



## **Communication**

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another.

Every communication involves (at least)

one sender,  
a message  
and a recipient.



## **A communication therefore has three parts:**

1. The sender
2. The message
3. The recipient

The sender 'encodes' the message,  
usually in a mixture of words and non-verbal communication.  
It is transmitted in some way (for example, in speech or writing),  
and the recipient 'decodes' it.

## **The Communication Process**

A message or communication is sent by the sender through a communication channel to a receiver, or to multiple receivers. The sender must encode the message (the information being conveyed) into a form that is appropriate to the communication channel, and the receiver(s) then decodes the message to understand its meaning and significance. Misunderstanding can occur at any stage of the communication process. Effective communication involves minimizing potential misunderstanding and overcoming any barriers to communication at each stage in the communication process.

### **Communication Channels**

Communication channels is the term given to the way in which we communicate. It is therefore the method used to transmit our message to a recipient, or to receive a message from someone else. There are multiple communication channels available to us today. These include face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, text messages, email, the Internet (including social media such as Facebook and Twitter), radio and TV, written letters, brochures and reports.

### **Encoding Messages**

All messages must be encoded into a form that can be conveyed by the communication channel chosen for the message. We all do this every day when transferring abstract thoughts into spoken words or a written form.

### **Decoding Messages**

Once received, the recipient needs to decode the message. Successful decoding is also a vital communication skill. People will decode and understand messages in different ways. This will depend on their experience and understanding of the context of the message, how well they know the sender, their psychological state and how they feel, and the time and place of receipt.

## Feedback

The final part of a communication is feedback: the recipient lets the sender know that they have received and understood the message. Recipients of messages are likely to provide feedback on how they have understood the messages through both verbal and non-verbal reactions.

### Common Barriers to Effective Communication:

1. **The use of jargon.** Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms.
2. **Emotional barriers and taboos.** Some people may find it difficult to express their emotions and some topics may be completely 'off-limits' or taboo. Taboo or difficult topics may include, but are not limited to, politics, religion, disabilities (mental and physical), sexuality and sex, racism and any opinion that may be seen as unpopular.
3. **Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver.** (See our page Barriers to Effective Listening for more information). Differences in perception and viewpoint.
4. **Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.**
5. **Physical barriers to non-verbal communication.** Not being able to see the non-verbal cues, gestures, posture and general body language can make communication less effective. Phone calls, text messages and other communication methods that rely on technology are often less effective than face-to-face communication.
6. **Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.**
7. **Expectations and prejudices which may lead to false assumptions or stereotyping.** People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions. Our page The Ladder of Inference explains this in more detail.
8. **Cultural differences.** The norms of social interaction vary greatly in different cultures, as do the way in which emotions are expressed. For example, the concept of personal space varies between cultures and between different social settings.



## **Types of Communication**

There are four main categories or communication styles including

verbal

nonverbal

written and

visual

### **1. Verbal**

Verbal communication is the use of language to transfer information through speaking or sign language. It is one of the most common types, often used during presentations, video conferences and phone calls, meetings and one-on-one conversations. Verbal communication is important because it is efficient.

### **Four Types of Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication include sounds, words, language, and speech. Speaking is an effective way of communicating and helps in expressing our emotions in words.

#### **a) Intrapersonal Communication**

This form of communication is extremely private and restricted to ourselves. It includes the silent conversations we have with ourselves, wherein we juggle roles between the sender and receiver who are processing our thoughts and actions.

## **b) Interpersonal Communication**

This form of communication takes place between two individuals and is thus a one-on-one conversation. Here, the two individuals involved will swap their roles of sender and receiver in order to communicate in a clearer manner.

## **c) Small Group Communication**

This type of communication can take place only when there are more than two people involved. Here the number of people will be small enough to allow each participant to interact and converse with the rest. Press conferences, board meetings, and team meetings are examples of group communication.

## **d) Public Communication**

This type of communication takes place when one individual addresses a large gathering of people. Election campaigns and public speeches are example of this type of communication.

