

# Communication Process

The process of communication refers to the transmission or passage of information or message from the sender through a selected channel to the receiver overcoming barriers that affect its pace.

The process of communication is a cyclic one as it begins with the sender and ends with the sender in the form of feedback. It takes place upward, downward and laterally throughout the organization.

The process of communication as such must be a continuous and dynamic interaction, both affecting and being affected by many variables.

Communication process consists of certain steps where each step constitutes the essential of an effective communication.

The following is a brief analysis of the important steps of the process of communication.

## The Different Elements in The Process of Communication

We will now learn about the different elements in the process of communication.



Figure: The Business Communication Process

### Sender

The very foundation of communication process is laid by the person who transmits or sends the message. He is the sender of the message which may be a thought, idea, a picture, symbol, report or an order and postures and gestures, even a momentary smile. The sender is therefore the initiator of the message that need to be transmitted. After having generated the idea, information etc. the sender encodes it in such a manner that can be well-understood by the receiver.

## **Message**

Message is referred to as the information conveyed by words as in speech and write-ups, signs, pictures or symbols depending upon the situation and the nature and importance of information desired to be sent. Message is the heart of communication. It is the content the sender wants to convey to the receiver. It can be verbal both written and spoken; or non-verbal i.e. pictorial or symbolic, etc.

## **Encoding**

Encoding is putting the targeted message into appropriate medium which may be verbal or non-verbal depending upon the situation, time, space and nature of the message to be sent. The sender puts the message into a series of symbols, pictures or words which will be communicated to the intended receiver. Encoding is an important step in the communication process as wrong and inappropriate encoding may defeat the true intent of the communication process.

## **Channel**

Channel(s) refers to the way or mode the message flows or is transmitted through. The message is transmitted over a channel that links the sender with the receiver. The message may be oral or written and it may be transmitted through a memorandum, a computer, telephone, cell phone, apps or televisions.

Since each channel has its advantages and disadvantages, the choice of proper selection of the channel is paramount for effective communication.

## **Receiver**

Receiver is the person or group who the message is meant for. He may be a listener, a reader or a viewer. Any negligence on the part of the receiver may make the communication ineffective. The receiver needs to comprehend the message sent in the best possible manner such that the true intent of the communication is attained. The extent to which the receiver decodes the message depends on his/her knowledge of the subject matter of the message, experience, trust and relationship with the sender.

The receiver is as significant a factor in communication process as the sender is. It is the other end of the process. The receiver should be in fit condition to receive the message, that is, he/she should have channel of communication active and should not be preoccupied with other thoughts that might cause him/her to pay insufficient attention to the message.

## **Decoding**

Decoding refers to interpreting or converting the sent message into intelligible language. It simply means comprehending the message. The receiver after receiving the message interprets it and tries to understand it in the best possible manner.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is the ultimate aspect of communication process. It refers to the response of the receiver as to the message sent to him/her by the sender. Feedback is necessary to ensure that the message has been effectively encoded, sent, decoded and comprehended.

It is the final step of the communication process and establishes that the receiver has received the message in its letter and spirit. In other words, the receiver has correctly interpreted the message as it was intended by the sender. It is instrumental to make communication effective and purposeful.

Consider the following points related to the feedback involved in the process of communication –

- It enhances the effectiveness of the communication as it permits the sender to know the efficacy of his message.
- It enables the sender to know if his/her message has been properly comprehended.
- The analysis of feedbacks helps improve future messages. Feedback, like the message, can be verbal or nonverbal and transmitted through carefully chosen channel of communication.
- We can represent the above steps in a model as the model of communication process.

## **Types of Feedback**

Kevin Eujeberry, the world famous leadership exponent mentioned the four types of feedback. The types are as follows –

- Negative Feedback or corrective comments about past behavior
- Positive Feedback or affirming comments about future behavior
- Negative *feedforward* or corrective comments about future behavior
- Positive *feedforward* or affirming comments about future behavior

## **The Model of Communication Process**

The process of communication, however, is not as smooth or barrier-free as it seems. From its transmission to receipt, the message may get interfered or disturbed with at any stage by many factors which are known as barriers to effective communication. One of the factors is poor choice of communication method. In addition to a poor choice of communication method, other barriers to effective communication include noise and other physical distractions, language problems, and failure to recognize nonverbal signals. We will discuss these barriers of communication in a subsequent chapter.

## **Summary**

- The process of communication refers to the transmission or passage of information or message from the sender through a selected channel to the receiver overcoming barriers that affect its pace.
- The different elements in the process of communication –
  - Sender
  - Message
  - Encoding
  - Channel
  - Receiver
  - Decoding
  - Feedback
- Kevin Eugeberry, the world famous leadership exponent mentioned the four types of feedback. The types are as follows –
  - Negative Feedback or corrective comments about past behavior
  - Positive Feedback or affirming comments about future behavior
  - Negative feedforward or corrective comments about future behavior
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## **Importance of communication skills**

### **1. Valued in the workplace**

If you are applying for jobs or looking for a promotion with your current employer, you will almost certainly need to demonstrate good communication skills. Communication skills are needed to speak appropriately with a wide variety of people whilst maintaining good eye contact, demonstrate a varied vocabulary and tailor your language to your audience, listen effectively, present your ideas appropriately, write clearly and concisely, and work well in a group. Many of these are essential business skills that employers seek.

Having the ability to listen carefully, speak clearly and put others at ease is valuable in any organization and can involve a wide range of skills:

- Listening to others and showing interest in what they say
- Dealing with telephone conversations appropriately
- Encouraging interest and interaction from others in your team
- Expressing an opinion or asking a question clearly
- Being able to persuade others

### **2. In demand by businesses**

Oral and written communication proficiencies are consistently ranked in the top ten desirable skills by employer surveys year after year. Employees are often encouraged to take online courses and in-person training to improve their presentation and communication skills.

### **3. Helps your career progression**

You will need to request information, discuss problems, give instructions, work in teams, interact with colleagues and clients. If you are to achieve co-operation and effective teamwork, good human relations skills are essential. Also, as the workplace is also becoming more global, there are many factors to consider if you are to communicate well in such a diverse environment.

Being able to deliver messages clearly and understand other people means work can be completed more effectively and to the benefit of the company as a whole.

Employers want staff who can think for themselves, use initiative and solve problems, staff who are interested in the long-term success of the company. If you are to be seen as a valued member of the organization, it is important not just to be able to do your job well, but also to communicate your thoughts on how the processes and products or services can be improved.

### **4. Allows you to speak concisely**

It is natural to feel some nerves when speaking to superiors or to clients. Communication skills training will help you learn how best to communicate effectively in a wide range of situations, and how to be direct in order to get the most out of your dealings with others.

## **5. Builds better rapport with customers**

Customers desire nothing more than to be understood by a company and they wish to feel like they are being heard and listened to. This is a particularly important point if your business involves a large amount of contact with customers, either face-to-face or over the phone.

## **6. Influences how you learn**

Communication skills have played an important part in your existing knowledge and beliefs. You learn to speak in public by first having conversations, then by answering questions and then by expressing your opinions. You learn to write by first learning to read, then by writing and learning to think critically. Good communication skills help you absorb information and express your ideas in a clear, concise and meaningful way to other people.

## **7. Enhances your professional image**

You want to make a good first impression on your friends and family, instructors, and employer. They all want you to convey a positive image, as it reflects on them. In your career, you will represent your business or company in spoken and written form. Your professionalism and attention to detail will reflect positively on you and set you up for success.

## **8. Other benefits of effective communication**

The most successful organizations understand that if they are to be successful in today's business world, good communication at all levels is essential. Here is a useful mnemonic to remember the benefits you and your organization can achieve from effective communication:

- Stronger decision-making and problem-solving
- Upturn in productivity
- Convincing and compelling corporate materials
- Clearer, more streamlined workflow
- Sound business relationships
- Successful response ensured



Research Paper

## Role of Professional Communication in Today's World of Business and Commerce

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**ABSTRACT:-** Communication is the process of transmitting ideas or thoughts from one person to another person who receives the communication. Thus, communication can be defined as the sum of all things that one person does when he wants to create an understanding about something in the mind of another. It is a bridge that conveys meaning and involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening and understanding. Professional Communication is the communication within the workplace that encompasses oral, written, and visual discipline. There are professional communication theories and most of them are practical. Effective professional communication promotes services and products in organizations. Professional communication encompasses written, oral, visual and digital communication within a workplace context. Professional business communication is essential to the success of any corporation. This could include newsletters, memos, notices, circulars, reports, proposals, etc. Small businesses all the way up to corporations can benefit from professional and technical communication.

**Keywords:-** communication, transmitting, effective, reports, proposal, digital, organization

**Communication** (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share") is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior. It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living creatures. Communication is a two-way street. Good listening skills are part of good communication; we need to understand what the other person is saying to us as well as to say what we want. Communication often includes non-verbal clues such as tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and body posture. Good communication includes being observant and focusing on the other person. Communication is a compromise. Everyone has a right to have their own opinion; just because you don't agree with them is no reason not to listen.

One definition of communication is "any act by which one person gives to or receives from person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states". Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.

1. "Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver – G.G. Brown.

2. "Communication is the intercourse by words, letters or messages"- Fred G. Meyer.

Communication requires a sender, a message, and a recipient, although the receiver does not have to be present or aware of the sender's intent to communicate at the time of communication; thus communication can occur across vast distances in time and space. Communication requires that the communicating parties share an area of communicative commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver understands the sender's message.

Communicating with others involves three primary steps:

- Thought: First, information exists in the mind of the sender. This can be a concept, idea, information, or feelings.
- Encoding: Next, a message is sent to a receiver in words or other symbols.
- Decoding: Lastly, the receiver translates the words or symbols into a concept or information that a person can understand.

**Professional Communication** is the communication within the workplace that encompasses oral, written, and visual discipline. There are professional communication theories and most of them are practical. Effective professional communication promotes services and products in organizations. Professional communication encompasses written, oral, visual and digital communication within a workplace context. This discipline blends together pedagogical principles of rhetoric, technology, and software to improve communication in a variety of settings ranging from technical writing to usability and digital media design. It is a new discipline that focuses on the study of information and the ways it is created, managed, distributed, and consumed. Since communication in modern society is a rapidly changing area, the progress of technologies seems too often outpace the number of available expert practitioners. This creates a demand for skilled communicators which continues to exceed the supply of trained professionals.

The field of professional communication is closely related to that of technical communication, though professional communication encompasses a wider variety of skills. Professional communicators use strategies, theories, and technologies to more effectively communicate in the business world. Successful communication skills are critical to a business because all businesses, though to varying degrees, involve the following: writing, reading, editing, speaking, listening, software applications, computer graphics, and Internet research. Job candidates with professional communication backgrounds are more likely to bring to the organization sophisticated perspectives on society, culture, science, and technology.

#### **The study of professional communication includes:**

- the study of rhetoric which serves as a theoretical basis
- the study of technical writing which serves as a form of professional communication
- the study of visual communication which also uses rhetoric as a theoretical basis for various aspects of creating visuals
- the study of various research methods

Other areas of study include global and cross-cultural communication, marketing and public relations, technical editing, digital literacy, composition theory, video production, corporate communication, and publishing. A professional communication program may cater to a very specialized interest or to several different interests. Professional communication can also be closely tied to organizational communication. Students who pursue graduate degrees in professional communication research communicative practice in organized contexts (including business, academic, scientific, technical, and non-profit settings) to study how communicative practices shape and are shaped by culture, technology, history, and theories of communication.

Professional communication encompasses a broad collection of disciplines, embracing a diversity of rhetorical contexts and situations. Areas of study range from everyday writing at the workplace to historical writing pedagogy, from the implications of new media for communicative practices to the theory and design of online learning, and from oral presentations to the production of websites. Effective communication in business helps better understand a person or situation, enables us to resolve important differences, and builds trust and respect. Effective communication is also about exchanging information and it requires you to understand the emotion behind the information. Effective communication can also improve relationships at work, home, and in social situations by deepening your connections to others and improving teamwork, decision making, caring, and problem solving. It is also stated that effective communication in a business is a learned skill.

#### **Different types of professional documents**

Professional business communication is essential to the success of any corporation. This could include writing memos, reports, or proposals. Small businesses all the way up to corporations can benefit from professional and technical communication.

There are many different forms and aspects of business communication. Every document must be reviewed for legal implications, because any and all written documents in a business environment can and will be used in court. For all documents, use professional language and tone. When writing any document, it is important to pay attention to your audience and consider their background when writing. When writing business documents such as memos, reports, or workplace e-mails, it is important to consider these points. Efficiency in the business setting is of extreme importance and it all begins with communication. Wasting time in communicating is ultimately wasting money in today's society.

Every document that is created is normally crafted to someone specifically. This someone would be our intended audience. Our writing style and content will be tailored to them because they are the ones we must impress. In many situations, however, an unintended audience could come into play. This could be anyone that we never expected to see our document, such as a boss or co-worker. For example, if you send an email to a co-worker talking about the company that you work for, or even our peers, the co-worker is your intended audience. Although, if our boss were to come across this document, he or she would be the unintended audience.

and there could be severe repercussions if the email was not crafted with other people in mind. All aspects of our business documents should take into consideration everyone that could potentially read it. By ensuring this, we will save our self and possibly even save our job. The worst case scenario could be that our document's unintended audience is the people in a court of law.

Overall, one must always consider who will be reading or witnessing their documents. With the business world becoming more and more global, it is increasingly important to understand how to communicate with a foreign audience as well. Something that might not be offensive to us could easily be offensive to someone from another culture. No one will make decisions in our favor if they feel that our deliberately offended them. This could all be caused because our communication was lacking, and we weren't properly considering our audience.

- **Letters**-Personal letters do not usually have a strict layout but business letters follow a common order or sequence in which information is presented. This makes it easier to quickly scan through the letter and helps in reducing time to draft and read letters shared between different people. The following are the elements that are commonly found in business letters-heading, date, reference, inside address, attention line, salutation, subject, body of letter, complementary close, signature, enclosure notation, mailing notation and addressee notation. The four steps to be kept in mind while drafting effective business letters are-Planning, Writing, Revising and Editing.
- **Reports**-The word ‘report’ is derived from the Latin word reportare which means to carry back. Report is therefore a description of an event carried back to someone who was not present on the scene. Reports can be written on a number of occasions .It can be progress report card of students, given to parents at the end of academic session giving details of marks and grades obtained in monthly tests, with some suggestions for improvement and overall evaluation of child’s work. Another could be a newspaper report of a ragging incident in our college,given by the college president to a newspaper. It is a written account of facts, information, data, analysis, conclusion and recommendation.It is prepared by someone who has information.
- **Proposals**  
The word proposal is made of ‘pro’ meaning forth and ‘posal’ meaning put or to place. Hence, proposal means to put forth. A proposal can be defined as an offer to help in finding a solution to some technical problem. A proposal can be made on a future project which might produce some practical or theoretical benefits. It can be considered as a formal suggestion, plan or purpose. Proposals are given within organization, in between different departments or from subordinates to superiors to bring about change in an old policy, system or to start a new venture. In short proposal is a properly conceived idea or plan, an action- oriented report. But it is different from a report.
- **Memos**  
A memo format is used for shorter reports that circulate within a company or an office. The day-to-day operation of a company depends on memos. A memo is actually a brief report, therefore called a miniature report. Periodic reports are usually written in memo format and are generally brief. It may be used for interdepartmental work like policy changes, problemsolving, sharing outcomes of changes etc. Memo reports also deal with the internal communication of the business.
- **Progress / Interim reports**  
In projects, an interim report is often compiled to analyze how the project is proceeding, before its final completion. Interim analysis is important in medical trials, to ensure that the patients are not exposed to unnecessary danger during the trial. An interim official is a person who is filling an official role temporarily. This can be in between two other people, or when the normal person is temporarily unable to do it and somebody else must fill in temporarily or without following the ordinary protocol. A public financial report covering a period of less than one year. An interim statement is used to convey the performance of a company before the end of the year. Unlike annual statements, interim statements do not have to be audited. Interim statements increase communication between companies and the public, and provide investors with up-to-date information between annual reporting periods.
- **Lab reports**  
Laboratory reports are written for several reasons. One reason is to communicate the laboratory work to management. In such situations, management often bases company decisions on the results of the report. Another reason to write laboratory reports is to archive the work so that the work will not have to be done in the future.

### **Professional Communication through Internet**

The Internet is no longer just a place of content. It is the latest technological breakthrough in communication following the telegraph and the telephone. Internet users are able to communicate with each other from all around the world instantaneously. With the necessary tools, users can share photos, send virtual

birthday and Christmas cards and develop better relationships with family and friends. Professionals can communicate effectively with the help of e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, social networking, forum, blog, video conferencing.

### **Email**

A shortened form of "electronic mail," an email works much like traditional mail in that messages are still sent by one person, received and sometimes saved by another, but the process is instantaneous. Users are given a unique email address from which messages are passed back and forth. Additionally, one message can be sent to several recipients simultaneously.

### **Instant Messaging**

An instant message, or IM, is the process of sending real-time messages from one user to another. One user types a message that is conveyed over a network and received by the other user. Instant messaging can be between two or more people using a specific program such as Yahoo Messenger or Windows Live Messenger.

### **Chat Room**

A chat room is an "area" on the Internet where groups of people come together to communicate. A user types a message that is seen by all other users currently online in the same "room." Users can see a list of all other users online. If a user right-clicks another user name, they are able to view his profile and send a private message.

