be of the following types such as Descriptive/ Narrative/ Expository and Persuasive (Convincing). The word limit in a paragraph should be 150 words with 3-8 sentences. Sometimes, we go up to 100-200 words with 5-6 sentences. The organizing principles should be: A Topic Sentence-Supporting Sentences-Concluding Sentences clubbed with unity, coherence and single idea. It is also important to understand the difference between a Thesis Statement and a Topic Statement.

So, The Thesis Statement tells us what the writing is about. This is the main idea of writing in one sentence at the beginning. There is only one thesis statement. On the other hand, The Topic Statement tells what the para is about. There is only one Topic Sentence for each body of the paragraph. It clears why The Thesis Statement is true.

## 4.3   How to write a good introduction

1. Keep your first sentence short.

2. Don't repeat the title.

3. Keep the introduction brief.

4. Use the word "you" at least once.

5. Dedicate 1-2 sentences to articulating what the article covers.

6. Dedicate 1-2 sentences to explaining why the article is important.

7. Refer to a concern or problem your readers might have.

8. But ... be careful telling stories.

9. Use a stat or fact to convey importance.

1. Keep your first sentence short

I'm a big fan of short sentences. I love them because people can understand them easily. There's an insane amount of value in short sentences that are readable, digestible, and punchy. But often, writers get so caught up in the stress of their introduction that they come out with long, garbled sentences. The problem with long, garbled sentences is that it makes readers work hard. Readers don't want to work hard to understand your article – especially at the beginning. Lead off your introduction with a bite-sized sentence or two.

[] Say something unusual

You've probably heard advice like "create a hook" and "grab the reader's attention." But what kind of stuff actually grabs someone's attention? I can think of a lot of things, actually, but they probably wouldn't be appropriate for an introduction.

What these oft-repeated phrases boil down to is this: say something unusual. Something unexpected, even. If your very first sentence is odd enough to make people want to read the next one, then you've done a good job. If you start off with something boring or expected, you might lose potential readers. ghj

2. Don't repeat the title

Assume that the reader already read the title. You don't need to write it over again. Instead, take advantage of your chance to reinforce that title and to set the stage for the remainder of the article. 3. Keep the introduction brief

There is no definitive answer for how long an introduction should be. But, like the Slate study told us, readers have short attention spans. They're impatient to get to the meat of the article. Your readers are looking for information, so don't bury it deep in your article. Cut to the chase. 4. Use the word "you" at least once

The word "you" is a powerful word. It tells the reader that you, the author, are writing the article with them in mind. You empathize with them, you care

about them, and you want your piece to resonate with them. It's a simple trick that establishes a crucial connection with your reader.

5. Dedicate 1-2 sentences to articulating what the article covers

Your English teacher would call this the "thesis." This is where you tell the reader what the article is about. What will you be discussing, in order? What will the reader learn? Lay it out to help set the reader's expectations and help her decide whether she wants to read the article in full, scroll to different parts, or not read it at all. Don't be afraid of writing, literally, "This article is about X" or "In this article, I'll talk about Y." Here are some variations on this theme to get you started: [] You're about to find out why sea turtles always lay their eggs on the beach." [] "And, if you've ever wondered why sea turtles lay their eggs on the beach, here's everything you need to know." [] "This article explains the 17 reasons why these amazing creatures lay their eggs on beaches." [] "Fascinating, funny, and shocking, these are the reasons why sea creatures lay their eggs on the beach."

It may be obvious to you why the content of your article is important to your readers, but it may not be obvious to them. Let them know loud and clear why it's important for them to know the information you cover in your article. You might compel readers who would otherwise have bounced to keep on reading.

If you don't write introductions well, then you're denying yourself potential promoters, subscribers, leads, and even paying customers. 6. Refer to a concern or problem your readers might have.

If you can pull a pain point into the introduction, even better. Everyone in every field has their set of problems. You should have some listed already from when you created your buyer personas. Communicate your awareness of those problems in your introduction and you're more likely to gain a sympathetic reader. 7. But ... be careful telling stories.

A lot of people will tell you that you need to write a story in the introduction. Stories can work, as in the example above, but there are good and bad ways to tell stories in your intro.

Do use storytelling to spark the reader's curiosity and empathize with her. But don't get carried away and write a long-winded story that loses readers along the way. Remember the tip about keeping introductions short? That still applies when you're telling a story.