# Nonverbal

Nonverbal communication is the use of body language, gestures and facial expressions to convey information to others. It can be used both intentionally and unintentionally. For example, you might smile unintentionally when you hear a pleasing or enjoyable idea or piece of information. Nonverbal communication is helpful when trying to understand others' thoughts and feelings.

## Types of Nonverbal Communication

1. Eye contact.
2. Facial Expressions
3. Gestures
4. Postures and body orientation
5. Body language
6. Space and distance
7. Proximity
8. Oral language
9. Humor
10. Silence
11. Personal Appearance
12. Symbol
13. Visual Communication

**Eye contact:** Eye contact, an important channel of interpersonal communication, helps regulate the flow of communication. And it signals interest in others. Furthermore, Eye contact with audiences increases the speaker's credibility. Teachers who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility.

**Facial expressions:** The face is an important communicator. It is commonly said that face is the index of the mind. It expresses the type of emotions or feelings such as joy, love, interest, sorrow, anger, annoyance, confusion, enthusiasm, fear, hatred surprise, and uncertainty. Facial expressions are indicated through the mouth (open, wide or closed), eyelids (raised or lowered), nose (wrinkled or relaxed), cheeks (drawn up or back) and the forehead (lowered or raised).

**Gestures** are movements of the arms, legs, hands, and head. Some authors opine that gesture is the deliberate body movement as because they express specific and intentional meaning. For example; a wave of the hand has a specific meaning-“hello” or “good-bye”; a forefinger and a thumb touching to form a circle have the meaning -“ok”.

**Posture and body orientation:** You communicate numerous messages by the way you walk, talk, stand and sit. Standing erect, but not rigid, and leaning slightly forward communicates to students that you are approachable, receptive and friendly.

**Body Language:** Body language is another widely recognized form of non-verbal communication. Body movements can convey meanings and message. Body language may take two forms of unconscious movements and consciously controlled movements.



**Proximity:** Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with students. You should look for signals of discomfort caused by invading students' space. Some of these are: Rocking, Leg swinging, Tapping and Gaze aversion. Typically, in large college classes space invasion is not a problem. In fact, there is usually too much distance.

**Para-linguistic:** This facet of nonverbal communication includes such vocal elements as: Tone, Pitch, Rhythm, Timbre, Loudness and Inflection. For maximum teaching effectiveness, learn to vary these six elements of your voice. One of the major criticisms is of instructors who speak in a monotone. Listeners perceive these instructors as boring and dull. Students report that they learn less and lose interest more quickly when listening to teachers who have not learned to modulate their voices.

**Personal Appearance:** Appearance is also an important non-verbal communication tool. Appearance includes dress, hair, jewelry, makeup, belt buckles and so on. Appearance indicates the degree of importance or interest a person conveys to an occasion. By means of uniform, we can identify a student, a doctor, a lawyer, a police officer, etc.

**Silence:** Silence is a powerful tool for communication. It may have a positive or negative meaning. In a classroom, silence indicates that students are listening carefully and attentively. In the same way, through silence one can communicate his lack of interest or a failure to understand

**Humor:** Humor is often overlooked as a teaching tool, and it is too often not encouraged in college classrooms. Laughter releases stress and tension for both instructor and student. You should develop the ability to laugh at yourself and encourage students to do the same. It fosters a friendly environment that facilitates learning.

## Key Differences between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication:

The following points explain the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication in detail:

1. The use of words in communication is Verbal communication. The communication which is based on signs, not on words is Non-verbal communication.
2. There are very fewer chances of confusion in verbal communication between the sender and receiver. Conversely, the chances of misunderstanding and confusion in non-verbal communication are very much as the use of language is not done.
3. In verbal communication, the interchange of the message is very fast which leads to rapid feedback. In opposition to this, the non-verbal communication is based more on understanding which takes time and hence it is comparatively slow
4. In verbal communication, the presence of both the parties at the place of communication is not necessary, as it can also be done if the parties are at different locations. On the other hand, for an effective non-verbal communication, both the parties must be there, at the time of communication.