### **Social Networking**

Social networking allows members to reconnect with old friends, make new friends and come together with members of similar interests. A user creates a profile and is granted access to the site where he can view other user profiles and connect with them. Popular social networking sites include MySpace, Facebook and Twitter.

### **Forums**

A forum is a part of a website that allows for group discussion. Members have the ability to start a discussion and read and reply to other ones. Each individual discussion is called a thread. A forum is usually monitored by a moderator who has the ability to edit forum posts.

### **Blog**

A blog is an online journal, or diary, of an individual. Typically written by one person, a blog can be used to tell about an individual's life, to promote products, provide information, make political statements and give tutorials. Readers of the blog -- which can often be subscribed to -- can read the content and typically leave comments.

### **Audio Conferencing**

Audio conferencing is a connection between two computers that requires participants to have a microphone and speakers. Using an instant messaging program, such as America Online Messenger (AOL), or audio conferencing software, such as Skype, users speak into the microphone and the dialogue is heard through the speakers of the other users.

### **Video Conferencing**

Video conferencing works much like audio conferencing. The differences are that the users are able to see each other -- and for this a webcam is needed by all parties -- and that depending upon the service used, multiple people can see and be seen at the same time.

### **VoIP**

Voice over Internet protocol, or VoIP, is phone service through an Internet connection. Users are given an adapter and a unique phone number. The user can then send and receive phone calls using a computer, a VoIP phone or a traditional phone, to and from other people, whether or not they use VoIP themselves.

### **Why Professional communication skills are so important?**

The various forms of speaking, listening, writing, and responding carried out both in and beyond the workplace, whether in person or electronically.

As Cheng and Kong point out in the preface to *Professional Communication: Collaboration Between Academics and Practitioners* (2009), "Professional communication is an emerging area of investigation in many

disciplines such as applied linguistics, communication studies, education, and psychology. . . . [T]he understanding of professional communication can be enhanced by the studies conducted by the professionals themselves, because they are the insiders in their professions."

1. Professional communication **passes information along**. If we can effectively communicate, then people understand us much better, and whatever information we are trying to tell them will get across without being misunderstood. In business, this can prevent mistakes from being made by people who thought we said something else. In personal life, it can help us to let others know what we want.
2. Professional communication **makes good relationships**. If we can effectively communicate, then other people know what we need and want, and we can let them know our feelings without being misunderstood. This prevents arguments, especially between couples, because it avoids all that "we should have known how I felt" sort of mind-reading arguments. If we can explain our thoughts and feelings, then we won't misunderstand each other.
3. Professional communication **helps us get what we need**. If we can effectively communicate what we need or want, we are more likely to be successful in getting it. Effective communication also helps us to convince others to agree with us in a persuasive setting.
4. Professional communication **gives us self-esteem**. People with effective communication skills are more confident, because they know that they can tell other people exactly what they need to, and they know that they understand those people better.
5. Professional communication **helps us to think better**. In order to communicate effectively, we have to think ahead and organize our thoughts. This helps us learn how to organize, and how to plan ahead.
6. Professional communication **makes peaceful communities**. If we can effectively communicate, then we can get along better with our neighbors - in our town or city, in our country, and in the world. Most wars are caused by people not communicating effectively and not being able to negotiate with each other.

## **Conclusion**

All professionals want to expand their business in global market. So they need professional communication skills to deal with other parties, to get better results, to search new market, to advertise products, to compare prices, to get information of new products, to maintain cordial relationships, to draft letters, to explore web sites, to take wise and better decisions. Professional communication skills also need to maintain internal communication which boosts team spirit and effectiveness.

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# **7 Principles of Communication – Explained!**

**Following principles of communication make it more effective:**

## **1. Principle of Clarity:**

The idea or message to be communicated should be clearly spelt out. It should be worded in such a way that the receiver understands the same thing which the sender wants to convey. There should be no ambiguity in the message. It should be kept in mind that the words do not speak themselves but the speaker gives them the meaning. A clear message will evoke the same response from the other party. It is also essential that the receiver is conversant with the language, inherent assumptions, and the mechanics of communication.

## **2. Principle of Attention:**

In order to make communication effective, the receiver's attention should be drawn towards message. People are different in behaviour, attention, emotions etc. so they may respond differently to the message. Subordinates should act similarly as per the contents of the message. The acts of a superior also draw the attention of subordinates and they may follow what they observe. For example, if a superior is very punctual in coming to the office then subordinates will also develop such habits. It is said that 'actions speak louder than words.'

## **3. Principle of Feedback:**

The principle of feedback is very important to make the communication effective. There should be a feedback information from the recipient to know whether he has understood the message in the same sense in which the sender has meant it.

## **4. Principle of Informality:**

Formal communication is generally used for transmitting messages and other information. Sometimes formal communication may not achieve the desired results, informal communication may prove effective in such situations. Management should use informal communication for assessing the reaction of employees towards various policies. Senior management may informally convey certain decisions to the employees for getting their feedback. So this principle states that informal communication is as important as formal communication.

## **5. Principle of Consistency:**

This principle states that communication should always be consistent with the policies, plans, programmes and objectives of the organization and not in conflict with them. If the messages and communications are in conflict with the policies and programmes then there will be confusion in the minds of subordinates and they may not implement them properly. Such a situation will be detrimental to the interests of the organization.

## **6. Principle of Timeliness:**

This principle states that communication should be done at proper time so that it helps in implementing plans. Any delay in communication may not serve any purpose rather decisions become of historical importance only.

### **7. Principle of Adequacy:**

The information communicated should be adequate and complete in all respects. Inadequate information may delay action and create confusion. Inadequate information also affects efficiency of the receiver. So adequate information is essential for taking proper decisions and making action plans.

# **Communication Methods**

A connected team and a connected organization in today's world is the only way we can achieve greater things. Connections and relations are built with exchange of thoughts and information. Communication serves as a valuable mechanism in building these connections and engagement between people.

Communication is a very important skill and art. There are four different ways we communicate with others. No matter what form of communication we choose, it is important to have the right intention to connect with the other person.

## **1. Written**

It refers to printed or recorded materials such as plans, contracts, memos, minutes of the meeting, requirement analysis document, design documents risk registers and other related written materials. It is used to provide well-thought and well-planned details, thus easily to be reviewed than verbal communication because everything that has been written cannot be altered right away. More so, it can be used for future reference.

Written communication can be time consuming, but is extremely essential for formal scenarios which require approvals and having legal implications as well. Emails have ushered in a revolution in making written communication very fast and thus have become a preferred mechanism for sharing detailed information in fraction of a second.

## **2. Oral/Verbal**

It involves the exchange of message or information by using words verbally through face to face or telephone conversations. It is the most common type of conversation as it paves way to get feedback right after receiving the message. It is known to be spontaneous as well. In verbal communication, the ability to listen and think carefully before speaking is critical.

A person must be careful of the words or expressions to be said. Any word that has been spoken cannot be taken back, so it is important to formulate expressions or sentences carefully.

## **3. Non-Verbal**

Non-verbal communication is sending information without the use of words. It is mostly through one's body language, gestures, eye-contacts, appearance, pitch and tone of one's voice etc. one can communicate huge amount of feelings and emotions.

They say, "It is important to understand what has not been said explicitly".

Non-verbal communication includes, body-language, paralanguage (pitch and tone of voice), appearance etc. Research has shown that nonverbal cues or body language along with facial

expressions, tone of voice and body stance account for almost 55% of all the communication that takes place.

#### **4. Visual Communication**

“A picture is worth a thousand words”. Visual aids such as animation, colour, illustration, graphs & charts, drawing, signs and logos immensely enhance written communication. Visual communication is also used in the right balance for making information sharing more effective and efficient.

#### **Conclusion:**

Communication is an art. The above are different methods of exchanging information to communicate. All the methods are used for specific expected outcomes and purpose of communication.

# Difference between Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Communication is a natural phenomenon, it is an act of interacting with people and sharing information with them. Do you know, whether you speak or not, it communicates the message to the other party. There are two types of communication Verbal and Non-verbal. **Verbal communication** is a form of communication in which you use words to interchange the information with other people either in the form of speech or writing.

On the contrary, **Nonverbal communication** does not use words for communicating anything, but some other modes are used, i.e. where communication takes place by way of unspoken or unwritten messages such as body language, facial expressions, sign language and so forth. In this article excerpt, we've broken down all the important differences between verbal and non-verbal communication in detail.

## Comparison Chart

Basis for Comparison	Verbal Communication	Non-verbal Communication
Meaning	The communication in which the sender uses words to transmit the message to the receiver is known as verbal communication.	The communication that takes place between sender and receiver with the use of signs is known as non-verbal communication.
Types	Formal and Informal	Chronemics, Vocalics, Haptics, Kinesics, Proxemics, Artifacts.
Time Consuming	No	Yes
Chances of transmission of wrong message	Rarely happens.	Happens most of the time.
Documentary Evidence	Yes, in case of written communication.	No
Advantage	The Message can be clearly understood and immediate feedback is possible.	Helpful in understanding emotions, status, lifestyle and feelings of the sender.
Presence	The message can be transmitted through letters, phone calls, etc. so the personal presence of the parties, doesn't make any change.	The personal presence of both the parties to communication is a must.

## Definition of Verbal Communication

The communication in which the sender uses words, whether spoken or written, to transmit the message to the receiver is known as Verbal Communication. It is the most effective form of communication that leads to the rapid interchange of information and feedback. There are fewer chances of misunderstanding as the communication between parties is clear, i.e. the parties are using words for saying anything.

The communication can be done in two ways (i) Oral – like face to face communication, lectures, phone calls, seminars, etc. (ii) Written – Letters, E- mail, SMS, etc. There are two types of communication, they are:

- **Formal Communication:** Also termed as official communication, it is a type of communication in which the sender follows a pre-defined channel to transmit the information to the receiver is known as formal communication.
- **Informal Communication:** Most commonly known as grapevine, the type of communication in which the sender does not follow any pre-defined channels to transmit the information is known as informal communication.

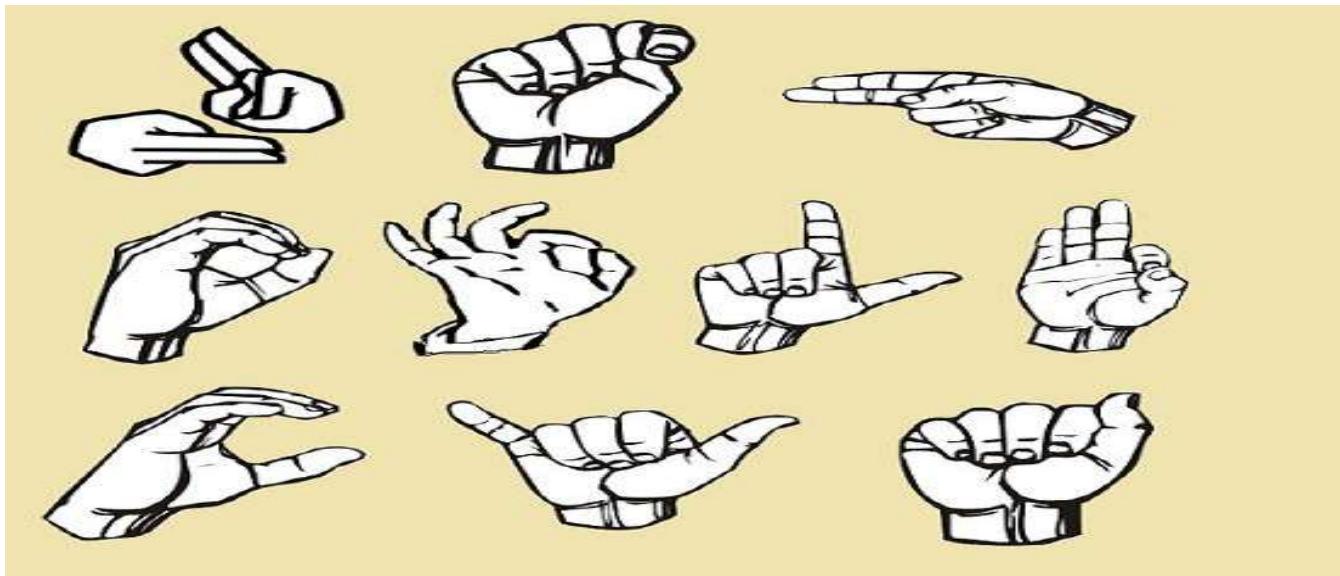


## Definition of Nonverbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is based on the understanding of the parties to communication, as the transmission of messages from the sender to receiver is wordless i.e. the communication uses signs. So, if the receiver understands the message completely and proper feedback is given afterwards, then the communication succeeds.

It complements the verbal communication many times, to understand the mindset and the status of the parties, which is not spoken by them, but it is an act of understanding. The types of Non-verbal communication are as under:

- **Chronemics:** The use of time in communication is chronemics, which speaks about the personality of the sender / receiver like punctuality, the speed of speech, etc.
- **Vocalics:** The volume, tone of voice and pitch used by the sender for communicating a message to the receiver is known as vocalics or paralanguage.
- **Haptics:** The use of touch in communication is the expression of feelings and emotions.
- **Kinesics:** It is the study of the body language of a person, i.e., gestures, postures, facial expressions, etc.
- **Proxemics:** The distance maintained by a person while communicating with others, communicates about the relationship of the person with others like intimate, personal, social and public.
- **Artifacts:** The appearance of a person speaks about his personality, i.e. by way of clothing, carrying jewellery, lifestyle, etc. This kind of communication is known as artifactual communication.



# **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.
5. In verbal communication, the documentary evidence is maintained if the communication is formal or written. But, there is no conclusive evidence in case of non-verbal communication.
6. Verbal communication fulfils the most natural desire of humans – talk. In the case of Non-verbal communication, feelings, status, emotions, personality, etc are very easily communicated, through the acts done by the parties to the communication.

## **Conclusion**

Verbal and Non-verbal communication are not contradictory to each other, but they are complementary as somebody has rightly said, “Actions are louder than words.” In short, both goes side by side and helps a human being, to interact and respond to other human beings.

Verbal communication is obviously an important part of life as we use words to communicate. But have you ever thought, that a small baby cannot use language or words to speak, but he chooses signs to show his anger, happiness, and sorrow. Similarly, deaf and dumb persons also use sign language for communicating with other people. So, this is the significance of Non-verbal communication in many lives.

**Source: <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-verbal-and-non-verbal-communication.html>**

### **Disadvantages**

- Memorization requires too much of time.
- There are chances of making it a dull and monotonous presentation because you go exactly by whatever you have memorized.
- Even your mnemonic skills fail you if you have not rehearsed adequately. (The use of mnemonics is explained in Chapter 8.)
- No flexibility or adaptation is possible during the speech.
- The speaker gets flustered if he forgets a word, sentence, or a whole paragraph. Among all the four modes of delivery, extemporaneous is the best because of its flexible nature and its effectiveness. Hence it is always better to use this mode to make your presentations more lively, effective, and memorable.

## **KINESICS**

*'Nobility and dignity; self-abasement and servility, insolence and vulgarity, are reflected in the face and in the attitudes of the body whether still or in motion.'*

Socrates

Kinesics is the name given to the study of the body's physical movements. In other words, it is the way the body communicates without words, i.e., through various movements of its parts. As is well said by Watzlawick and his associates, 'You cannot not communicate'. You communicate just by being. Nodding your head, blinking your eyes, shrugging shoulders, waving the hands, and other such physical activities are all forms of communication. Some kinesic behaviours are deliberately intended to communicate, as when you nod your head for acceptance. Understanding non-verbal cues will develop your ability to use them more effectively during your presentations.

While speaking, listening, reading, or writing, we consciously use words to receive or send ideas. Why do we use words? Because they are the primary symbolic forms that convey our thoughts. On paper, words remain static; punctuation marks are used to convey pauses, expressions, emotions, etc. But in face-to-face communication the message is conveyed on two levels simultaneously. One is verbal and the other is non-verbal. For example, you are congratulating two of your friends on their success in their interviews. If you extend your hand to them with a big smile on your face along with your utterance, 'Congrats', your appreciation has more impact on them than the word in isolation. Your smile and the handshake are non-verbal means of communication, which enhance the impact of your verbal communication. Sigmund Freud established the power of non-verbal communication when he stated, 'He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent he chats with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore'.

The non-verbal part of an oral presentation is not as deliberate and conscious as verbal communication. Rather, it is subtle and instinctive. Non-verbal communication refers to all communication that occurs without the use of words either



spoken or written. Non-verbal communication is concerned with body movements (Kinesics), space (Proxemics) and vocal features (paralinguistic features). It is important that we know more about these features of body language because the verbal components of oral communication carry less than 35 percent of the social meaning of the situation, while more than 65 percent is carried on the non-verbal band. People react strongly to what they see.

### **Body Language**

When a speaker presents himself, we see him before we start hearing him. Immediately, we begin developing impressions of his abilities and attitudes based on the non-verbal signals he sends. This is why body language is so critical in oral communication.

Body language includes every aspect of your appearance, from what you wear, how you stand, look, and move, to your facial expressions, and physical habits such as nodding your head, jingling change in your pocket, or pulling your necktie. Your use of space and gestures are other key concerns.

### **Personal Appearance**

Personal appearance plays an important role; people see you before they hear you. As you adapt your language to an audience, you should also dress appositely. Appearance includes clothes, hair, jewellery, cosmetics, and so on. In today's society the purpose of clothing has altered from fulfilling a basic need to expressing oneself. Clothes accent the body's movements.