8. Use a stat or a fact to convey importance

When journalists begin a news story, they often give readers an eye catching stat or fact about what's going on. As a blogger or any other type of writer, a really interesting stat or fact will draw your reader in and show them why your topic is really important. For example, say you're a plumber writing a blog post on pipe replacement. You might pull in more readers if you start a post by explaining how frequently old pipes burst in the winter. If readers see that this is a common annoyance that others face, they might keep reading to learn how they can avoid it.

**Introduction Takeaways**

The next time you write an article introduction, think about what kind of introduction would make you want to read the article.

Would a long, wordy first sentence make you want to read more? No. You might find yourself thinking, Yikes, is this what the rest of the article's going to be like? and bounce from the page. What about a story or question that doesn't really apply to you? No, probably not. To compel you to read past the introduction of an article, you want to read something unique, fresh, and engaging. You want to hear about yourself and your problems. You want to be put in a position where the remainder of the article is a must-read experience that will help you solve those problems and change your life.

Introductions are hard, and writing effective ones take time and practice. Sometimes, you might find yourself having to re-write them several times before you're satisfied. Remember, it's all worth it if it means keeping the attention of a few more of your readers.

## 4.4    What is Precision Writing?

Precision writing is a style of written communication whose primary objective is to convey information. This style of writing is an appropriate mode of writing for technical communication, but can also be used in nontechnical situations.

Precision writing is distinct from fiction writing, where the main objective is story telling. In addition, precision writing is distinct from persuasive writing, which is appropriate for political, legal, and commercial objectives.

Precision writing is appropriate for documents that convey technical information, such as reports and articles. Instructions are also encompassed by precision writing, including directions (how to get to some place) and manuals (how to build, repair, or operate something).

In a nutshell, the key characteristics of precision writing are 1) clarity and 2) conciseness. To achieve clarity, fuzziness and ambiguity must be avoided. Conciseness refers to the minimal number of words needed to convey information without sacrificing clarity while providing fault tolerance as explained below.

All writing must take place with the audience in mind. Every audience requires that a framework be established so that your readers understand what you are talking about. You need to establish some background, assumptions, and terminology to set the stage for conveying information. Signal-to-noise ratio. Every communication channel involves a signal and noise. The goodness of the channel is measured by the signal-to-noise ratio. Your objective in writing precisely is to optimize the signal-to-noise ratio by minimizing ambiguity and fuzziness. These are some of the points one must keep in mind.

1. Redundancy: Redundancy involves excess information that is included to decrease the possibility of miscommunication. Example: "Go 2.3 miles and turn left at the red house."

2. Fault tolerance and diagnostics: Unlike a personal conversation, you cannot receive immediate feedback from the reader on what you have written. The

next best thing is to include diagnostics in your writing. Example: "Go three blocks and turn left. You will see a white barn on the right. If you do not, then go back to step 3."

3. Terminology: Choose good terminology and use it consistently. Choosing terminology means that you are giving names to things or ideas. These names must be easy to use, logical, and memorable. Poor or inconsistent terminology can be a significant barrier to precision communication.

4. Compression and expansion: Like a fluid, writing is compressible. You can be terse or long winded. Both extremes are bad. Sometimes you can compress ideas, while at other times more wordy or detailed expansion is needed.

5. Spatial precision: It can be challenging to use only words (that is, without images) to describe spatial ideas. Example: "Face the center of the east wall at a distance of 6 feet. Turn right, and go 10 feet. Look in the third box from the right. Inside you will find some gold." Another example, "At the fourth stoplight, turn left. Go one block. You will see a 5-way intersection, which you enter at 6 o'clock and exit at 11 o'clock. Go 1 mile. My house is on the left." Another example: "Face the center of the east wall. Viewing yourself from above, turn clockwise 45 degrees. You will now see the money on the table."

6. Avoiding ambiguity: Example: Take the sine of the angle. That is, the trigonometric sine, not the algebraic sign." Additional ambiguous words include right/right, current/current/current, sign/sine, amp/amp (current/amplifier), plane/airplane, and tangent/tangent. Pronouns are a scourge when it comes to ambiguity especially when it is not clear what "it" or "this" refer to.