## Written

Written communication is the act of writing, typing or printing symbols like letters and numbers to convey information. It is helpful because it provides a record of information for reference. Writing is commonly used to share information through books, pamphlets, blogs, letters, memos and more. Emails and chats are a common form of written communication in the workplace.

**Written communication** involves any type of message that makes use of the written word. Written communication is the most important and the most effective of any mode of business communication.

Some of the various forms of written communications that are used internally for business operations include:

- Memos
- Reports
- Bulletins
- Job descriptions
- Employee manuals
- Emails
- Instant messages

Examples of written communications generally used with clients or other businesses include:

- Email
- Internet websites
- Letters
- Proposals
- Telegrams
- Faxes
- Postcard

**Characteristics of a good written communication are discussed below:**

- 1. Easy language:** Easy language should be used in written communication. The sentences of written communication must be understandable to the reader.
- 2. Structure:** Definite structure must be followed in drafting any written document. Every written form has its own structure.
- 3. Accurate and precise:** A well written document must be accurate and precise. Written communication insists on greater accuracy and precision.
- 4. Direct speech:** Direct speech should be used in written communication. Indirect and passive sentences must be avoided.
- 5. Paragraph design:** A good written communication bears a paragraph design. Paragraphing is also important to clear communication.
- 6. Error-less:** A well written document must be free from error in both grammar and language.
- 7. You-attitude:** There must be your attitude in written communication. The reader can be impressed for this.
- 8. Personal and organizational images:** A good written communication bears the personal image of the writer. It also increases the organizational image as a whole.



**Visual communication** is the act of using photographs, art, drawings, sketches, charts and graphs to convey information. Visuals are often used as an aid during presentations to provide helpful context alongside written and/or verbal communication.

## **Different Types of Visual Communication**

### **Graphs**

Graphs are an important visual aid when showing the relationship between two different quantities. There are numerous types of graphs including line graphs, bar graphs and pie graphs

### **Maps**

In a geography speech, a map would be the most suitable item to use. A map can be used in showing different locations in the region and comparing them. This makes the audience know exactly where the speaker is referring to.

### **Photographs**

Their main advantage is they are great tools to explain points. For example in giving a talk about slums, pictures about the slums can give an accurate description of the slum life a photograph, if too small, will only serve as a distraction.

These are the platforms on which visual aids can be projected. They vary from the simplest methods to the most sophisticated.

They include:

1. Whiteboards or chalkboards for writing and drawing;
  2. Poster boards for posters
  3. Handouts for displaying pictures;
  4. Projectors;
  5. Computer assisted presentations
- Conclusion.

**Oral communication** implies communication through mouth. It includes individuals conversing with each other, be it direct conversation or telephonic conversation. Speeches, presentations, discussions are all forms of oral communication.

Some definitions of oral communication are as follows:

- 1. One-on-One Speaking (Student-Student or Student-Teacher):** Can range from moments punctuating a lecture, where students are asked to discuss or explain some question or problem with the person next to them, to formal student conferences with their instructor.
- 2. Small-Group or Team-Based Oral Work:** Smaller-scale settings for discussion, deliberation, and problem solving. Appropriate for both large lectures and smaller classes and allows levels of participation not possible in larger groups.
- 3. Full-Class Discussions (Teacher- or Student-Led):** Typically less agonistic, argument-based, and competitive than debate and deliberation but still dialogic in character. Often times has the quality of creating an atmosphere of collective, out-loud thinking about some question, idea, problem, text, event, or artifact. Like deliberation and debate, a good way to encourage active learning.
- 4. n-Class Debates and Deliberations:** A structured consideration of some issue from two or more points of view. Debates typically involve participants who argue one side throughout, while deliberation allows for movement by individuals within the process.

**5. Speeches and Presentations:** Classically, the stand-up, podium speech delivered by an individual from an outline or script. Also includes group presentations or impromptu speaking.