You should expect appearance to be a part of the message you communicate. Plan your appearance in such a way that it communicates effectively to others. Even before the speaker utters his first syllable you begin to form an opinion about him and visualize the way he is going to talk. One's appearance may put the audience into a resistant or hostile attitude or induce in them a receptive mood. You should be clean and well groomed, conforming to the need of the occasion. Appearances communicate how we feel about ourselves and how we want to be viewed.

### **Posture**

Posture generally refers to the way we hold ourselves when we stand, sit, or walk. Novice speakers are unsure of what to do with their body. Certain mannerisms creep in, usually from nervousness—pacing constantly, bobbing the shoulders, fidgeting with notes, jingling coins, either constantly moving or remaining static. Truly, what one speaks is very important but what you do just before you begin and after you have finished is equally important.

You need to analyse the effects of body shape and posture to understand their role in non-verbal communication. When you are with your friends you are probably spontaneous. You are unaware of your posture, being fluid in all of your physical movements. But when you encounter an unfamiliar situation, you become more conscious of your posture. Stiff, unnatural positions such as the *big leaf* (hands crossed below the waist with the back of the hand toward the audience) send the message that you are unsure of yourself and your message. Instead, lower your hands to your sides in a natural, relaxed, and resting posture. Standing, sitting, or walking in a relaxed way is a positive posture, which will encourage questions and discussion. Also being comfortably upright, squarely facing an audience, and evenly distributing your weight are all aspects of posture that communicate professionalism, confidence, attention to detail, and organization. Seeing is believing; so be and appear at ease. Neither remain static nor fidget. Move occasionally to hold attention, suggest transitions, and increase emphasis.

The way you sit, stand, or walk reveals a lot about you:

- Slumped posture—low spirits
- Erect posture—high spirits, energy, and confidence
- Lean forward—open, honest, and interested
- Lean backward—defensive or disinterested
- Crossed arms—defensive and not ready to listen
- Uncrossed arms—willingness to listen

#### **Ways to Improve Body Language**

Try and videotape a part of your presentation. Play it back and identify one aspect of your body language you want to improve. After more rehearsal, record this part again and see if there is any improvement. You can also practise in front of a mirror to improve on facial expressions. When you have worked through your entire presentation, and feel sufficiently confident, invite a friend to watch your performance. Ask him for comments on aspects of your body language that are good or need improving.

#### **Gesture**

Gesture is the movement made by hands, arms, shoulders, head, and torso. Adroit gestures can add to the impact of a speech. A well-timed gesture not only drives a point home but also enhances the impact and adds greater value to what is being said. Similarly, an ungainly gesture (like playing with your key chain or button) can mar the effectiveness of the message.

Gestures clarify your ideas or reinforce them and should be well suited to the audience and occasion. Gestures are more numerous than any forms of non-verbal communication, and the meanings attached to them are diverse. It has been observed that there are as many as 700,000 varied hand gestures alone, (Ray L. Birdwhistell, *Introduction to Kinesics*, Louisville, Ky. University of

Louisville Press, 1952), and the meanings derived from them may vary from individual to individual.

Gestures should not divert the attention of the listener and distract from your message. Your gesture should be quite natural and spontaneous. Be aware of and avoid irritating gestures like playing with a ring, twisting a key chain, clasping the hands tightly, or cracking your knuckles. Gestures can roughly be divided into the following types:

- Enumerative—numbers
- Descriptive—size of the objects
- Symbolic—abstract concepts
- Locative—location of an object
- Emphatic—emphasis

## Facial Expression

*Some facial expressions are common to all cultures. Even if you have never met a person from a particular culture, you can recognise certain feelings or attitudes. These are love, happiness, and mirth; surprise; anger and determination; contempt and disgust; fear and suffering.*

Along with posture and gesture, facial expressions also play an important part. The face is the most expressive part of your body. A smile stands for friendliness, a frown for discontent, raised eyebrows for disbelief, tightened jaw muscles for antagonism, etc. Facial expressions are subtle. You can use them in a variety of ways: to aid or inhibit or complement your communication. The face rarely sends a single message at a time. Instead it sends a series of messages—your facial expressions may show anxiety, recognition, hesitation, and pleasure in quick succession.

Facial expression is difficult to interpret. Though there are only five basic expressions, you can have 33 blends. (Pearce, C. Glenn et al., 1988, Business Communication: Principles and Application, Second edn, page 590, USA, John Wiley and sons.) Also, people tend to hide their true feelings and reveal only those expressions required at a particular movement. The five basic expressions are:

- Inhibited—restricted and stolid
- Uninhibited—spontaneous and impetuous
- Substitute—happy with a long face
- Frozen—no change in expression
- Blank—no expression at all

## Eye Contact

The eyes are considered to be the windows of the soul. You look to the eyes of a speaker to help find out the truthfulness of his speech, his intelligence, attitudes, and feelings. Eye contact is a direct and powerful form of non-verbal communication. You use your eyes to cull information. Your eyes are a rich source of feedback.

Looking directly at listeners builds rapport. Prolonging the eye contact for three to five seconds (without, however, giving the impression of staring) tells the audience

that you are sincere in what you say and that you want them to pay attention. Eye contact is especially important when you start the presentation, and at the beginning of each new section.

Your upper eye lids and eyebrows help you to convey an intricate array of non-verbal messages. Arabs, Latin Americans, and South Europeans look directly into eyes. Asians and Africans maintain far less eye contact. In the professional world you should make personal and pleasant eye contact with the listeners. It is not only that you should look at the audience, how you look at them also counts. Do not look outside the windows, towards the roof or floor, or at one particular section; instead try to establish eye contact with one and all. Your eye contact shows your intensity and elicits a feeling of trust. A direct look conveys candour and openness. This direct and powerful form is a signal for confidence or sincerity; therefore, experienced speakers maintain longer eye contact. Your eyes should convey the message, 'I am pleased to talk with you, believe deeply in what I am saying'.

Eye contact and eye movement help you tremendously in the filtering process or in getting the desired response or feedback. However, be wary of cultural differences when addressing a foreign audience as signals vary from one culture to another.

## **PROXEMICS**

Proxemics is the study of physical space in interpersonal relations. Space is related to behavioural norms. The way people use space tells you a lot about them. In a professional setting, space is used to signal power and status. For instance, the head of a company has a larger office than more junior employees, and you, as a speaker, will have an open space before you when addressing an audience. You should use the psychological power of this space to your advantage.

Your gestures should be in accordance with the space available. When you have plenty of space to manoeuvre, move more boldly and expand your gestures. When seated at a table, use milder gestures. Even here, though, you can subtly reach out over the table to extend your space. This expresses control and authority.

Moving closer to an audience is useful to invite discussion, to express agreement, or to emphasize a point. However, do not retreat from this close position when you make an important point or conclude your presentation. This encourages the audience to downplay the importance of your point.

You can learn a great deal about how to use space to great advantage by observing dynamic, influential speakers. It is interesting to note that like kinesics, proxemics also has cultural variations. A Latin American or a French is likely to stand closer to another person when conversing than an Anglo-Saxon would in the same situation. Americans, addressed from a close distance, may feel offended

or become aggressive. Studies show that Americans, unlike many other nationals, avoid close contact with one another in public places.

Edward T. Hall in his *The Hidden Dimension* divides space into four distinct zones.

- (i) **Intimate:** This zone starts with personal touch and extends just to 18 inches (one and a half feet). Members of the family, lovers, spouses, relatives and parents fall under this zone. The best relationship that describes it is the mother-child relationship. No words are spoken; if at all something is spoken, it is just some whispering sounds. Other individuals come close for a very brief period and only under special circumstances—when they want to congratulate you, sympathize with you, or console you. A handshake, a pat on the back, or a hug all come into this zone.
- (ii) **Personal:** This zone stretches from 18 inches (one and a half feet) to 4 feet. Your close friends, colleagues, peers, etc. fall in this tier. Instead of whispering sounds or utter silence, normal talking takes place. Though this zone is personal, it is quite a relaxed and casual place. It permits spontaneous and unprogrammed communication. Sitting or standing so close brings you closer to the listener and gives the impression of friendliness and warmth.
- (iii) **Social:** Social events take place in this radius of 4 feet to 12 feet. In this layer, relationships are more official. You tend to become more formal. People are more cautious in their movements. You should be smart enough to conduct it with less emotion and more planning. Here the number of people decides whether it should be sitting-sitting or sitting-standing position. It is through experience that you decide which position to take. If the number of people is less and you can maintain eye contact, you could go in for a sitting position. If you have to be authoritative and the audience is large, you can go for the sitting-standing position.
- (iv) **Public:** This zone starts from 12 feet and may extend to 30 feet or to the range of eyesight and hearing. Events that take place in this zone are formal. Here the audience views what is happening as an impartial observer. The degree of detachment is very high. The audience is free to do whatever it feels like. Here the speaker has to raise his voice to communicate to others or use a microphone. Public figures like the Prime Minister of a country, for example, have to maintain this distance for security reasons.

## PARALINGUISTICS

Paralinguistic features are non-verbal vocal cues that help you to give urgency to your voice. Your voice is your trademark; it is that part of yourself that adds human touch to your words. Writing does not have that immediacy because the words are static on a page. Voice gives extra life to your delivery. Therefore, you

may find it useful to understand the characteristic nuances of voice, namely *quality, volume, rate, pitch, articulation, pronunciation, and pauses.*

### **Projection**

Loudness and projection are two different aspects of our voices. It is possible to project your voice without being loud. Stage actors do this when they speak in a low voice, and yet are heard in the back rows of a theatre. If you begin speaking in a loud voice, you will get the full attention of the audience. Then shifting to a lower, softer voice when appropriate will hold that attention. Generally, you need to use a louder voice at the beginning of your talk and at the start of each new section.

To make your voice travel through the room, breathe deeply. You need air in your lungs to project. Often, speakers run out of air and let their voices fade just when they are delivering critical information. At the end of a section, your voice need not be loud, but it must project.

### **Quality**

Quality is a characteristic that distinguishes one voice from another. Each one of us has a unique voice and its quality depends upon its resonating mechanism. While the quality of one's voice cannot be changed, it can be trained for optimum impact. It may be rich and resonant, soft and alluring, thin and nasal, hoarse and husky, or harsh and irritating. Very few people are naturally blessed with deep and resonant quality; everybody can improve upon the quality of the voice and develop it to its fullest potential. Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill, for example, adapted the quality of their voices to become speakers par excellence.

### **Volume**

Volume is the loudness or the softness of the voice. Your voice should always project but need not always be loud. If the place you are speaking in is large and open, the volume should be high, and if the place is small and enclosed, the volume should be low. If your volume is too high you may sound boorish and insensitive, whereas if it is too low you may convey an impression of timidity, which has no place in the business world. It also gives the impression that you are not well prepared and lack the confidence to express yourself. In all, you should vary your volume so as to make your voice audible and clear.

One way to improve your voice and speaking style is through reading aloud. Read children's stories, giving each character a unique way of speaking, to develop vocal variety. Reciting tongue twisters such as *she sells sea shells on the seashore* also improves diction.

### **Pace/Rate**

Rate is the number of words which you speak per minute. It varies from person to person and from 80 to 250 words per minute. The normal rate is from 120 to 150

words. Cultivate your pace so as to fit in this reasonable limit. If a person speaks too slowly and monotonously, he is most likely to be considered a dull speaker even though the contents of his speech may be highly interesting. Similarly, a fast speaker also causes discomfort because the listeners do not get time to grasp the thoughts and switch from one thought to another. Under these circumstances, listeners may just stop listening to you and their attention may go astray.

It is best, therefore, to vary your speaking pace. Use pauses to create emphasis. A well-paced, varied message suggests enthusiasm, self-assurance and awareness of audience.

### **Pitch**

Pitch refers to the number of vibrations per second of your voice. The rise and fall of the voice conveys various emotions. 'Thank you' is such a phrase. You can find out the difference when you utter it indifferently and when you say it with sincerity. *Inflections* give warmth, lustre, vitality, and exuberance to your speech. Lowness of pitch can indicate sadness, shock, dullness, guilt, etc. If you are excited, joyous, ecstatic, triumphant, and even angry, then your pitch automatically becomes high. A well-balanced pitch results in a clear and effective tone. It helps you avoid being monotonous. *Intonation* refers to the rising and falling pitch of the voice when somebody says a word or syllable. By learning and adopting an appropriate intonation pattern, you will be able to express your intention very clearly.

Pitch is also influenced by your air supply; if you run out of air, you cannot control the pitch of your voice. Like the strings of a guitar, if you tense the vocal chords, a higher pitch results, and if you relax the vocal chords, a lower pitch results. Tilting your chin up or down reduces your ability to control pitch.

Use a variety of pitches to hold your listeners' attention. Avoid raising the pitch of your voice as you end a sentence. This vocal pattern, called *pitching up*, makes your remarks sound tentative or unfinished.

### **Articulation**

Speakers should be careful not to slop, slur, chop, truncate, or omit sounds between words or sentences. If all the sounds are not uttered properly, the flow of understanding gets interrupted and deters the listener from grasping the meaning of the message. The result is similar to the negative impression that written errors leave with a reader. Lazy articulation, slurred sounds, or skipping over words will lower the credibility of the speaker. Develop in yourself the ability to speak distinctly; produce the sounds in a crisp and lucid manner without causing any obfuscation. Your audience will better understand 'I do not know' and 'I want to go', than 'I dunno' and 'I wanna go'.

## Pronunciation

If *articulation* means speaking out all the sounds distinctly, then *pronunciation* requires us to speak out sounds in way that is generally accepted. The best way is to follow British Received Pronunciation. (Received pronunciation or R.P., or Educated Southern British English, is a form of English socially acceptable in all parts of the country.) One should be careful enough to pronounce individual sounds along with word stress according to the set norms. Don't be taken in by the fancy that you know the correct pronunciation of all the words. Wherever there is confusion, always consult a good dictionary and try to pronounce it accordingly. Given below are few commonly mispronounced words along with their correct pronunciation:

Word	Common Error	Correct Pronunciation
arctic	ar-tic	arc-tic
gesture	ges-ture	jes-ture
3 tier	3-tyre	3-tear
gigantic	jai-jan-tik	jai-gan-tik

## Voice Modulation

While intonation refers to the tonal variations, modulation pertains to the way we regulate, vary, or adjust the tone, pitch, and volume of the sound or speaking voice. Modulation of voice brings flexibility and vitality to your voice, and you can express emotions, sentiments like impatience, careful planning, despondency, suspicion, etc. in the best possible way. If you do not pay special attention to the modulation of your voice, then your voice becomes flat and you emerge as a languid speaker with no command over your voice. Word stress and sentence stress also play an important role in voice modulation. For example, by accentuating one or two words in a sentence (e.g., in the sentence *This company produces 50 cars everyday*, you can stress 'this' and '50 cars'), you can effectively bring in modulation in your voice. If you are a novice in professional presentations, it is better to initially underline the words that you may like to stress during your presentation. This will help you to avoid sounding dull and monotonous.

## Pauses

A pause is a short silence flanked by words. A pause in speaking lets the listener reflect on the message and digest it accordingly. It helps you glide from one thought to another one. It embellishes your speech because it is a natural process to give a break. Be spontaneous. If you become too self-conscious, this process becomes artificial.

A pause helps not only the listener but the speaker as well. Pauses automatically come in between the major points of your speech. Do not prolong the pauses unnecessarily as they will hinder the flow of your speech. Vocalized pauses or vocal segregates like *uh*, *ah*, *hm*, *ahem*, *a*, *aah* should be substituted by silent pauses. Vocalized pauses make the speech sound evasive and untruthful, they dilute the conviction of your point. If you keep inserting repetitive phrases like '*I mean*', '*well*', '*like*', '*ok*', '*got it*', '*actually*', etc., then these phrases sweep away the good impression you have created. Use pauses thoughtfully, and time them well as they exhibit assurance, confidence, and self-control. Use pauses at the end of certain thought units to let the audience fully absorb the information.

## CHRONEMICS

Chronemics is the study of how human beings communicate through their use of time. How do you communicate with others? What does time mean to you? In order to use time as an effective communication tool, you should understand the impact it has and then act accordingly. We attempt to control time, trying to use it more effectively.

In the professional world, time is a valuable commodity. When you are late for an appointment, people react negatively. If you arrive early, you are considered either over-eager or aggressive. So always be on time. Through time, you communicate both subtly and explicitly.

People have their own 'time language'. To one person who wakes up at 8:00 a.m., 6:30 a.m. may be early; to another, 8:00 a.m. may be late if he wakes up at 5:00 a.m. every day!

Time language also varies from culture to culture. In Latin countries, meetings usually begin well after their appointed time. Everyone knows this. It is customary, and no one is offended by the delay. In Scandinavia or Germany, on the other hand, strict punctuality is the rule, and tardiness is frowned upon.

As a speaker, your awareness of schedules is a chronemic element. Good timing is crucial, and you should rehearse a formal presentation until it is a little under time, because staying within time limits is a mark of courtesy and professionalism. If, at the beginning of your presentation, you assure the listeners that you will be giving them time at the end of your presentation and then keep talking till the time is all gone, without allowing scope for the audience to respond, you will undoubtedly annoy the audience.

The shorter the time allowed, the more difficult the task. The more difficult the task, the greater the need not just for careful planning and effective visual aids but also for diligent rehearsal.

To recapitulate, oral presentation is an art that requires careful planning, preparation, and a great deal of practice. This tool is both valuable and relevant. Apart from communicating the main purpose of your presentation, there are various factors that you need to blend inextricably to convey your message clearly. These features are: audience analysis, organization of matter, preparation of an outline, nuances of delivery, kinesics and paralinguistics, and visual aids. Your aim should be to keep all these threads intact, neither too loose nor too tight. With care and practice, you can achieve wonders with your oral presentations.