7. Negative information: Negative information refers to what not to do, again a device for improving reliability of the information you are providing. Example: "Pour the red liquid into the beaker. Do not touch the flame." Another example: "Go three miles. At the stop sign, turn left, that is, do not turn right." Note that the words "that is" signify equivalence.

8. Binary information: Some information is of the yes/no type, whereas other information is a matter of degree. This distinction is digital (binary) versus analog. Example: "The toaster is on. When the toaster is on, the coils are hotter than boiling water." Do not say "relative" or "advantage" without saying relative to what or advantage over what.

9. Negative questions: Questions of this type are often confusing. I do not know how to answer the question: "You don't want the money?" Conciseness. Do not use many words when a few words suffice. Example: Change "The computer is able to make use of the software." to "The computer can use the software."

## 4.5   10 Techniques for More Precise Writing

Here are ten ways to produce more vivid, direct, concise prose by replacing wordy phrases with fewer words and reorganizing sentences. It is not advisable to employ these strategies indiscriminately, but prose will usually be improved by following the recommendations below.

1. Use Active Voice

When a sentence includes be or any other copulative verb, such as is or are, recast the sentence to omit the verb.

Before: "The meeting was seen by us as a ploy to delay the project." After: "We saw the meeting as a ploy to delay the project."

2. Avoid Vague Nouns

Phrases formed around general nouns such as aspect, degree, and situation clutter sentences. Before: "She is an expert in the area of international relations."

After: "She is an expert in international relations."

3. Use Words, Not Their Definitions

Replace explanatory phrases with a single word that encapsulates that explanation. Before: "The crops also needed to be marketable so that families would be able to sell any yields that exceeded what they personally required." After: "The crops also needed to be marketable so that families would be able to sell any surplus."

4. Avoid Noun Strings

Reorganize sentences to eliminate series of nouns used as adjectives. Before: "The lack of a secure transfer may hamper computer security incident response efforts." After: "The lack of a secure transfer may hamper responses to computer-security incidents."

5. Convert Nouns to Verbs

When a sentence includes a noun ending in -tion, change the noun to a verb to simplify the sentence.

Before: "They will collaborate in the creation of new guidelines." After: "They will collaborate to create new guidelines."

6. Reduce Verb Phrases to Simple Verbs

Identify the verb buried in a verb phrase and omit the rest of the phrase. Before: "The results are suggestive of the fact that tampering has occurred." After: "The results suggest that tampering has occurred."

7. Replace Complex Words with Simple Ones

Choose simpler synonyms for multisyllabic words.

Before: "The department will disseminate the forms soon." After: "The department will pass out the forms soon."

8. Avoid Expletives

Don't start sentences with "There is," "There are," or "It is." Before: "There are many factors in the product's failure." After: "Many factors contributed to the product's failure."

9. Eliminate Prepositional Phrases

Replace "(noun1) of the (noun2)" phrasing with "(noun2)'s (noun1)" phrasing. Before: "The decision of the committee is final." After: "The committee's decision is final."

10. Reduce Wordy Phrases to Single Words

Replace phrases that signal a transition with simple conjunctions, verbs, or other linking words. Before: Due to the fact that the project is behind schedule, today's meeting has been postponed. After: Because the project is behind schedule, today's meeting has been postponed.

## 4.6   Letter writing:

Ever wondered how the practice of writing letters came into being? Letters were one of the earliest forms of passing communication across to family and friends, and it has continued to exist since then. Letter writing is no mere ornamental accomplishment. Even today, letter writing has been thought of as a necessary skill that every individual should acquire. This article will take you through the following topics

[] What is letter writing? [] Different types of letters. [] Types of letters examples.

[] FAQ on letter writing and its types

## 4.7   What is Letter Writing?

Letter Writing has been deemed as one of the most useful forms learnt and used for various reasons. There are several kinds of letters, each of which has its own form and style. However, there are certain parts of the letter which remain the same. They include:

[] Sender's address [] Date [] Greeting or Salutation [] Body of the Letter [] Subscription [] Signature

1. Sender's Address

   The writer's complete postal address has to be mentioned at the beginning of the letter on the left-hand side of the paper. This lets the receiver know where you wrote the letter from.

2. Date

   The date is written just below the sender's address, and it lets the recipient know when exactly the letter was written. The date may be written in any of the following ways: 4th July 2005

   July 4, 2005 4/6/2005 4-6-2005

   4.6.2005

3. Greeting or Salutation

   The Salutation depends on the relationship between the sender and the receiver.