**6. Oral Examinations:** Can take place in the instructor's office, in small groups, or before a whole class. Range from one oral question on an otherwise written exam to an oral defense of a written answer or paper to an entirely oral quiz or examination.

## Presentation

All types of presentations consist of three basic parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. In general, the introduction should be about 10-15% of your speaking time, the body around 75%, and the conclusion only 10%.

### The Introduction:

The introduction is the most important part of your presentation as it sets the tone for the entire presentation. Its primary purpose is to capture the attention of the audience, usually within the first 15 seconds.

There are many styles you can use to get the audience's attention. Here are just a few:

- Ask a question. (This is probably the easiest but least creative choice.)
- Share a fascinating fact or startling statistic.
- Quote someone.
- Share a personal story. (This is often good for speeches.)
- Show a completed product.
- Show an unusual object.
- State a problem.
- Wear a mask or costume.
- Sing, dance, or do a skit. (Be sure it doesn't last too long and don't be silly.)
- Enter in an unusual way such as popping up from behind the table.





## **The Body**

The body is the main part of your presentation. This is where you explain your topic and where all your information is presented. The organization of the body is critical because the audience needs to be able to follow what you are saying and/or doing.

## **The Conclusion**

Your conclusion should be short and concise. It should summarize or highlight the main points you made or emphasize what the audience should have learned. Do not restate everything you said in the body and never introduce new information at this time. A good conclusion ties together all the parts of your presentation. Try to include some sort of link to your introduction. Avoid false or multiple endings.

## Some tips for Delivering a Memorable Presentation

If you are using your valuable time to prepare and deliver some sort of presentation, you want it to be a success. You want to engage your audience and make your presentation memorable (for the right reasons!). Here are some tips to help you deliver a winning and memorable presentation that you actually enjoy giving.

### 1. Take Time to Prepare

Regardless of the type of presentation, don't wait until the last minute to start preparing. As soon as you know you will be presenting or attending a meeting that requires more informal presenting, start thinking about the content of your presentation.

### 2. Research Your Audience

Your audience should drive not only the content you present, but your approach as well. Find out who will be in the audience and tailor your presentation directly to them.

### 3. Identify Your Goals

What are your goals? Why are you presenting? Are you trying to win business? Are you sharing your expertise? Take time to identify your goals and keep them in mind as you develop your presentation.

### 4. Know Your Time Limit

Make sure you know how long you will have to present. It's vital to know if you're delivering a 60-second elevator pitch, a half hour tutorial or a two-hour presentation before you start preparing your content.

### 5. Write It Down

Even if your presentation is short and simple, avoid the temptation to keep your content only in your head. Your presentation should be written down so you can revise, practice and fine-tune before the big day.

### 6. Create Visual Aids (If Necessary)

Depending on the type of presentation, you may want some kind of visual aid to add to your presentation. However, do not include every piece of content on your slides. Keep it short and simple. Your visual aid should be for your audience, to drive home important points, not a crutch for your presentation.

## **7. Memorize It**

Don't worry, I'm not going to suggest that you need to memorize every word of your presentation. But...start by memorizing the key points anyway. Knowing the content inside and out will make you more comfortable and confident during the delivery.

## **8. Practice, Practice, Practice**

Run through your presentation in full several times before the big day. You may even consider video taping yourself so you can self-critique and fine-tune.

## **9. Get There Early**

Not only do you want to be on time, but if you get there early, you can scope out the room where you will be presenting and start to familiarize yourself with the environment. You can also meet some of the people in the audience, which can help add a conversational tone.

## **10. Show Your Passion**

Hopefully you're passionate about the subject matter. Let your enthusiasm come through in your delivery. It can be contagious and the perfect way to engage your audience.

## **11. Make It Interactive**

To prevent boredom for your audience, plan group activities, ask questions and work in a break, if appropriate.

## **12. Use Humor**

Humor can be powerful in a presentation setting. Not only can it put the audience at ease, but it can make you more relaxed as well.