# Difference between Oral Communication and Written Communication

Words play a crucial role in communication process, to transmit the message in the way it is intended to be conveyed. When words are used in the process of communication, it is known as verbal communication. Verbal transfer of information can be performed, orally or in written form. **Oral Communication** is the oldest means of communication, which is most commonly used as a medium for the exchange of information. It involves gathering or disseminating information through spoken words.

**Written Communication**, on the other hand, is a formal means of communication, wherein message is carefully drafted and formulated in written form. It is kept as a source of reference or legal record. In this article, we've presented all the important differences between oral and written communication in tabular form.

## Comparison Chart

Basis for Communication	Oral Communication	Written Communication
Meaning	Exchange of ideas, information and message through spoken words is Oral Communication.	Interchange of message, opinions and information in written or printed form is Written Communication.
What is it?	Communication with the help of words of mouth.	Communication with the help of text.
Literacy	Not required at all.	Necessary for communication.
Transmission of message	Speedy	Slow
Proof	No record of communication is there.	Proper records of communication are present.
Feedback	Immediate feedback can be given	Feedback takes time.
Revision before delivering the message?	Not possible	Possible
Receipt of nonverbal cues	Yes	No
Probability of misunderstanding	Very high	Quite less

## **Definition of Oral Communication**

Oral Communication is the process of conveying or receiving messages with the use of spoken words. This mode of communication is highly used across the world because of rapid transmission of information and prompt reply.

Oral communication can either be in the form of direct conversation between two or more persons like face to face communication, lectures, meetings, seminars, group discussion, conferences, etc. or indirect conversation, i.e. the form of communication in which a medium is used for interchange of information like telephonic conversation, video call, voice call, etc.

The best thing about this mode of communication is that the parties to communication, i.e. sender or receiver, can notice nonverbal cues like the body language, facial expression, tone of voice and pitch, etc. This makes the communication between the parties more effective. However, this mode is backed with some limitation like the words once spoken can never be taken back.

## **Definition of Written Communication**

The communication in which the message is transmitted in written or printed form is known as Written Communication. It is the most reliable mode of communication, and it is highly preferred in the business world because of its formal and sophisticated nature. The various channels of written communication are letters, e-mails, journals, magazines, newspapers, text messages, reports, etc. There are a number of advantages of written communication which are as under:

- Referring the message in the future will be easy.
- Before transmitting the message, one can revise or rewrite it in an organised way.
- The chances of misinterpretation of message are very less because the words are carefully chosen.
- The communication is planned.
- Legal evidence is available due to the safekeeping of records.

But as we all know that everything has two aspects, same is the case with written communication as the communication is a time consuming one. Moreover, the sender will never know that the receiver has read the message or not. The sender has to wait for the responses of the receiver. A lot of paperwork is there, in this mode of communication.

## **Key Differences between Oral Communication and Written Communication**

The following are the major differences between oral communication and written communication:

1. The type of communication in which the sender transmits information to the receiver through verbally speaking the message. The communication mode, which uses written or printed text for exchanging the information is known as Written Communication.

2. The pre-condition in written communication is that the participants must be literate whereas there is no such condition in case of oral communication.
3. Proper records are there in Written Communication, which is just opposite in the case of Oral Communication.
4. Oral Communication is faster than Written Communication.
5. The words once uttered cannot be reversed in the case of Oral Communication. On the other hand, editing of the original message is possible in Written Communication.
6. Misinterpretation of the message is possible in Oral Communication but not in Written Communication.
7. In oral communication, instant feedback is received from the recipient which is not possible in Written Communication.

## **Conclusion**

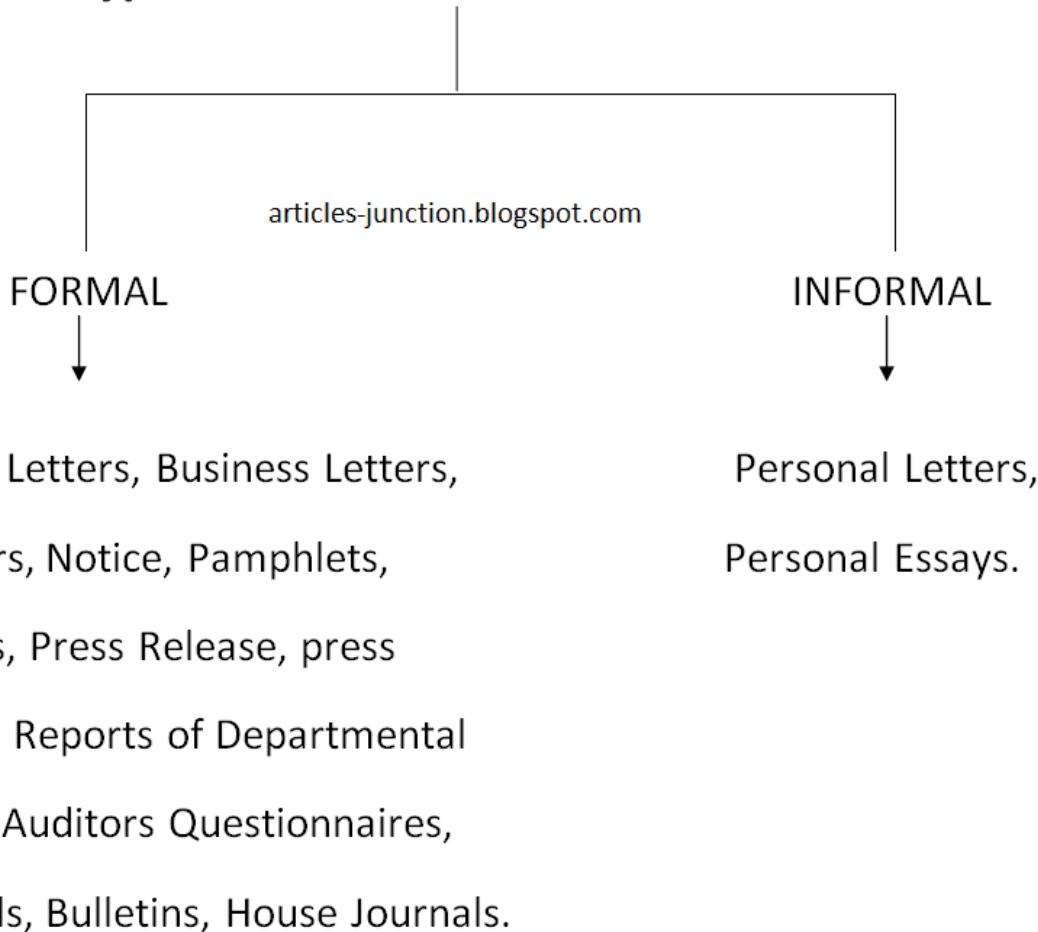
Oral Communication is an informal one which is normally used in personal conversations, group talks, etc. Written Communication is formal communication, which is used in schools, colleges, business world, etc. Choosing between the two communication mode is a tough task because both are good at their places. People normally use the oral mode of communication because it is convenient and less time-consuming. However, people normally believe in the written text more than what they hear that is why written communication is considered as the reliable method of communication.

**Source:** <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-oral-communication-and-written-communication.html>

# **Written Communication**

## **Meaning, Advantages and Disadvantages**

### **Types of Written Communication**



Written communication has great significance in today's business world. It is an innovative activity of the mind. Effective written communication is essential for preparing worthy promotional materials for business development. Speech came before writing. But writing is more unique and formal than speech. Effective writing involves careful choice of words, their organization in correct order in sentences formation as well as cohesive composition of sentences. Also, writing is more valid and reliable than speech. But while speech is spontaneous, writing causes delay and takes time as feedback is not immediate.

## **Advantages of Written Communication**

- ✓ Written communication helps in laying down apparent principles, policies and rules for running of an organization.
- ✓ It is a permanent means of communication. Thus, it is useful where record maintenance is required.
- ✓ It assists in proper delegation of responsibilities. While in case of oral communication, it is impossible to fix and delegate responsibilities on the grounds of speech as it can be taken back by the speaker or he may refuse to acknowledge.
- ✓ Written communication is more precise and explicit.
- ✓ Effective written communication develops and enhances an organization's image.
- ✓ It provides ready records and references.
- ✓ Legal defenses can depend upon written communication as it provides valid records.

## **Disadvantages of Written Communication**

- ✓ Written communication does not save upon the costs. It costs huge in terms of stationery and the manpower employed in writing/typing and delivering letters.
- ✓ Also, if the receivers of the written message are separated by distance and if they need to clear their doubts, the response is not spontaneous.
- ✓ Written communication is time-consuming as the feedback is not immediate. The encoding and sending of message takes time.
- ✓ Effective written communication requires great skills and competencies in language and vocabulary use. Poor writing skills and quality have a negative impact on organization's reputation.
- ✓ Too much paper work and e-mails burden is involved.

# Writing effectively to get a Job/Potential Client

In today's competitive world, a good writing must engage a reader. Whether it is a proposal or a resume, the reader must feel involved in the write-up.

*Read on to get tips on how to write better while applying for a job or for a business....*

1. **Start with something interesting:** In today's market scenario where several resumes are lying at the desk, why does a particular resume gets picked than the others in the lot? Thinking... It is because the resume has a cover letter / introductory note that makes it saleable. A summary of a candidate's profile is always better than a simply stated one line objective which merely talks about a candidate's aspiration and does not tell about his / her profile summary.
2. **Add a personal touch:** While writing to potential clients for business, ensure that the content is customized as per the client's profile and requirement. This helps creating a special bond with the reader.
3. **Give examples and not just adjectives:** A candidate must mention a relevant example to demonstrate or justify the adjectives included in the resume. For instance, if he / she talks about his strength in area of team management, he / she should mention an example on how well a team was handled. Avoid giving micro level details, however, mention about achievements / recognitions.
4. **Leverage numbers:** A candidate must back-up achievements / adjectives stated with numbers. Same goes for the corporate looking for business. Numbers form a strong base for generating commitment. A percentage movement showing improvement in performance or scores always catches attention of the readers.
5. **Avoid jargons:** If a candidate is applying in a completely different industry than the one he has worked before in, he should avoid / not use jargons which are not relevant to the new industry. Jargons tend to confuse people and there is a possibility of the message being lost. In case a jargon is to be used, the expanded form should also be mentioned. For instance a jargon EMS should be written in a statement as "Employee Measurement System [EMS]".
6. **Do not misrepresent data:** Write with integrity. Whether it is numbers or years of experience or sales volume - all facts stated should be true.
7. **Communication Skills:** Ensure that the document is error free - no spelling or grammatical mistake. Always proof read the document / proposal or get it read by a friend / colleague.
8. **Follow-up:** Most of the times a candidate submits a resume or a proposal to a prospective client and does not follow-up. Remember, there are several other resumes and proposals which are lying at the desk. A candidate needs to ensure that a prompt follow-up [read "not too much"] should be done.

# Effective Writing for Results

While writing to a friend, colleague, client, or a business partner, the content must be clear, concise, persuasive, accurate, and confident. Read on to know some tips for making the letter / memo / presentation worthwhile.

1. **Avoid being verbose:** Choose shorter words and sentences. For e.g. “I wanted to bring to your notice that the meeting has been cancelled”. [10 words] This sentence could be rephrased as “Please note the meeting has been cancelled”. [7 words]
2. **Use objective subject lines:** The subject of the memo / letter / e-mail should be objective and should reflect the content of the message. For e.g. “Tips on Effective Writing for Business” conveys to the reader that the message content will be related to information on effective writing.
3. **Decide your audience:** It is advisable to write to one set of audience as writing to different professionals would require choosing correct verbiage which is understood by different professionals in the same way. Also, do not use words which are very technical and can be understood only by a specific audience.
4. **Request for action:** Never leave the reader guessing “what next ?” He or she should know what is expected out of him / her. Close your mail / letter with the action you are expecting the reader to take.
5. **Share companywide messages with a strategy:** Do not overload employees with a lot of text heavy mails. Divide the message. For e.g. If a company has set up a videoconference room, the Corporate communication Team should sent out the first message announcing the launch, the second message on how to use the equipment, and the third message on how to block the conference room for client meetings and calls.
6. **Logically format a document:** Ensure that the content in the message is linked to the subject and to the content below and above it. There should be a logical connection in various paragraphs included in the document.
7. **Be Persuasive:** Address one reader rather than many as it increases the focus and also creates accountability of the reader.
8. **Engage the audience:** Talk to the audience. For e.g. Rather than saying, “There will be two ways for calculating the cost.” The sender of the message could say, “Financial Analysts can choose one of two procedures to calculate the cost.”
9. **Check before you send:** Always proofread the mail / memo / document that is to be sent. Remember the first draft is not always the final draft. Do not only check for content, but also, check for formatting, subject lines, audience, and attachments.
10. **Execute with confidence:** Do not be fearful while sending the communication. If a reminder needs to be sent, it should be sent. Do not try to send it to a group, rather send it to those who haven’t sent the reports so far. For e.g. In case you are following up on a report you asked for, address the audience as “Thank You X, Y, Z for sending the reports.

We are still awaiting reports from A, B, and C. Request you to send them latest by 4:00 PM today.”

## **Types of Written Communication:**

### **LETTER**

Letters are the most widely used form of **written communication**. They are used mostly for external **communication**. A letter has a complex layout which has to be carefully followed as each part of the layout has a purpose and is needed for reference. It is typed/printed on the company's letterhead. It may be sent by mail, speed post, courier or hand delivery.

### **MEMO**

MEMO (Short form of memorandum) is usually an informal message between members of an organization and generally relates to daily work. Instructions can be conveyed by a memo. Many organizations provide pads of memo forms (with blank sheets of carbon copies) for the exchange of short messages among individuals. Memo forms are usually small and used for brief messages. The forms may have the company's name printed on the top; spaces are provided for date, sender's name and department, and the receiver's name and department. Top executives of an organization may have personal memo pads with their name printed on the top, for use within the department. A memo may or may not be signed.

### **NOTICE**

A notice is used when people in the organization have to be given the same information. It is the most common method of mass **communication** within an organization. A notice is short; the language is simple, and the type is large and well-spaced for easy reading. A notice is put up on the notice board.

### **CIRCULAR**

A circular is a detailed document giving information, instructions or orders on a specific matter. A circular has a number and a date for reference, and is signed by the authorized signatory of the issuing office. Circulars are generally issued by the government departments and other official bodies like councils, universities and had offices of the

organization. Circulars are sent by mail or fax to the various offices that are to be given the information.

## **REPORT**

A report is a document prepared by an individual or a committee entrusted with the task of collecting information on a given subject. It requires careful research, collection of data and presentation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Reports are of varying length and may be anything from two pages to a full book divided into chapters.

## **MINUTES**

Minutes are the written record of decisions taken at a meeting. Different bodies have their own convention of recording the discussion and the decisions. Minutes may be written by hand or typed and pasted in a minute book, or typed and filed in a minute file. Minutes are a legal document.

SOURCE: <http://www.managementstudyguide.com/>

## **EFFECTIVE ORAL COMMUNICATION**

### **Ten Common Problems**

1. Lack of initial rapport with listeners.
2. Stiffness or woodenness in the use of body or face or body movements.
3. Speaker forgets to involve the audience logically and/or emotionally.
4. Fear of failure: uncomfortable body language and speech.
5. Poor use of eye-contact and facial expressions.
6. Lack of humor or appropriate examples
7. Speech direction and intent is unclear due to improper preparation.
8. Inability to use silence/pause for impact.
9. Lack of energy, inappropriate pitch, tone, speech rate, volume.
10. Lack of interesting content.

words which are more specific in their meaning. Be aware of the subtleties of the language. After thinking through the alternatives, apply the best solution that not only solves the problem, but also does not create any new difficulties. Hence, instead of using the troublesome term *bimonthly*, you can use either *twice in a month* or *once in a fortnight*. After successfully completing all the four steps, you come to the last step, namely *following rigorously*. This means that you must implement the best solution relentlessly. Having once come across a particular communication barrier, you should make a conscious effort to never let it crop up again.

Let us now look in detail at the term *noise* before going on to consider the different barriers to communication.

### **What is noise?**

*Noise here does not mean cacophony, but a break in the communication process.*

Any interference in the message sent and message received leads to the production of 'noise'. The term communication barrier, or that which inhibits or distorts the message, is an expansion of the concept of noise. Noise here does not mean cacophony, but a break in the communication process. If noise occurs because of technological factors, it is a smaller problem as it can be removed by correcting the technological faults. However, if the noise is due to human error, the parties involved in the communication process need to take corrective measures.