   [] To members of your family and friends, it could be Dear Father, My Dearest Friend, Dear Uncle, Dear Diana, etc. [] To Business people or any officer of higher rank, it could be Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Sir/Ma'am, etc.

4. Body of the Letter

   The message that you want to convey is stated in the body of the letter. The style, however, depends on the type of letter you are writing. The style of a friendly letter differs completely from that of a business letter or an official letter, but there are certain points that apply to both formal letters and informal letters. Generally, when you draft the body of your letter, see to that you divide it into short paragraphs, according to the change in the subject matter. Use simple and direct language that is easy to comprehend. Put down all your points in a logical order. Mind your punctuation; incorrect punctuation will alter the meaning of the sentence completely.

5. Subscription

   The subscription helps you end the letter in a polite and courteous manner. The subscriptions change according to the type of letter you are writing. It can be written as Yours faithfully, Yours lovingly, Yours sincerely, With love, etc.

6. Signature

   The signature or the name of the writer should be written just before the subscription.

## 4.8   Different Types of Letters

Letters can be classified into two main types according to the purpose of the letter. Informal Letters, also known as Social Letters, include Friendly Letters and Notes of Invitations. Formal Letters, also known as Business Letters, include Letters of Application, Letters to Higher Authorities, and Letters to Newspapers.

Informal Letter

Letters to friends and family can be written in a conversational style. They are just a composition of spontaneous thoughts, and they are easy and personal. When writing an informal letter, you are free to use colloquial language, which would be quite out of place in a formal letter. This does not mean that you can pen down random thoughts that are totally disconnected and make no sense. Wrong spelling, punctuation and grammar are not allowed even though the letter is informal and personal. An informal letter can be written by following a basic format that includes the sender's address, date, greeting, body of the letter, subscription

and signature. To know more about how to write an informal letter, visit Informal Letter Format.

Formal Letter

Formal letters or Business letters should be clear and concise. You should always remember that formal letters are written to bring important information into consideration, so you should always take care to draft the letter carefully by providing only the necessary information. The language used in formal letters is a lot more professional than informal letters. The format of formal letters is the same as explained above, with a few additions, viz., 'the Receiver's Address', 'Subject' and 'Signature'. Check out Formal Letter Writing in English for more information on formal letters.

## 4.9   Types of Letters Examples

Sample Informal Letter – Letter to a friend in reply to her about planning a trip together

16/65, Martins Castle DB Road Hyderabad 500023 20/05/2020 Dearest Caro,

I was happy to see your letter, and I loved your idea. I have been wanting to go on a trip with you for a long time, and I think both of us can finally make time to plan and make it happen. I have a list of places that I thought would be fun to visit. I also do have a list of things I would like to do on our trip. I am too scared of heights, and I know you are too, but I have always wanted to try out bungee jumping with you. Let me know what you think about it. We can also find affordable and beautiful places to stay, and I am sure we can chart it all out. I cannot wait to go on this adventure with you. I know it is a secret to be kept since it is going to be just us, and that makes it all the more exciting. I know for sure that it is going to be worth it too. I will make sure that I meet you next weekend and make plans for the trip. It would definitely be difficult to get our parents to allow us on this trip, but let's try hard and make this work. See you soon. Love, Rose

Sample Formal Letter – Letter of Application

3, Old Gate

Nagpur 440003

20th April, 2018 The Principal Taurina High School Mumbai 500043 Subject: Application for the post of English Teacher Dear Sir, I am applying for the position of English Teacher in your organization with reference to the advertisement on The Indian Express dated 18/04/2018. I have great interest in this position and would highly appreciate it if you could consider my application. I have completed my Post Graduation in English and have experience of working as a High School English Teacher for two years. In my teaching experience, I have come across various challenging situations with kids and parents, and I have learnt to handle all of them well. I have enjoyed connecting with the children and being a part of their growth and development as considerate and intelligent individuals. I have attached my resume and experience certificate for your kind perusal and hope to hear from you

in this regard. Yours faithfully, SEAN ALEXANDER

**How do I start writing a letter?**

To start writing a letter, you will have to know who you are writing to and the reason behind the letter. With that in mind, you can start drafting your letter with the Sender's address on the left-hand side of the paper at the beginning, followed by the date.