A barrier acts like a sieve, allowing only a part of the message to filter through; as a result, the desired response is not achieved. To communicate smoothly and effectively in an organization, irrespective of your position, you need to know how the barriers operate, why they cause misunderstandings and how to mitigate their negative impact.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF BARRIERS**

How often have you said, 'I meant to say this and not that'? Even with the best intentions, communication barriers crop up and our written and spoken messages are misunderstood. If we classify these barriers according to the processes of message formation and delivery, we get them at three levels:

- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Organizational

### **Intrapersonal Barriers**

Individuals are unique because of their idiosyncrasies. This is mainly because of differences in experience, education, value, and personality. Each of us interpret the same information in different ways as our thinking varies. Certain common

causes are responsible for the an individual's inbuilt barriers. Let us explore all the causes listed below that lead to these intrapersonal barriers:

- Wrong assumptions
- Varied perceptions
- Differing background
- Wrong inferences
- Impervious categories
- Categorical thinking

### Wrong Assumptions



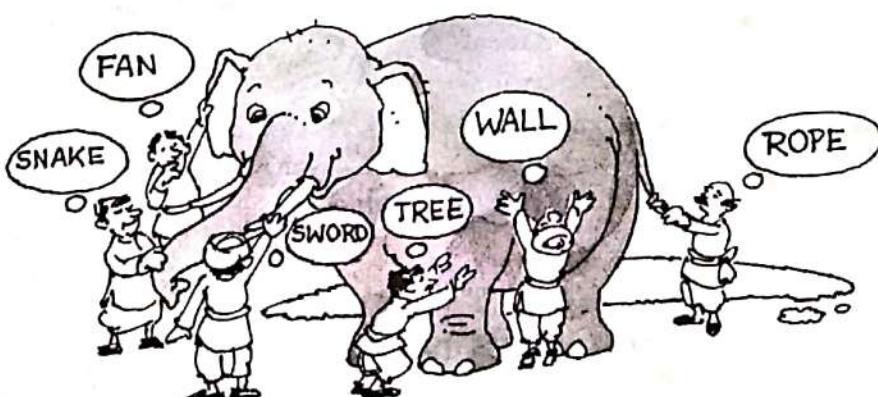
'Take the medicine only SOS.'

Many barriers stem from wrong assumptions. For example, when a doctor tells his patient that he has to take some medicine only 'SOS', without knowing whether the patient understands the term 'SOS', he is creating a barrier in their communication. Here the doctor has made a wrong assumption about his patient's level of knowledge. Wrong assumptions are generally made because the sender or the receiver does not have adequate knowledge about each other's background or entertains certain false notions, which are fixed in their mind. Sometimes the speaker does not realize that backgrounds, education, and experiences of different people can be different. A skilled communicator keeps these issues in mind to prevent them from becoming barriers.

To strengthen your skills as a communicator try to put yourself in the shoes of the listener. This exercise will prevent making wrong assumptions about the receiver.

### Varied Perceptions

We all know the story of the six blind men and their description of an elephant. The elephant is perceived by each man as a fan, a rope, a wall, a sword, a snake, and a tree. None of the blind men is wrong, as the part of the elephant body



touched by each man was compared with various objects. This is how an individual perceives reality.

Similarly, individuals in an organization also perceive situations in different ways. Let us take the case of an altercation between two individuals. If you are close to one of them, you are likely to be biased. You may perceive your friend's arguments as correct, and hence, may not be able to appreciate his opponent's point of view. It is all a matter of perception. The best way to overcome this barrier is to step back and take a wider perspective of the issue.

### Differing Backgrounds

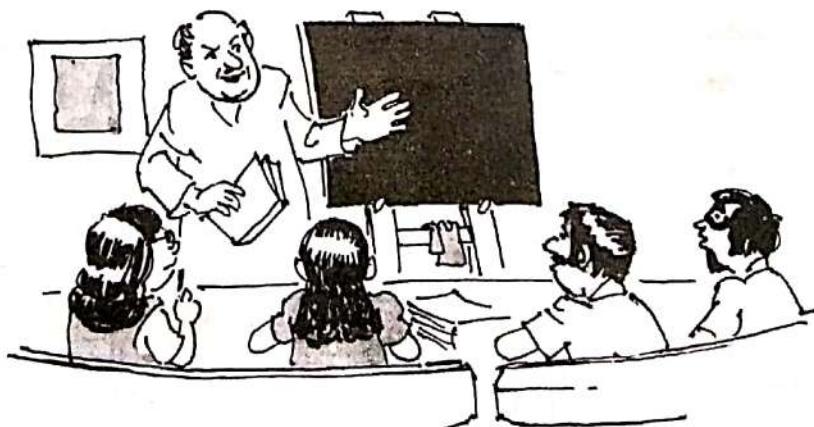
*To enhance your communication skills, it is necessary to know the background of your audience. You can accordingly use that information to construct your message.*

No two persons have a similar background. Even siblings differ in their genetic inheritance. People vary in terms of their education, culture, language, environment, age, sex, financial status, etc. Our background plays a significant role in how we interpret the message. At times, something not experienced by you earlier will be difficult to interpret or appreciate. Think of a class where the professor talks about his rock climbing adventure. Those students who have had the experience of trekking may be able to appreciate the professor's talk, while others who have never been trekking may not find it interesting at all.

A computer company representative would not make much sense to a group of doctors if in his presentation he goes into details about the hardware aspects of the computer that he has plans to install.

To enhance your communication skills, it is necessary to know the background of your audience. You can accordingly use that information to construct your message.

*Empathy or identification with another person is the solution to this barrier. Make an effort to understand where the listener can find it difficult to comprehend the message because of the difference between your background and that of the listener.* Use language understood by the receiver to avoid ambiguity and reduce multiple meanings in your communication. The meaning of the word resides in the mind of speaker; therefore, one ought to be cautious while using words.



'While on a climb ... sunglasses save you from glare ... Jumar helps you to pull yourself ....'

### Confusables

Common groups of words are sometimes confused or ignored by users.

*Ability* is a skill that you have mastered through study or practice. *Capacity* refers to innate talent.

If something *affects* you, it has an effect on you. To *effect* something however means to make something happen: 'The new Management wanted to *effect* drastic changes, but the unions felt these would adversely affect workers.'

The multiple meanings of a word increases astronomically the problem of communication barriers. A word can have several connotations and definitions. The more a word is prone to multiple meanings, the greater are the chances of its being misunderstood. A conscientious speaker is careful to explain his message in context by rephrasing and repeating words that can be confusing.

### When writing or speaking:

1. Think of your audience. How well do they understand the language? How much do they know about your logic?
2. Select your words with care, especially technical terms. Words must be suited to your audience's language skills.
3. If you *have* to use slightly difficult or unfamiliar words, try to explain these as part of your communication.
4. Don't fall into the trap, however, of oversimplifying your language; your audience could get put off if you use words that sound babyish.

Feedback serves as an effective barometer to find out if the intended message has been put across. Ask the receiver to paraphrase the message and also ask questions on what was said. Even if you have an extensive vocabulary, never use words merely to impress. Rather use them to express your ideas as simply and clearly as possible.

### Wrong Inferences

You have returned from a business trip and you find that two of your colleagues are absent. They do not turn up for several days. Since there is a recession on, you draw an inference that they have been laid off. The fact is that they have been promoted and sent to another department. This is an example of *fact-inference confusion*. It has happened because you failed to distinguish between what actually exists and what you had assumed to exist.

Inferences are more dramatic than facts, and for this reason they give more scope for gossip and rumour to burgeon. Inferences supported by facts are essential for professionals when they analyse material, solve problems and plan procedures. Systems analysts, marketing specialists, advertisers, architects, engineers, designers, and others must work on various premises and draw inferences after collecting factual data. When presenting any inference in the course of your work, you

could use qualifiers such as 'evidence suggest', or 'in my opinion' to remind yourself and the receiver that this is not yet established as fact.

### **Impervious Categories**

In general, we react positively to information only if it is in consonance with our own views and attitudes. Conversely, when we receive information that does not conform to our personal views, habits and attitudes, or appears unfavourable to us, we tend to react negatively or even disbelieve. Rejection, distortion, and avoidance are three common, undesirable, and negative reactions to unfavourable information.

Advances in communication and technologies are so rapid today that many people have difficulty in quickly adapting themselves to these developments. Instead of taking advantage of these developments that expedite the communication process, they tend to resist and criticize them. This is a result of having a closed mind. Such people are called misoneists.

They tend to ignore variations and differences, which lead to unreliable conclusions. In some people, certain prejudices are so deeply embedded in the psyche that these cannot be challenged.

Similarly, people who are very rigid in their opinions may face problems in communicating effectively. For example, one of your fellow students may think that only students of science are good in reasoning; another might be of the opinion that young executives are more efficient than older ones. Such people fall into impervious categories, because they may not be able to accept any deviation from their points of view.

### **Categorical Thinking**

People who feel that they 'know it all' are called *pansophists*. This type of thinking exists in people who feel that they know everything about a particular subject, and therefore refuse to accept any further information on that topic. For example, in a General Body meeting of your organization, you are to be briefed about the annual budget. However, you do not pay attention because you feel you have already been briefed about it by your secretary the previous day. Later you propose that new vehicles have to be bought. Imagine your embarrassment when you realize that the topic was discussed and a decision had already been taken in the General Body meeting. This type of thinking can pose a major barrier, leading to a failure in communication. In such instances, the receivers refuse information because of their 'know-it-all' attitude..

The clue to detecting this barrier in others and ourselves is the use of words like *all, always, everybody, everything, every time* and their opposites like *none, never, nobody, and nothing*. If a message contains too many of these words, then there is a fair chance of the communication getting distorted. To avoid this barrier, substitute

these words with phrases like 'in most situations' or 'likely'. Label your opinions with phrases like, 'it appears to me' or 'the evidence indicates'. If your data is insufficient, it is better to admit that you are unaware of the rest of the information rather than stonewalling.

To sum up, good communicators should:

- Be non-judgemental
- Be empathetic
- Not assume anything
- Stick to the subject
- Listen and above all paraphrase

However, you must remember that the generalization does not always hold good in all situations.

## **Interpersonal Barriers**

Intrapersonal barriers stem from an individual's attitudes or habits, whereas interpersonal barriers occur due to the inappropriate transaction of words between two or more people. The two broad categories into which this barrier can be classified are:

- Inefficiency in communication skills
- Negative aspect nurturing in the climate

Interpersonal barriers creep in as a result of the limitations in the communication skills of encoder or decoder, or both. In addition, they may also occur because of some disturbance in the channel. If there are two people involved in communication, the traits that distinguish them as individuals can be the root cause of a communication problem.

In a business environment, we neither attempt to change these traits, nor can we do it; however, we can understand the role of differences among individuals that lead to communication breakdowns. The most common reasons for interpersonal barriers are:

- Limited vocabulary
- Incongruity of verbal and nonverbal messages
- Emotional outbursts
- Communication selectivity
- Cultural variations
- Poor listening skills
- Noise in the channel

### **Limited Vocabulary**

An inadequate vocabulary can be a major hindrance in communication. At times, your pen falters, or your tongue fumbles as you search for the exact word or phrase. In your communication, the connotative and denotative meanings of your

### Some pointers to good word usage:

1. **Be positive** We all have a 'passive vocabulary'—words we know but never use. There are also words we have read or have a vague idea about. Try shifting these words into the vocabulary that you are familiar with and use.
2. **Dictionary and Thesaurus** These are invaluable tools. Use a dictionary to check the meanings of words. Make sure you can use it easily and confidently. A thesaurus will give you all the options to a word, so that you can choose the best one for the occasion.
3. **A wide choice** Remember, English gives you several choices of words for a single meaning. When you write, don't opt for the first word that comes to mind. Make an effort to think of other words. Use a thesaurus to help you in your work.
4. **Who is your audience?** When speaking or writing, always keep your audience in mind. Communication is a two-way street. Use words that are in keeping with your audience's level of language skills and their knowledge of the subject.
5. **Social setting** Do you have an informal or formal relationship with your audience? Words that suit one social setting could be disastrous in another and ruin your communication, however accurate your language may be. Choose your style of speaking or writing according to the occasion.
6. **Jargon** Unless your target audience is in the know, jargon tends to put off people. Avoid it!
7. **New words** Just as words fall into disuse and vanish from the language, new words are constantly being added. Some words will last and become widely used; others will fade away. While it is interesting to try out new words, be wary of trying to sound 'fashionable' all the time, or you will end up looking ridiculous.
8. **Sentence construction** Learn how words work in sentences before you can start developing your vocabulary. This will greatly benefit you, especially in writing.
9. **Understand word structure** Many words have common 'building blocks'—try to figure out how these work. Also try to understand how common prefixes and suffixes are used in constructing new words.
10. **Enjoy the language!** English is an amazingly creative, flexible language, capable of assimilating various influences and expressing subtleties of thought. As Thomas Carlyle said, 'Be not the slave of words'. Don't let words scare you—rather, get a hold on them and enjoy using them in your speaking and writing.

words should be absolutely clear to the receiver. During your speech, if you are at a loss for words, your communication will be very ineffective, and you will leave a poor impression on the audience. On the other hand, if you have a varied and substantial vocabulary, you can create an indelible impression on your listeners.

Do remember also that merely having a good vocabulary is of no use unless the communicator knows how to use it. Therefore, one should make constant efforts to increase one's vocabulary by regularly reading a variety of books and listening to native speakers of the language.

### Incongruity of Verbal and Non-verbal Messages

Imagine a situation where your CEO introduces the newly recruited middle level manager to the other employees. In a small speech, he conveys the message that he is very delighted to have the new manager appointed in his office. However,



'Did whatever I said in the last half hour make any sense to you?'

Actions speak louder than words, and thus, non-verbal cues provide a deeper insight into the sender's message. Ignoring non-verbal cues or misinterpreting them can result in the message being completely misunderstood. Thus, one should not only try to accurately gauge others' non-verbal cues but also be aware of one's own body language.

Generalizations, based on assumptions about physical appearance or dress, can also lead to severe communication barriers. *Physical appearance often serves as one of the most important non-verbal cues. First impressions regarding people are made on the basis of physical appearance.* For instance, people initially formed negative impressions of Einstein because of his haggard appearance. It is important to remember that physical appearance can have a great impact on any kind of conversation.

**Guidelines to improve your appearance:**

- Dress according to the occasion
- Wear neat and clean clothes
- Choose an appropriate hairstyle
- Wear clean and polished shoes

While interpretation of non-verbal cues requires keen observation, there are also pitfalls to guard against. For instance, there is great disparity in the use and interpretation of non-verbal messages across countries and cultures. For example, in Kenya, a mother-in-law and a son-in-law avoid eye contact. In fact they turn their backs to each other. In America, this would be a sign of disrespect.

In brief, your non-verbal cues should consistently match your verbal messages, adding to their effectiveness and enhancing your image as a competent and interesting communicator.

### **Emotional Outburst**

Imagine that you are the President of a well-established company. There are rumours floating amongst your employees that you have indulged in fraudulent activities. You are fully aware that these rumours are baseless. However, when

the expression on his face shows just the opposite of what he is saying. The stark difference between the verbal and non-verbal aspects of his communication leaves his listeners feeling confused and puzzled. A communicator should acclimatize himself to communication environment, think from the angle of the listener, and then communicate.

Misinterpreted non-verbal communication acts as another barrier to effective information gathering. Non-verbal communication usually enhances and enlivens verbal communication.

you are asked to address the same employees, you are unable to put your point across, as you are flushed with anger. Despite the fact that you are a confident public speaker, your communication failed as you were overwhelmed by your emotions.

In most cases, a moderate level of emotional involvement intensifies communication, making it more personal. However, excessive emotional involvement can be an obstacle in communication. For example, extreme anger can create such an emotionally charged environment that rational discussion is just not possible. Likewise, prejudice, stereotyping, and boredom all hinder effective communication. Positive emotions like happiness and excitement also interfere in communication, but to a lesser extent than negative feelings.

Emotions are an integral part of our being, whether in business or personal encounters. By sharpening self-awareness, intuition, and empathy, emotions can help in developing an environment highly conducive to good communication.



Yet, situations often arise where people react negatively. Depending on their nature and the situation, this negative reaction may either be classified as hostile or defensive. Hostility can be considered as a move to counter-attack the threat, whereas defensiveness is resistance to it. Both occur in situations where the receiver of the message perceives some kind of threat. Both these responses have an extremely negative impact on the communication. Messages are either misinterpreted, ignored, or overreacted to by people displaying such behaviour. Those who witness such behaviour are most likely to lower their opinion about the sender of such messages.

It is important to maintain one's composure in all kinds of communications. Viewing issues from different perspectives helps develop objectivity and rational thinking, which in turn can eliminate many of the causes of hostility or defensiveness.

If you are confronted with such negative behaviour, it is essential that you do not retaliate. The person displaying these emotions should be calmed down. He should preferably be taken to a quiet place to try and sort out the problem that caused his emotions to spin out of control.

Usually, in such exchanges, the volume of both the sender and receiver increases, with stress more on the volume than on the message. Therefore, it is important that the situation be checked at the outset, when the volume increases.

### **Communication Selectivity**

If you are the receiver in a communication process, and you pay attention only to a part of the message, you are imposing a barrier known as *communication selectivity*. You do this because you are interested only in that part of the message which may be of use to you. In such a situation, the sender is not at fault. It is the receiver who breaks the flow of communication.

Take for example, a meeting held by the chairman of a company. He has called all his senior executives from various divisions—production, marketing, finance, personnel, etc. During the meeting he discusses diverse topics. But, he may not be able to get across the entire message to each one of the participants, unless he gets their undivided attention. If the production manager and the marketing manager pay attention only to matters related to their respective areas, they may not be able to get the total perspective of what the chairman is conveying. Communication selectivity may act as a barrier in written forms of communication as well. *When you read a story, if you read only certain parts and omit others, you are posing this barrier.*

### Cultural Variations

This is one of the predominant factors in communication failure. As businesses are increasing across national boundaries to compete on a global scale, the outlook of global and domestic work force has changed drastically. European, Asian and American firms have expanded their businesses worldwide to create international ties through partnership, collaborations, and affiliations. The management and employees of such companies need to closely observe the laws, customs, and business practices of their host countries, while dealing with their multinational workforce. To compete successfully in today's globalized business environment, we must overcome the communication inadequacy arising from different languages and cultures.

This holds good in the area of education as well. You will prove to be a successful communicator abroad, during the course of your higher studies, if you take pains to understand the culture of the educational campus in which you would be studying. Your success, whether as a student or as a professional, lies in knowing the business practices, social customs, and etiquette of a particular country.

### Poor Listening Skills

A common obstacle to communication is poor listening habits. We should remember that listening and hearing are not the same. Hearing is a passive exercise while listening requires careful attention and accurate decoding of the signals received from the speaker. Misunderstanding and conflicts can be mitigated if people listen to the message with attention. The various distractions that hinder wandering attention.

Sometimes, an individual is so engrossed in his own thoughts and worries that he is unable to concentrate on listening. If a superior goes on shifting the papers on his desk while listening to his subordinate, without making eye contact with the latter, he pays divided attention to the speaker's message. This divided attention adversely affects the superior-subordinate relationship, besides distorting the



'The sales are low! We need to strategize. Call for a brainstorming session in Goa.'

Thus, business executives should be not only good speakers but also better listeners. This can be done by paying proper attention to the speaker through nonverbal responses, and asking questions at the appropriate moment. Do not jump to conclusions hastily, but maintain your composure and allow the speaker to finish before interpreting his message.

### Noise in the Channel

Noise interferes greatly in the transmission of signals. Noise is any unwanted signal which acts as a hindrance in the flow of communication. It is not necessarily limited to cacophony, but can also occur in visual, audio-visual, written, physical, or psychological forms. All these forms of noise communicate extraneous matter which may allay the receiver's interest in the message, even irritate him.

Technical or physical noise refers to the din of machines, the blare of music from a stereo system, or other such sounds which make the task of the listener difficult. Human noise can be experienced when, for instance, employees gather for a meeting and a member arrives late distracting everybody's attention. Disturbances in telephone lines, poorly designed acoustics of a room, dim typescripts, and illegible writing are some more examples of technical noise.

### Organizational Barriers

Communication barriers are not only limited to an individual or two people but exist in entire organizations. Every organization, irrespective of its size, has its own communication techniques, and each nurtures its own communication climate.

In large organizations where the flow of information is downward, feedback is not guaranteed. Organizations with a flat structure usually tend to have an intricately knit communication network. *Irrespective of size, all organizations have communication policies which describe the protocol to be followed.* It is the structure and complexity of this protocol that usually causes communication barriers.

We have already discussed in detail the formal and informal (grapevine) methods of communication existing in organizations. Most large companies are realizing

*In organizations with many levels of communication, messages have a greater chance of being distorted. This occurs due to poor listening, lack of concentration or a person's tendency to leave out part of the message.*

that a rigid, hierarchical structure usually restricts the flow of communication. This is because there are numerous *transfer points*, for communication to flow in these hierarchical systems, and each of these points has the potential to distort, delay, or lose the message. To obviate this, there should be direct contact between sender and receiver with minimum transfer stations. If the message is presented orally, this further reduces the dependence on transfer stations.

The main organizational barriers are enumerated below.

### Too Many Transfer Stations

The more links there are in a communication chain, the greater are the chances of communication that will occur. Imagine for instance, that your professor asks you to convey a message to *X*. You, because of some inconvenience or sheer laziness, ask your friend *Y* to do this job. Now, there are four people involved in this communication channel. Let us see how the message gets distorted as a result of the increased number of transfer stations:

**Professor:** *X* was supposed to meet me today regarding the submission of an assignment on Magnetic Theory. But I want *X* to meet me on Friday, as I am going out of station tomorrow.

**You** (to your friend): Ask *X* to meet the professor tomorrow, regarding the assignment, as the professor is going out of station today.

**Your friend Y** (to *X*): *X*, you have to meet the professor today as he will not be available tomorrow.

After going through this example, you will be able to appreciate how messages get distorted in huge organizations, with several layers of communication channels. The message gets distorted at each level not only because of poor listening or lack of concentration, but also because of several other reasons. Some employees may filter out a part of the message which they consider unimportant. Whatever the reasons for filtering or distorting the message, having too many transfer stations is always a deterrent to effective communication and should be avoided. Transfer stations do serve a purpose, but having too many of them is counterproductive.

### Fear of Superiors

In rigidly structured organizations, fear or awe of the superiors prevents subordinates from speaking frankly. An employee may not be pleased with the way his boss works but is unable to put his point across because of losing his boss's goodwill. As a supervisor, it is essential to create an environment which enables people to speak freely. An open environment is conducive to increasing the confidence and goodwill of a communicator. To avoid speaking directly to their boss, some employees may either shun all communication with their superiors. At

the other extreme, they may present all the information that they have. This is because they feel that they shall be viewed in an unfavourable light by leaving out some vital information. In written communication, this results in bulky reports, where essential information is clubbed with unimportant details. Such unfocussed messages result in a lot of wasted time. Such practices need to be eliminated by superiors to ensure that communication flows effectively in their organizations. Moreover, by encouraging active participation from their subordinates, senior officers pave the way for more ideas, resources or solutions to come forth from their subordinates.

### Negative Tendencies

Many organizations create work groups. While some groups are formed according to the demands of the task, such as accomplishing a particular project, many other small groups are also formed for recreational, social, or community purposes. These groups may be formal or informal, and generally consist of people who share similar values, attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and behaviours. Nevertheless, on some occasions, it is possible to have a communication barrier due to confliction of ideas between members and non-members of a group.

Student members of the sports club of an educational institution may be annoyed with non-members who oppose the club's demand for allocating more funds to purchase sports equipment. This type of opposition gives rise to insider/outsider relationships, which in turn pave the way for negative tendencies in the organization. Once these negative tendencies develop, they create noise in inter-personal communication. However, good managers can take advantage of these situations by considering these groups, not as troubleshooters, but regarding them as reinforcers of the organization's objectives and values. Experienced administrators can even make these groups organize orientation sessions for new recruits, thereby projecting the corporate image.

### Use of Inappropriate Media

Some of the common media used in organizations are *graphs* and *charts*, *telephones*, *facsimile machines*, *boards*, *e-mail*, *telephones*, *films* and *slides*, *computer presentations*, *teleconferencing*, and *video conferencing*. While choosing the medium you should therefore keep in mind the advantages, disadvantages and potential barriers to communication.

Before sending a message, you should consider the following factors while choosing the medium:

- time
- cost
- type of message
- intended audience

The telephone, for instance, would not be an ideal medium for conveying confidential information. Such messages are best conveyed in person or, if the receiver is located in another office, by speed post.

Typed letters, which provide permanence, are preferable for information which requires to be stored for future reference.

Usually, a mix of media is best for effective communication. For example, a telephone call to book an order, followed by a confirmatory letter ensures that there is no possible misunderstanding of the message.

### Information Overload

One of the major problems faced by organizations today is the availability of huge amounts of data which the receiver is unable to handle effectively. This is known as *information overload*.

The usual results of information overload are fatigue, disinterest, and boredom. Under these circumstances, further communication is simply not possible.

Very often, vital, relevant information gets mixed up with too many irrelevant details, and therefore goes ignored by the receiver. Thus, the *quality* of the information is much more important than the *quantity*.

To reduce information overload in an organization, screening of information is mandatory. Messages should be directed only to those people who are likely to benefit from the information. Major points should be highlighted, leaving out all irrelevant details. This kind of screening will be appreciated by all and can reduce the problem of information overload to a great extent.

We have observed that communication falls into two categories: either it is successful or it is not successful. Bearing in mind the possibilities and reasons for communication failure, you can take preemptive measures to avoid these barriers.



**Tips for effective communication:** Constant practice and rigorous implementation of these ideas will help you become an excellent communicator.

- Create an open communication environment.
- Always keep the receiver in mind.
- Avoid having too many transfer stations.
- Do not communicate when you are emotionally disturbed.
- Be aware of diversity in culture, language, etc.
- Use appropriate non-verbal cues.
- Select the most suitable medium.
- Analyse the feedback.

## **What is Noise in Communication?**

A broad definition of noise in communication is something that keeps a receiver from completely comprehending a message. Distractions can inhibit a person from offering his undivided attention and may keep him from fully grasping what you are trying to say. These disturbances guarantee that the receiver will either misinterpret your information or not understand it at all.

### **Physical Noise**

Sometimes the biggest impediment to clear communication is everyday environmental noise. This can include loud passersby, music (think talking over a band at a concert), traffic or children playing. Even a simple phone ringing can distract a listener so that she cannot fully focus on a conversation. Other physical conditions that can hinder communication are physical illness, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or being tired.

### **Semantic Noise**

Semantic noise affects communication when people communicate from different playing fields. In other words, they are working from different understandings, such as different primary languages, dialects or basic cultural characteristics. Poor handwriting and using slang can also be semantic noises that complicate effective communication.

### **Psychological Noise**

Psychological noise can be more difficult to define in a particular situation, as the mental makeup of every person is different. This type of noise includes concepts like prejudices, narrow-mindedness and personal bias. Communication can also be difficult if a person is feeling very emotional -- anger, sadness and even joy can affect how much someone can pay attention to a conversation or lecture.

### **Physiological Noise**

Physiological noise comprised of biological factors within a speaker or listener that interfere with effective and accurate communication. Examples of physiological noise include: poor eyesight, illness, hearing problems, allergies, headache, memory loss...

## **BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION**

Most people would agree that communication between two individuals should be simple. When you communicate, you are successful in getting your point across to the person you're talking to.

It's important to remember that there are differences between talking and communicating. When we talk, we tend to erect barriers that hinder our ability to communicate. Some of the communication barriers during conversation include:

The use of jargon. Over-complicated, unfamiliar and/or technical terms.

Lack of attention, interest, distractions, or irrelevance to the receiver.

Differences in perception and viewpoint.

Physical disabilities such as hearing problems or speech difficulties.

Language differences and the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents.

People often hear what they expect to hear rather than what is actually said and jump to incorrect conclusions.

### **Most Common Barriers to Effective Communication**

1. Physical Barriers: this has to do with poor or outdated equipment used during communications, background noise, poor lighting, temperatures that are too hot or too cold.

2. Attitudes: emotions like anger or sadness can taint objectivity. Also being extremely nervous, having a personal agenda or “needing to be right no matter what” can make communications less than effective. This is also known as “Emotional Noise”.

3. Language: this can seem like an easy one, but even people speaking the same language can have difficulty understanding each other if they are from different generations or from different regions of the same country. Slang, professional jargon and regional colloquialisms can even hurt communicators with the best intentions.

4. Physiological Barriers: ill health, poor eyesight or hearing difficulties, pain.

5. Problems with Structure Design: companies or institutions can have organization structures that are not clear, which can make communications difficult. Also to blame for faulty communications are bad information systems, and lack of supervision or training of the people involved.

6. Cultural Noise: people sometimes make stereotypical assumptions about others based on their cultural background.

7. Lack of Common Experience: it's a great idea to use examples or stories to explain a point that is being discussed. However, if the speaker and the audience cannot relate to these examples because they do not have the same knowledge or have not shared the same experiences then this tool will be ineffective.

8. Ambiguity and Abstractions Overuse: leaving things half-said, using too many generalizations, proverbs or sayings, can all lead to communications that are not clear and that can lend themselves to misinterpretations.

9. Information Overload: it takes time to process a lot of information and too many details can overwhelm and distract the audience from the important topics. Keep it Simple, Sweetie.

10. Assumptions and Jumping to Conclusions: This can make someone reach a decision about something before listening to all the facts.

All of these barriers to effective communication can either distract those involved or otherwise hinder your communications. Make sure they're not in the way of making your point crystal-clear!

### **The keys for effective communication:**

Listening:

Probably the most important thing you should learn from this article is that in order to be a "super communicator" you must be a super listener. Effective communication has more to do with listening than any other thing. By this we mean REALLY listening: paying attention and caring for the other person's needs so that you make sure your message (which can be a simple "uh-huh, I see what you mean.") is relevant and helpful for them.

Some scholars call this "active listening", which entails more than just scanning what you're hearing for something that relates to a story YOU want to tell. Active listening shows that you genuinely care about what the other person or audience feels or thinks, and you can prove this by doing things like:

Give reassuring sounds and phrases, like "I see", "aha", "hmm, I understand"

Ask questions to clarify the issue and show your interest, and

Restate the issue to make sure you understood correctly and show that this is important to you.

Listening with your whole body. Listening to what others have to say, but also to the clues that give insight to their thoughts and emotions as expressed in their body language or tone of voice. Also, listening to your own self and to what you are experiencing while you are communicating.

By being an active listener you can reduce misunderstandings and improve the chances that when it is your chance to speak, your message is heard and understood...as you wanted it to be!

### **Body Language:**

If you're trying to come across as an assertive speaker but your hands are shaking, your voice cracks and your eyes are bouncing from one place to another, you can pretty much kiss that image of yourself goodbye.

Also, if you're trying to make something sound really serious but you look like you're about to burst into laughter, while twirling your hair around your finger like a 7-year old, nobody is going to take you seriously either.

Make sure the rest of your body is delivering the same message that comes out of your mouth.

And when you're the one listening and can see the person who is doing the talking, pay attention! That person is sending out clues that will help you uncover the whole truth behind the story!

### **Emotional awareness:**

It's important to be aware of the emotions and attitudes that one is displaying when in the presence of someone else, too. Are you feeling nervous? Did you just hear something that made you angry or sad? How is that affecting the way you are delivering your message?

This is not about having to have a "poker face" during your entire conversation. It is about being aware of your thoughts and feelings so that you're certain they do not get in the way of the message you are trying to communicate.

It is OK if, say, a particular story makes you sad and a little teary-eyed but if you're sobbing uncontrollably others might become more concerned with making you stop than with what you have to say. Don't distract them from what you consider is the really important issue.

### **Common language:**

Trying to ask for directions to a farmer in Italy when you only speak English and the farmer only speaks Italian constitutes a problem, for sure. But sometimes both people can speak the same language and still not understand each other's words.

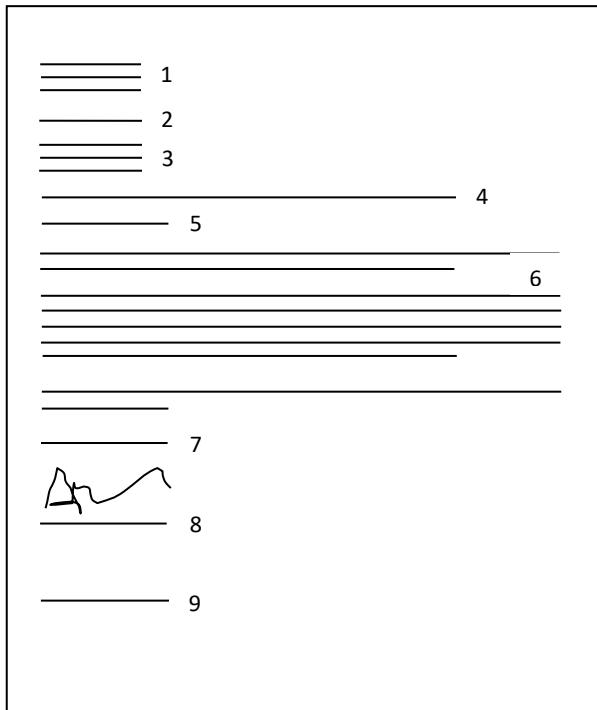
Make sure you only use slang or professional jargon if you are 100% sure everyone that is listening (or reading) can understand your words. Also, if you have a heavy accent that is unfamiliar to those around you, try to speak just a little slower...and stop talking and ask what is wrong if you start getting any puzzled looks!

### **Show some respect!**

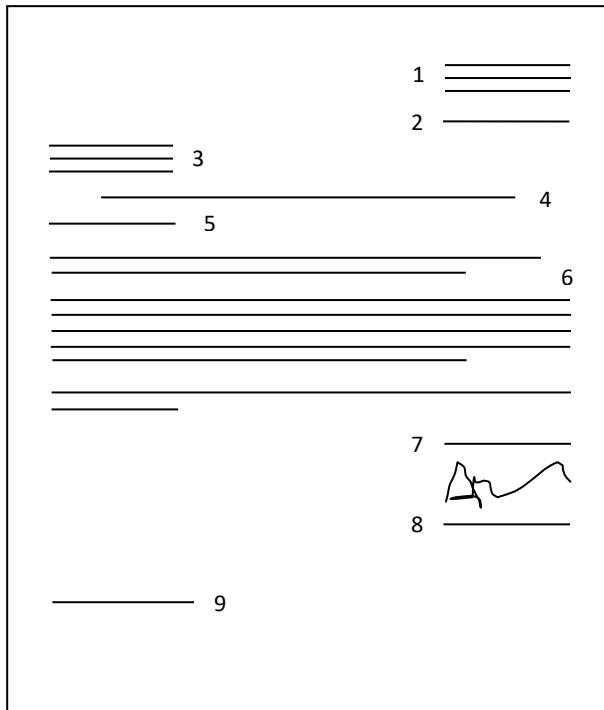
Make your mother proud and show some good manners when you speak AND when you listen.

Try your best to not interrupt, insult, scream, burp, pick your nose or teeth, roll your eyes, or make fun of the other person (although best friends can sometimes put up with a little teasing!).