**What are the types of letter writing?**

Letter writing can be divided into two main types – Formal Letters and Informal Letters. Formal letters are letters that are written for official purposes, whereas informal letters are written about anything you want to let your friends or family know.

**What are the parts of a letter?**

A letter can be said to have six main parts. They include the Sender's Address and Date, Receiver's Address, Salutation, Body of the Letter, Complimentary Close and Signature.

## 4.10   How To Write an Effective Email

1. Have a compelling subject line.

2. Start with an appropriate greeting.

3. Have a strong attention grabber.

4. Keep your message short and concise.

5. Be consistent with your font.

6. Write a simple closing.

7. Schedule your emails.

8. Do a final spelling and grammar check.

1. Have a compelling subject line.

Subject lines can make or break your email's success. It's often the deciding factor on whether someone will open your email.

Unfortunately, a lot of people struggle with this part.

2. Start with an appropriate greeting.

To kick off the email, you should begin with an appropriate greeting. There are two components to the greeting: the salutation and the opening sentence.

The appropriate salutation actually depends on the situation. If you're writing a formal email to a bank or government institution, it would be better to start off with "Dear [X]."

If you're sending an email to someone you know, or work in a casual environment, then it is perfectly fine to go with a "Hi [name]" or "Hello [Name]."

There's also "To Whom It May Concern," when you're sending an email to a group email and not sure who will be reading it.

One thing you want to avoid is using gendered and non-inclusive terms like "Hi guys" and "Mr./Ms/Mrs." in your salutation.

To help you out, here is a list of salutations you can open in your emails:

[] Dear [First Name]

[] [Name]

[] Good morning/afternoon

[] Hi team

[] Hey

[] Hi there

3. Have a strong attention grabber.

Once you've gotten the salutation out of the way, it's time to start your email.

While the subject line determines whether your email is opened, your opening sentence determines whether your email is read till the end.

If it's an introduction, you can open with something you know will interest your recipient. You can find this out through a little research on their social media profiles. Perhaps they Tweeted something interesting or recently posted something on LinkedIn you can reference.

4. Keep your message short and concise.

According to Statista, we send and receive roughly 319 billion emails a day worldwide.

This statistic makes one thing very clear: We spend a lot of time reading emails. And because of this, many people simply scan emails to get the essence of the message and move on to the next.

With this in mind, you want to optimize your email for readability and scanability. This will look like:

[] Keeping paragraphs short.

[] Adding bullet points.

[] Using visuals to break up the text.

While you may feel like you need to tell them everything in one email, don't.

No one is eagerly awaiting a three-page essay arriving in their inbox. Think about it this way: What's the main takeaway from your email and is there a particular action you want your recipient to take?

5. Be consistent with your font.

If I get an email like this, I'm immediately deleting or assuming it's a scam.

Emails can be fun. You can add images, GIFs, and colors. However, there's a way to do it that's not too jarring or distracting.

This is an example of what not to do. There are several fonts used in the email, different font sizes along with different colors. As a result, the eye doesn't know where to go and it's a bit overwhelming.

Furthermore, the message gets lost, as your recipient is too distracted by all these elements fighting for their attention.

So, as a rule of thumb: Stick to one font. If you want to use a secondary one, use it sparingly. Follow the same rule for color.

Write a simple closing.

Once you're done with the content of your email, it's time to close it off.

You don't have to make it fancy – just keep your closing simple and straightforward. So, nothing like this:

Instead, stick to the safe, proven closing lines and you should be good. You can choose from some of the most common closing lines below: [] Sincerely

[] Best regards

[] Best

[] Warm regards

[] Warm wishes

[] Kind regards

[] Kind wishes

[] Thank you

[] Take care

7. Schedule your emails.

One 2020 survey by Sleep Advisor found that around 54% of Americans check their work email immediately after or within an hour of waking up. Another study by Litmus on the State of Email Engagement in the United States in 2021 supports this. It reveals that the most popular time for reading emails is in the morning. Open rates start around 6 a.m. but usually peak between 9 a.m. and noon local time.

Given this information, you can follow one of two strategies: Send your email in the morning when you know they're scrolling or wait for a less busy time.

On one hand, your email runs the risk of being buried if you send it in the morning. However, if you wait for a later time, your email may never get opened.

It takes trial and error to figure out what works best when emailing with your team.

If you're writing an email to someone in another state or country, you also have to factor in time zones. Noon for you may be 7 p.m. for someone else. As such, keep in mind who your recipient is and when they would be most receptive to your email.

8. Do a final spelling and grammar check.

You're almost there – don't mess up at the last stretch.

Imagine spending time crafting a perfect message, only to be ignored because the email riddled with spelling and grammar errors.

Staying on top of your inbox is not always easy, but having some useful phrases like these can save you a lot of time. Make your emails more varied and richer with these over 150 phrases. Save this article as a guide (or as a cheat sheet), and copy and paste anytime you need them. Remember that you can always use CTRL+F to directly find the type of phrase you're looking for or click on the links below:

A. Opening Lines

A1 Being social

A2 Emailing first A3 Replying A4 Apologizing

B. Body Lines

B1 Attachments and information B2 Requests and enquiries B3 Asking for clarifications B4 Sharing information B5 Getting and giving approval B6 Scheduling B7 Giving bad news

C. Closing Lines

C1 When something is expected C2 Offering help or information C3 Apologizing C4 Closing greetings

A1 Being social

By adding these at the beginning of your emails you will sound more friendly and social.

[] I hope you had a good weekend.

[] I hope you had a great trip.

[] Hope you had a nice break.

[] I hope you are well.

[] I hope all is well.

[] Hope you're enjoying your holiday.

[] I hope this email finds you well.

[] I hope you enjoyed the event.

[] I'm glad we had a chance to chat at the convention.

[] It was great to see you on Thursday.

[] It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday.

A2 Emailing first

Are you the one emailing first? Try these:

[] I am writing to you about our last meeting/your presentation yesterday/our next event.

[] I am writing to you with regards to/regarding/concerning/in connection with...

[] I am writing to ask/enquire/let you know/confirm/check/invite you to/to update you on/ask for a favor...

[] I am writing you to follow up on...

[] I am contacting you to inform...

[] I am reaching out because...

[] This is just a quick note to...

[] This is just a quick reminder...

[] I wanted to let you know that...

[] Might I take a moment of your time to... (very formal)

[] It's [Your Name] from [Your Company].

[] This email is just to let you know that...

A3 Replying

[] I just got your request for...

[] I just read your email about...

[] As we discussed, I would like to send you...

[] Thank you for your email about...

[] Thanks for your email this morning/yesterday/on Wednesday/last month...

[] Thanks for your feedback on/your invitation/your suggestion

[] Thanks for sending/asking about/attending

[] Thanks for your quick reply.

[] Thanks for getting back to me so quickly.

[] Thank you for reaching out (to me).

A4 Apologizing

[] Sorry for my late reply.

[] Sorry it took me so long to get back to you.

[] I apologize for the late response.

[] Sorry it's been so long since my last email.

[] I was sorry to hear about...

[] Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

B1 Attachments and information

[] I've attached...

[] Please find [file] attached.

[] I'm enclosing [file].

[] Please see the information below for more details about...

[] The parts in bold/in red/in blue are my comments/are the changes we made.

[] Here's the document that you asked for,

[] I've attached [file] for your review.

[] I'm sending you [file] as a pdf file.

[] The attached file contains...

[] Could you please sign the attached form and send it back to us by [date]?

[] Here's the [document] we discussed.

[] [file] is attached.

[] Please take a look at the attached file.

[] Take a look at the [file] I've attached to this email.

[] I've attached [file].

[] More information is available at www.website.com.

[] Please note that...

B2 Requests and enquiries

[] Could you please...?

[] Could you possibly tell me...?

[] Can you please fill out this form?

[] I'd really appreciate it if you could...

[] I'd be very grateful if you could...

[] It would be very helpful if you could send us/me...

[] I was wondering if you could/if you would be able to...

[] If possible, I'd like to know (more) about...

[] Please find my two main questions below.

B3 Asking for clarifications

[] I didn't/don't fully understand [something]. Could you please explain that again?

[] I didn't quite get your point about [something]. Could you be more specific?

[] Could you repeat what you said about...?

[] Could you give us some more details on...?

[] If you could please shed some light on this topic, I would really appreciate it.

[] Could you please clarify [something]?

[] Could you please clarify when you would like us to finish this?

[] When exactly are you expecting to have this feature?