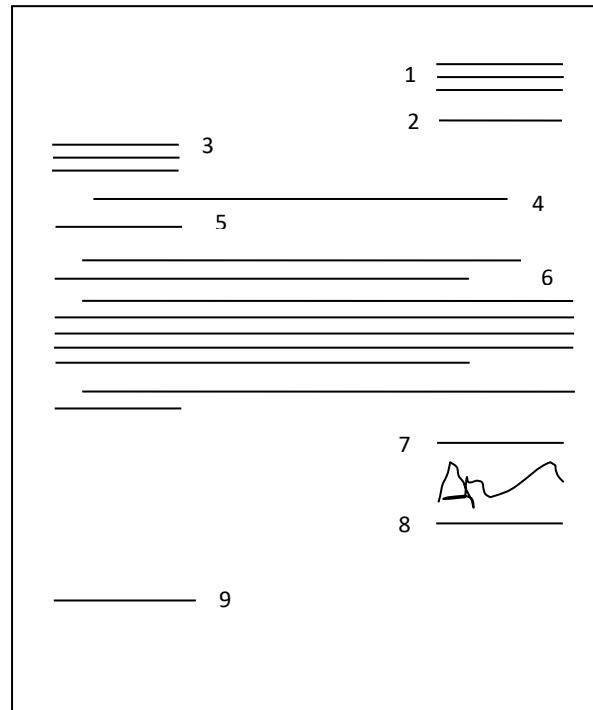
## DIFFERENT FORMATS OF BUSINESS LETTER



BLOCK STYLE



MODIFIED BLOCK STYLE



SEMI BLOCK STYLE

- 1. Heading (Sender's Address)
- 2. Date
- 3. Inside Address (Receiver's Address)
- 4. Subject Line
- 5. Salutation
- 6. Body
- 7. Complimentary Close
- 8. Signature Line
- 9. Enclosure

# 13

## Letters, Memos, and E-mails

### Business Letters

SIGNIFICANCE

PURPOSE

STRUCTURE

LAYOUT

PRINCIPLES

TYPES AND SAMPLES

- Claim Letters
- Adjustment Letters
- Sales Letters
- Job Application Letters

### Memos

CLASSIFICATION AND PURPOSE

STRUCTURE AND LAYOUT

STYLE

SAMPLES

### E-mails

ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS

OF E-MAIL

STYLE, STRUCTURE, AND

CONTENT

E-MAIL ETIQUETTES

SAMPLE E-MAIL MESSAGES

EFFECTIVENESS AND SECURITY

### BUSINESS LETTERS

#### Significance

Any business will have to correspond in writing with its customers, branches, suppliers, bankers, and others with whom it has or would like to have a lasting relationship. Business letters serve as a means to reach out to people not only within the locality and neighbourhood but also in other cities and nations. They represent you when you conduct transactions in writing. They have become such an integral part of everyday business that one cannot think of running a business without the related correspondence.

Though there are many modern communication methods available these days, the traditional business letters still retain their importance in the business world for the following reasons:

- Just as your personal letters help you keep your personal relationship with your friends and relatives alive, business letters assist you in sustaining your business relationships with other businesses and customers.
- They are the appropriate form of communication when the information you wish to convey is complex.
- They serve as permanent records and are a valuable repository of information, which you can refer to in future.

- They help you reach a large and geographically diverse audience thereby enabling you to save money on telephone calls.

## Purpose

The ultimate purpose of writing any business letter is to sustain the existing business relationships or to create and establish a new business relationship. But each individual letter will have a unique purpose. For example, when you apply for a job, you aim at offering your services to your prospective employer. Similarly, as the purchase manager of a company when you write a letter complaining about the damaged consignment, your aim is not only to bring the flaw to the notice of the recipient but also to request for a corrective action.

Business letters therefore are written for varied purposes as mentioned below:

- to inform
- to congratulate
- to enquire
- to order
- to request
- to collect dues
- to complain
- to make an adjustment
- to sell a product, service, or scheme
- to apply for a job

## Structure

Business letters are different from personal letters as they have a distinct structure and layout. Although there are different types of letters, each relevant in a specific context, they share a common structure comprising various elements or parts. You need to be familiar with not only these different elements but also their positioning in the letter and the purpose for which they are included in the letter.

Several of these elements appear in every letter; others appear only when desirable or appropriate.

## Standard Elements

**Heading** This element is also known as the letterhead, which shows the organization's name, full address, and also telephone numbers. If the letterhead is not used, the heading includes the sender's address.

Letterheads have the potential to create a favourable impression and hence need to be designed with thought and imagination. The colour and quality of paper, the size of the letterhead, the type of fonts that are used, and the spacing are factors to be carefully considered. Many companies even seek the help of advertising agencies to design their letterheads.

A sample letterhead is given below:

---

**Hi Tech Graphics**  
613, Circular Road, Bangalore-560001  
Serving your needs since 1990

**Phone: (080) 2335618 Fax: (080) 2335710 E-mail: [sales@hitechgraphics.com](mailto:sales@hitechgraphics.com)**

Whenever a letterhead paper is not used, the sender's address is either aligned with left margin or few spaces away from the centre depending upon the layout of the letter. For example, the same heading given above can be displayed as follows:

Hi Tech Graphics  
613, Circular Road  
Bangalore-560001  
Phone: (080) 2335618, Fax: (080) 2335710  
e-mail: [sales@hitechgraphics.com](mailto:sales@hitechgraphics.com)

or

Hi Tech Graphics  
613, Circular Road  
Bangalore-560001  
Phone: (080) 2335618, Fax: (080) 2335710  
e-mail: [sales@hitechgraphics.com](mailto:sales@hitechgraphics.com)

**Date** This refers to the date the letter was written. It includes the date, the month, and the year. You can represent this in either of the following two ways:

3 June 2003 or June 3, 2003

For international correspondence, check the accepted format for the recipient's region.

**Inside Address** This part of the letter identifies the recipient of the letter and is separated from the date by at least one blank line. The amount of space separating the inside address from the date may be adjusted to suit the length of the letter.

A courtesy title should precede the recipient's name. Table 13.1 shows you the appropriate titles to be used.

It is always best to address your letter to a specific person. You can usually identify the name of the person by checking the organization's website or telephoning the organization. If you do not know the name of a specific person, it is acceptable to address the letter to the department or to a job title.

Immediately following the addressee's name and title, separate lines should contain the name of the company, the street address or post office box number, and the city and state or province with proper postal code or zip code. If you are

**Table 13.1:** VARIOUS COURTESY TITLES

Audience	Courtesy Title
Men • All • Professional	Mr Professor, Dr, Captain, Father, Reverend, Justice, Brigadier, etc., (as the case may be)
Women • (Unmarried or marital status is unknown) • Married • Professional	Ms Mrs or Ms (as per the individual's preference) Professor, Dr, Captain, Reverend, Justice, Brigadier, etc., (as the case may be)
Firm Dignitaries (President, Prime Minister, Governor, Chancellor, Religious Heads, Royalty)	Messers (Messers Ram and Company) His/Her Excellency, His/Her Highness, His/Her Holiness (as the case may be)
Limited Company	Designation of the officer concerned. (The General Manager, Bharat Petroleum Limited)
Firms with name element (Sardar Balwant Singh and Brothers)	No title

writing internationally, the addressee's country should follow in capital letters and occupy the last line of inside address.

Here are a few samples of inside addresses:

Ms Christina George  
Corporate Communications Inc.  
3456 Grant  
Chicago, IL 60611  
USA

Messers Lal Chand and Sons  
56, Nehru Marg  
Greater Kailash  
New Delhi-110002

The General Manager  
Lion Industries Limited  
No. 3-A, East Patel Nagar  
Manasarovar  
Mumbai-400001

Professor (Ms) Gayathri Devi  
Department of Chemistry  
Indian Institute of Pharmacy  
Patel Colony  
Secunderabad-500017

**Salutation** Always try to address your letter to a person by name rather than title. If you must send a form letter or if you cannot find a specific name, you may choose a salutation such as:

Dear Committee Member  
Dear Students  
Dear Colleagues  
To All Sales Reps

To Whom It May Concern  
 Dear Sir or Madam  
 Dear Madam or Sir  
 Dear Purchasing Agent

If your letter is addressed to a company, the proper salutation is:

Gentlemen or Ladies  
 Ladies or Gentlemen

If your letter is addressed to an organization of only women or only men, use:

Dear Sirs  
 Dear Ladies  
 Dear Mesdames  
 Gentlemen  
 Ladies

#### **Punctuation After Salutation**

- After formal salutations, use a colon.
- After informal salutations, use a comma.

If you do not know the gender of the person to whom you are writing, use one of the following:

Dear Mallika Pande  
 Dear M. Pande

The way you address the recipient is governed by your relationship with that person. Whether you use the first or last name and whether you drop the *Dear* makes your letter either more formal or less formal:

Dear Mr Gupta: (most formal)  
 Dear Ashok:  
 Dear Ashok,  
 Ashok, (very informal)

**Message** This part of your letter will usually occupy the greatest amount of space. It should be single-spaced, with a blank line separating it from the preceding and the following parts of your letter. In addition, you should also separate each paragraph of your message by a blank line.

Within the message part or the main text of your letter, you can use formatting to help the reader. For example you can use bulleted lists, italics, and bold fonts. But be certain that these are consistent with the existing practice or style of letter writing in your organization.

**Complimentary Close** This element is a single word or phrase, separated from the message by a blank line. Here is a list of expressions that can be used for complimentary closing:

Sincerely  
 Cordially  
 Truly  
 Faithfully  
 Respectfully  
 Faithfully yours  
 Respectfully yours  
 Cordially yours  
 Truly yours  
 Sincerely yours  
 Yours sincerely  
 Yours truly  
 Yours obediently  
 Yours faithfully

Of all these expressions, the single word expressions are more modern and may suit almost any of your business letters. Your choice of *close* provides a way to create just the desired tone. Closings such as, *Sincerely yours*, *Truly yours*, *Very truly yours*, etc. seem outdated. *Sincerely* and *Cordially* are widely accepted closings.

**Signature Block** The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature block, which includes your signature, name and title. Every letter must end with a signature to give authenticity to the information contained in it. An unsigned letter is of no consequence.

Place the signature block four lines below the complimentary close. Include your name and the title. If your name might leave the reader in doubt about your gender, you may include a title in the signature block as shown in the sample given below:

Cordially,  
 Ms. Santosh Singh  
 Senior Executive

Your letterhead indicates that you are representing your organization. However, if your letter is on plain paper or runs to a second page, you may want to emphasize that you are writing legally for the company. The accepted way of doing so is to place the company's name in capital letters a double space below the complimentary close and then include the sender's name and title four lines below that.

Sincerely,  
 SHAREWELL INDUSTRIES  
 Mr. Atul Chauhan  
 President

If an organization has delegated the authority of signing letters to an executive by the Power of Attorney, that executive will add *per pro.* or *pp.* just before the name of the organization and sign below it as:

Cordially,  
Per Pro. Sharewell Industries  
Lakshmi Deshpande

## Additonal Elements

Formal letters differ greatly in subject matter, the identifying information they need (such as addressee notation, attention line, subject line, or reference line) and also the format they adopt. The following elements may be used in any combination, depending upon the requirements of the particular letter, but generally in the order shown below:

- Addressee notation
- Attention line
- Subject line
- Reference initials
- Enclosure notation
- Copy notation
- Mailing notation
- Postscript

**Addressee Notation** This sort of notation generally appears a double space above the inside address, in all capital letters. *Personal, Confidential, or Please Forward, Through Proper Channel* are examples of such notations which are used in letters that have a restricted readership or that must be handled in a special way.

**Attention Line** An attention line can be used to draw the attention of a particular person or a particular department in an organization so as to ensure a quick and prompt action on your letter. You may place the attention line two spaces below the inside address. This line is included in the following manner:

Attention: Dr Satish Yadav  
Attention: Personnel Manager

**Subject Line** This element lets the recipient know at a glance what the letter is about; it also indicates where to file the letter for future reference. It usually appears below the salutation. But sometimes it is placed above the salutation and below the attention line:

- Dear Mr Gupta:  
Subject: Information regarding last week's inspection
- Attention: Personnel manager  
Subject: Information regarding last week's inspection  
Dear Mr Gupta:

Body	<p>I am extremely sorry to inform you that our colony did not have any water supply on 15<sup>th</sup> of this month and we had to face acute water shortage because of this.</p> <p>I contacted your office on 15<sup>th</sup> October at 10 a.m. and the person at the receiving end informed us that the water supply has been stopped for certain areas because of some problems in pumping. But he ensured that the supply would resume by 5 p.m. To our dismay, we could not receive water on that day.</p> <p>The complaint letter signed by all the residents of this colony is enclosed. Please look into the matter and see to it that such lacuna does not occur at least in future.</p> <p>Regards</p>
Complimentary close	Sincerely
Signature block	Manokaran, President
Reference Initials	GK
Enclosure line	Enclosure (I)
Copy line	Copy: Chairman, Water Board
Post Script	PS: Please instruct your office to give prior intimation in case of not supplying water on a particular day.

### Exhibit 13.1: BUSINESS LETTER WITH STANDARD AND ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

#### Layout

Suitable and correct layout enhances the overall effectiveness of any letter. The layout helps to arrange all the elements of a business letter in an organized manner.

Although the basic parts of a business letter have remained the same for centuries, the layouts do change. Sometimes a company adopts a certain format as its policy; sometimes the individual letter writer is allowed to choose the format most appropriate for a given letter or to settle on a personal performance, but in general, four major letter layouts are commonly used.

- Block layout
- Modified block layout
- Semi-block layout
- Simplified layout

#### Block Layout

This form (Exhibit 13.2) is extremely popular as it makes the letter look attractive, elegant, and efficient. It has the following characteristics:

- All elements except the letterhead heading are aligned to the left margin.
- It follows open punctuation. In other words the end punctuation marks are omitted in each element except the salutation, complimentary close, and message.

25 North Main Street  
 Maharaja Colony  
 Post Box No. 1221  
 Mumbai-400001

HEADING

February 16, 2003

DATE

Ms Mary Fernandes  
 Customer Relations  
 Bharat Telephone Company  
 133 Balaji Street  
 Mumbai-400001

INSIDE ADDRESS

Dear Ms Fernandes:

SALUTATION

I received a collection notice from the Bharat Telephone Company on February 13, 2003. The letter states that I owe a past due balance from the September 16 to October 16 billing period in 2002. The letter also states that my service will be disconnected unless I act immediately; however, I am now informing you for the second time that I paid that bill on January 1st, 2003.

BODY

On January 15th, I received a call from one of your representatives about this matter, and I immediately told him that approximately two weeks ago I sent a cheque to your office for the due amount of Rs 6,450.00. Unfortunately, I failed to get his name. I am irritated that you have not taken care of this matter since I have the cancelled cheque in my possession, and I am enclosing a copy of it herewith.

I hope that this will settle the matter once and for all.

Sincerely yours,

COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE

Babulal Chotia  
 (419) 352-5555

SIGNATURE BLOCK

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

ENCLOSURES

Exhibit 13.2: BLOCK LAYOUT

### Modified Block Layout

Modified block format (Exhibit 13.3) differs from block format in the positioning of certain elements: Heading, complimentary close, and signature block are aligned vertically with the right margin.

Although businesses seem to prefer full block format, modified block is acceptable. Many people consider the modified block's appearance more balanced and traditional.

25 North Main Street  
Maharaja Colony  
Post Box No. 1221  
Mumbai-400001

February 16, 2003

Ms Mary Fernandes  
Customer Relations  
Bharat Telephone Company  
133 Balaji Street  
Mumbai-400001

Dear Ms Fernandes:

I received a collection notice from the Bharat Telephone Company on February 13, 2003. The letter states that I owe a past due balance from the September 16 to October 16 billing period in 2002. The letter also states that my service will be disconnected unless I act immediately; however, I am now informing you for the second time that I paid that bill on January 1st, 2003.

On January 15th, I received a call from one of your representatives about this matter, and I immediately told him that approximately two weeks ago I sent a cheque to your office for the due amount of Rs 6450.00. Unfortunately, I failed to get his name. I am irritated that you have not taken care of this matter since I have the cancelled cheque in my possession, and I am enclosing a copy of it herewith.

I hope that this will settle the matter once and for all.

Sincerely yours,

Babulal Chotia  
(419) 352-5555

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

**Exhibit 13.3: MODIFIED BLOCK LAYOUT**

### Semi-block Layout

This resembles modified block style except that the start of each paragraph is indented, i.e., each paragraph of the message starts a few spaces away from the margin.

This form makes the letter somewhat clumsy and has gone out of style (Exhibit 13.4).

25 North Main Street  
Maharaja Colony  
Post Box No. 1221  
Mumbai-400001

February 16, 2003

Ms Mary Fernandes  
Customer Relations  
Bharat Telephone Company  
133 Balaji Street  
Mumbai-400001

Dear Ms Fernandes:

I received a collection notice from the Bharat Telephone Company on February 13, 2003. The letter states that I owe a past due balance from the September 16 to October 16 billing period in 2002. The letter also states that my service will be disconnected unless I act immediately; however, I am now informing you for the second time that I paid that bill on January 1st, 2003.

On January 15th, I received a call from one of your representatives about this matter, and I immediately told him that approximately two weeks ago I sent a cheque to your office for the due amount of Rs 6450.00. Unfortunately, I failed to get his name. I am irritated that you have not taken care of this matter since I have the cancelled cheque in my possession, and I am enclosing a copy of it herewith.

I hope that this will settle the matter once and for all.

Sincerely yours,

Babulal Chotia  
(419) 352-5555

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

**Exhibit 13.4: SEMI-BLOCK LAYOUT**

### Simplified Layout

Though this format (Exhibit 13.5) resembles block format, it is characterized by the following features:

- Omits salutation
- Often includes a subject line in capital letters
- Omits complimentary close

This format is convenient when you do not know your recipient's name. However, some people object to this format because it seems mechanical and impersonal. Nevertheless, this drawback may be overcome with a warm writing style.