[] Here are the details on...

[] Could you please clarify what you would like us to do about...?

[] If I understood you correctly, you would like me to...

[] What exactly do you mean by [something]?

[] Could you explain what you mean by [something]?

[] In other words, would you like us to...

## 4.11 Report writing

What is a report and how does it differ from writing an essay? Reports are concise and have a formal structure. They are often used to communicate the results or findings of a project.

Essays by contrast are often used to show a tutor what you think about a topic. They are discursive and the structure can be left to the discretion of the writer.

Who and what is the report for?

Before you write a report, you need to be clear about who you are writing the report for and why the report has been commissioned.

Keep the audience in mind as you write your report, think about what they need to know. For example, the report could be for:

[] the general public [] academic staff [] senior management [] a customer/-client. Reports are usually assessed on content, structure, layout, language, and referencing. You should consider the focus of your report, for example:

[] Are you reporting on an experiment? [] Is the purpose to provide background information? [] Should you be making recommendations for action?

## 4.12 Language of report writing

Reports use clear and concise language, which can differ considerably from essay writing.

They are often broken down in to sections, which each have their own headings and sub-headings. These sections may include bullet points or numbering as well as more structured sentences. Paragraphs are usually shorter in a report than in an essay.

Both essays and reports are examples of academic writing. You are expected to use grammatically correct sentence structure, vocabulary and punctuation.

Academic writing is formal so you should avoid using apostrophes and contractions such as "it's" and "couldn't". Instead, use "it is" and "could not".

**Structure and organisation**

Reports are much more structured than essays. They are divided in to sections and sub-sections that are formatted using bullet points or numbering.

Report structures do vary among disciplines, but the most common structures include the following:

**Title page**

The title page needs to be informative and descriptive, concisely stating the topic of the report.

**Abstract (or Executive Summary in business reports)**

The abstract is a brief summary of the context, methods, findings and conclusions of the report. It is intended to give the reader an overview of the report before they continue reading, so it is a good idea to write this section last.

An executive summary should outline the key problem and objectives, and then cover the main findings and key recommendations.

**Table of contents**

Readers will use this table of contents to identify which sections are most relevant to them. You must make sure your contents page correctly represents the structure of your report.

Take a look at this sample contents page.

**Introduction**

In your introduction you should include information about the background to your research, and what its aims and objectives are. You can also refer to the literature in this section; reporting what is already known about your question/topic, and if there are any gaps. Some reports are also expected to include a section called 'Terms of references', where you identify who asked for the report, what is covers, and what its limitations are.

**Methodology**

If your report involved research activity, you should state what that was, for example you may have interviewed clients, organized some focus groups, or done a literature review. The methodology section should provide an accurate description of the material and procedures used so that others could replicate the experiment you conducted.

**Results/findings**

The results/findings section should be an objective summary of your findings, which can use tables, graphs, or figures to describe the most important results and trends. You do not need to attempt to provide reasons for your results (this will happen in the discussion section).

**Discussion**

In the discussion you are expected to critically evaluate your findings. You may need to re-state what your report was aiming to prove and whether this has been achieved. You should also assess the accuracy and significance of your findings, and show how it fits in the context of previous research.

**Conclusion/recommendations**

Your conclusion should summarize the outcomes of your report and make suggestions for further research or action to be taken. You may also need to include a list of specific recommendations as a result of your study.

**References**

The references are a list of any sources you have used in your report. Your report should use the standard referencing style preferred by your school or department e.g., Harvard, Numeric, OSCOLA etc.

**Appendices**

You should use appendices to expand on points referred to in the main body of the report. If you only have one item it is an appendix, if you have more than one, they are called appendices. You can use appendices to provide backup information, usually data or statistics, but it is important that the information contained is directly relevant to the content of the report.

Appendices can be given alphabetical or numerical headings, for example Appendix A, or Appendix 1. The order they appear at the back of your report is determined by the order that they are mentioned in the body of your report. You should refer to your appendices within the text of your report, for example 'see Appendix B for a breakdown of the questionnaire results'. Don't forget to list the appendices in your contents page.

**Presentation and layout**

Reports are written in several sections and may also include visual data such as figures and tables. The layout and presentation are therefore very important.

Your tutor or your module handbook will state how the report should be presented in terms of font sizes, margins, text alignment etc.