25 North Main Street  
Maharaja Colony  
Post Box No. 1221  
Mumbai-400001

February 16, 2003

Ms Mary Fernandes  
Customer Relations  
Bharat Telephone Company  
133 Balaji Street, Mumbai-400001

#### BALANCE PAYMENT ALREADY MADE

I received a collection notice from the Bharat Telephone Company on February 13, 2003. The letter states that I owe a past due balance from the September 16 to October 16 billing period in 2002. The letter also states that my service will be disconnected unless I act immediately; however, I am now informing you for the second time that I paid that bill on January 1st, 2003.

On January 15th, I received a call from one of your representatives about this matter, and I immediately told him that approximately two weeks ago I sent a cheque to your office for the due amount of Rs 6450.00. Unfortunately, I failed to get his name. I am irritated that you have not taken care of this matter since I have the cancelled cheque in my possession, and I am enclosing a copy of it herewith.

I hope that this will settle the matter once and for all.

Babulal Chotia  
(419) 352-5555

Encl: copy of cancelled cheque

**Exhibit 13.5: SIMPLIFIED LAYOUT**

# **LISTENING SKILLS**

## **Definition of Hearing**

The natural ability or an inborn trait that allows us to recognize sound through ears by catching vibrations is called the hearing. In simple terms, it is one of the five senses; that makes us aware of the sound. It is an involuntary process, whereby a person receives sound vibrations, continuously.

A normal human being's hearing capability ranges from 20 to 20000 Hertz, called as audio or sonic. Any frequency above and below the given range is known as ultrasonic and infrasonic respectively.

## **Definition of Listening**

Listening is defined as the learned skill, in which we can receive sounds through ears, and transform them into meaningful messages. To put simply, it is the process of diligently hearing and interpreting the meaning of words and sentences spoken by the speaker, during the conversation.

Listening is a bit difficult, because it requires concentration and attention, and the human mind is easily distracted. People use it as a technique to comprehend, what is being said, through different verbal and non-verbal signs, i.e. how it is being said? What type of words is used? Tone and pitch of voice, body language and so on.

Active listening is the key element; that makes the communication process effective. Further, it encompasses making sounds that show listener's attentiveness and providing feedback. It had a greater influence in our lives and used to gain information, learn and understand things and so on.

The following points are vital so far as the difference between hearing and listening is concerned

1. An individual's ability to perceive sounds, by receiving vibrations through ears, is called the hearing. Listening is something done consciously, that involve the analysis and understanding of the sounds you hear.
2. The hearing is the primary and continuous in nature, i.e. the first and foremost stage is hearing, followed by listening and it occurs continuously. On the other hand, listening is temporary, as we cannot continuously pay attention to something for long hours.
3. The hearing is physiological, which is through one of our senses in the living organisms. On the contrary, listening is a psychological (conscious) act.

4. While hearing is a passive bodily process that does not involve use of the brain. As opposed to listening, it is an active mental process, which involves the use of brain to draw meaning from words and sentences.
5. Hearing involves receipt of the message through ears. Conversely, listening encompasses interpretation of the message received by ears.
6. The hearing is an inborn ability but listening is a learned skill.
7. In the hearing, we are not aware of the sounds that we receive, however in the case of listening, we are completely aware of what the speaker is saying.
8. Hearing involves the use of only one sense i.e. ears. In contrast, listening, involves the use of more than one senses i.e. eyes, ears, touch etc. to understand the message completely and accurately.
9. In the hearing, we are neither aware nor we have any control over the sounds we hear. On the other hand, in listening, we are aware of what the other person is saying and so we listen to acquire knowledge and receive information.
10. Hearing does not require focus whereas listening does.

<b>Basis for Comparison</b>	<b>Hearing</b>	<b>Listening</b>
Meaning	Hearing refers to one's ability to perceive sounds, by receiving vibrations through ears.	Listening is something done consciously, that involve the analysis and understanding of the sounds you hear.
What is it?	An ability	A skill
Nature	Primary and continuous	Secondary and temporary
Act	Physiological	Psychological
Involves	Receipt of message through ears.	Interpretation of the message received by ears.
Process	Passive bodily process	Active mental process
Occurs at	Subconscious level	Conscious level
Use of senses	Only one	More than one
Reason	We are neither aware nor we have any control over the sounds we hear.	We listen to acquire knowledge and receive information.
Concentration	Not required	Required

## Conclusion

So, with the discussion, it is quite clear that listening is one step ahead of the hearing. The hearing is simply the ability to hear, i.e. natural or God-given however, listening is an acquired skill, which

only a few people possess. While the hearing is involuntary and performed effortlessly, listening is done intentionally, wherein we are selective and pay attention to only those messages, we think important for us.

## **Effective Listening Skills - An essential for good communication**

Listening is a significant part of communication process. Communication cannot take place until and unless a message is heard and retained thoroughly and positively by the receivers/listeners. Listening is a dynamic process. **Listening means attentiveness and interest perceptible in the posture as well as expressions.** Listening implies decoding (i.e., translating the symbols into meaning) and interpreting the messages correctly in communication process.

**Listening differs from hearing** in sense that:

- Hearing implies just perceiving the sounds while listening means listening with understanding whatever you are listening. Both the body as well as mind is involved in listening process.
- Listening is an active process while hearing is a passive activity.
- Hearing is an effortless activity while listening is an act requiring conscious efforts, concentration and interest. Listening involves both physical and psychological efforts.

**Effective listening** requires both deliberate efforts and a keen mind. Effective listeners appreciate flow of new ideas and information. Organizations that follow the principles of effective listening are always informed timely, updated with the changes and implementations, and are always out of crisis situation. Effective listening promotes organizational relationships, encourages product delivery and innovation, as well as helps organization to deal with the diversity in employees and customers it serves.

To improve your communication skills, you must learn to listen effectively. Effective listening gives you an advantage and makes you more impressive when you speak. It also boosts your performance.

### **Effective Listening Skills**

1. Discover your interests' field.
2. Grasp and understand the matter/content.
3. Remain calm. Do not loose your temper. Anger hampers and inhibits communication. Angry people jam their minds to the words of others.
4. Be open to accept new ideas and information.
5. Jot down and take a note of important points.
6. Work upon listening. Analyze and evaluate the speech in spare time.

7. Rephrase and summarize the speaker's ideas.
8. Keep on asking questions. This demonstrates that how well you understand the speaker's ideas and also that you are listening.
9. Avoid distractions.
10. "Step into the shoes of others", i.e., put yourself in the position of the speaker and observe things from his view point. This will help creating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and improve the exchange of ideas in communication process.

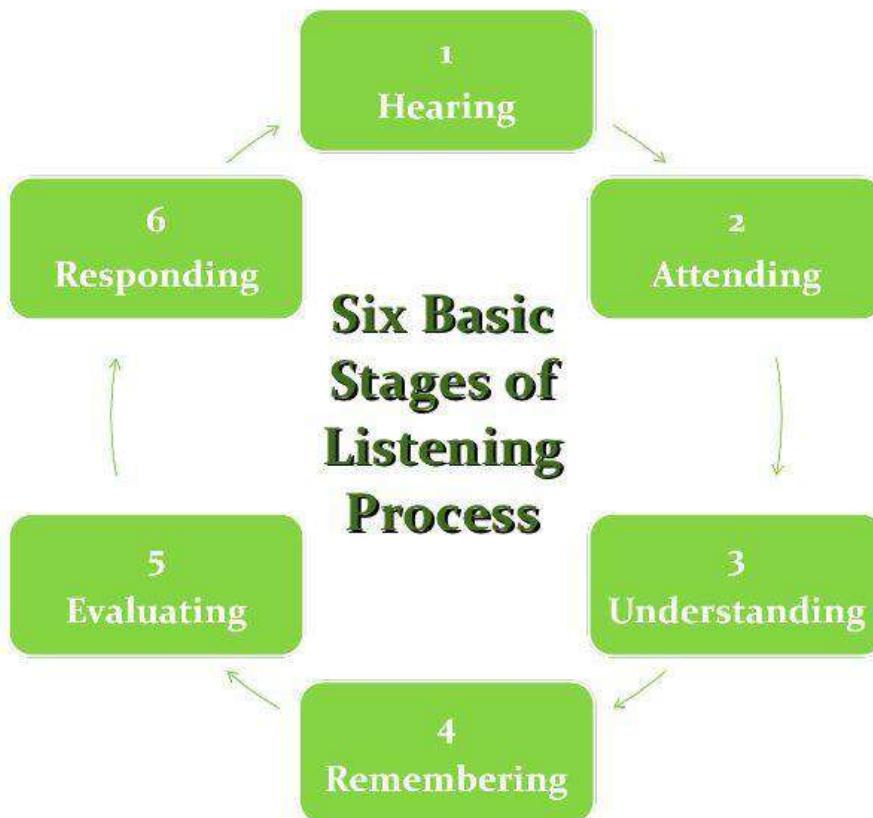
## Characteristics of Good and Effective Listener

Good and effective listener tries to give maximum amount of thought to the speaker's ideas being communicated, leaving a minimum amount of time for mental exercises to go off track. A good listener:

1. **Is attentive-** Good listener must pay attention to the key points. He should be alert. He should avoid any kind of distraction.
2. **Do not assume-** Good listener does not ignore the information he considers is unnecessary. He should always summarize the speaker's ideas so that there is no misunderstanding of thoughts of speakers. He avoids premature judgements about the speakers message.
3. **Listen for feelings and facts-** Good listener deliberately listens for the feelings of the speaker. He concentrates totally on the facts. He evaluates the facts objectively. His listening is sympathetic, active and alert. He keenly observes the gestures, facial expression and body language of the speaker. In short, a good listener should be projective (i.e. one who tries to understand the views of the speaker) and empathic (i.e. one who concentrates not only on the surface meaning of the message but tries to probe the feelings and emotions of the speaker).
4. **Concentrate on the other speakers kindly and generously-** A good listener makes deliberate efforts to give a chance to other speakers also to express their thoughts and views. He tries to learn from every speaker. He evaluates the speaker's ideas in spare time. He focuses on the content of the speaker's message and not on the speaker's personality and looks.
5. **Opportunizes-** A good listener tries to take benefit from the opportunities arising. He asks "What's in it for me?"

To conclude, effective listening enhances the communication quality. It makes all attentive. It encourages optimistic attitude, healthy relations and more participation. It leads to better decision-making in an organization. Effective listening is directly related to our ability to do team work. It must be noted that "We listen at about an efficiency rate of 25 percent maximum, and we remember only about 50 percent of what is delivered during a ten minute speech/lecture/communication."

**SIX STAGES OF LISTENING PROCESS:** hearing, attending, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. These stages occur in sequence, but they generally performed with little awareness an often rapid succession.



1. **HEARING** - it refers to the response caused by sound waves stimulating the sensory receptors of the ear; it is physical response; hearing is perception of sound waves; you must hear to listen, but you need not listen to hear (perception necessary for listening depends on attention)
2. **ATTENTION**- brain screens stimuli and permits only a select few to come into focus- these selective perception is known as attention, an important requirement for effective listening; *strong stimuli* like bright lights, sudden noise...are attention getters; attention to more commonplace or less striking stimuli requires special effort; *postural adjustments* are aided by physical changes in sensory receptor organs; *receptor adjustments* might include tensing of the ear's tympanic muscle for better response to weak sounds
3. **UNDERSTANDING**- to understand symbols we have seen and heard, we must analyze the meaning of the stimuli we have perceived; symbolic stimuli are not only words but also sounds

like applause... and sights like blue uniform...that have symbolic meanings as well; the meanings attached to these symbols are a function of our past associations and of the context in which the symbols occur; for successful interpersonal communication, the listener must understand the intended meaning and the context assumed by the sender.

**4. REMEMBERING-** it is important listening process because it means that an individual has not only received and interpreted a message but has also added it to the mind's storage bank; but just as our attention is selective, so too is our memory- what is remembered may be quite different from what was originally seen or heard.

**5. EVALUATING-** it is a stage in which active listeners participate; it is at this point that the active listener weighs evidence, sorts fact from opinion, and determines the presence or absence of bias or prejudice in a message; the effective listener makes sure that he or she doesn't begin this activity too soon ; beginning this stage of the process before a message is completed requires that we no longer hear and attend to the incoming message-as a result, the listening process ceases

**6. RESPONDING-** this stage requires that the receiver complete the process through verbal and/or nonverbal feedback; because the speaker has no other way to determine if a message has been received, this stage becomes the only overt means by which the sender may determine the degree of success in transmitting the message.

## **Effective speaking skills**

As a student, it is very easy to focus on listening, reading and writing and to neglect your speaking skills. The best way to learn at university, however, is to be actively engaged in your subject. This means forming your own opinions and sharing them with fellow students and lecturers. Good, confident speaking is essential to this so take every opportunity to speak. What you need to know.....

	<p>As a student, it is very easy to focus on listening, reading and writing and to neglect your speaking skills. The best way to learn at university, however, is to be actively engaged in your subject. This means forming your own opinions and sharing them with fellow students and lecturers. Good, confident speaking is essential to this so take every opportunity to speak. What you need to know.....</p>
<b>1. Fluency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not force yourself to speak quickly. Clarity is more important than speed and your speaking will naturally become faster over time.</li><li>• Fit your pace of speech to the complexity of the topic. If something is more difficult or complicated, slowing down is not a problem.</li><li>• Try not to speak too quietly or too loudly, even if you feel nervous. Moderate volume is best.</li></ul>
<b>2. Mistakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not be afraid of mistakes – everyone makes them!</li><li>• If you do make a mistake, it is fine to correct yourself. Remember, this is something everyone does.</li></ul>
<b>3. Misunderstandings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not see a bit of confusion as a disaster. Take a breath and try again. You could use different words or try to create a context for your listener to help their comprehension.</li><li>• Accept the fact that some misunderstandings will cause laughter. Do not let this embarrass you. If people laugh, they will usually want to laugh with you, not at you. Try to see the humour and join in rather than feeling embarrassed.</li></ul>
<b>4. Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take every opportunity you can to participate in conversations with a variety of people. There is usually time for a brief chat before or after lectures and tutorials.</li></ul>

- Remember that you do not have to always talk about what you are studying. Talking about anything from politics to Pokémon Go is also good practice!

## GROUP DISCUSSION

### **SKILLS**

#### **1. Communication**

- Good communication skills are essential in today's competitive world. Having good communication skills show that you are a good listener and a speaker, the top qualities of a leader.
- Good communication skills emphasize clarity of thought, hence leaving less scope for misunderstandings.
- Good communication skills will help students grab the attention of the panelists.
- The candidate should be well conversant with whatever medium of communication the candidate is comfortable with in order to get an edge over other candidates. Also, giving others a chance to speak or acknowledging others' opinions also works in your favour.
- How well you can drive your point across in a simple language, supported by data and information will help you get an edge over other participants of the GD.

#### **2. Initiative**

Initiative is the ability to take action without being told. The candidate who starts the discussion has this quality.

- Initiating a GD is a double-edged sword. When a candidate initiates, apart from grabbing an opportunity to speak, he also grabs the attention of examiners and fellow candidates. So, if a candidate who initiates is able to make a favourable first impression through his content and communication skills, it will help him sail through the GD.
- On the other hand, if a candidate stammers, stutters or quotes wrong facts and figures, the damage done is irreparable. The candidate who initiates also has the onus of giving the GD the right perspective or framework. So, initiate only if you have in-depth knowledge about the topic at hand.
- If, after initiating well, a candidate does not say much during the GD, it still gives the impression that he or she started the GD just for the sake of starting it, or to get those initial points earmarked for an initiator.

#### **3. Problem Solving**

- Ability to come out with divergent and offbeat solutions and use one's own creativity.
- Example: While thinking of solutions, don't be afraid to think of novel solutions. This is a high-risk high-return strategy.

Remember, there is always a reason behind the problem, first try to find the reason and then find solution keeping in mind the reason and situation.

#### **4. Listening**

Hearing does not involve any understanding.

Active listening is an essential skill for a presenter. Active listening is acquired with attention and understanding ideas and facts.

- Listening in a group discussion helps to give new ideas.
- Listening helps to not jump to conclusions.
- Good listening will avoid aggression because you know what the other person says.
- Listening will help learn something new.
- Listening in a group motivates the environment.
- Good listening skills in a group discussion can help you notice flaws in what others speak.
- Listening will help you comprehend what the other team member speaks even if the topic is not well known.
- Listening keeps you aware and alert.
- If you listen, team mates in the group will listen to you.

## 5. Interpersonal

- Is reflected in the ability of the individual to interact with other members of the group in a brief situation. Emotional maturity and balance promotes good interpersonal relationships. The person has to be more people centric and less self-centered.
- Example: To remain cool even when someone provokes you with personal comment, ability to remain objective, ability to empathize, non-threatening and more of a team player.
- Selectors look for the candidate who is accepted by the others in the group. They reject candidates who try to dominate others. They also reject those who speak for a long time, not allowing other to speak. Similarly, those who interrupt other repeatedly are rejected.

## QUALITIES

### 1. Encourager/Energizer

- Say you are someone who knows everything about the Group discussion topic given and has performed well too (spoken enough to make it to the PI round). But when the results are out, you are shocked to see that your name is not even there in spite of the fact that you were most knowledgeable in your entire group!
- Well, a true leader does not bash others to become successful but carries his team along to climb the ladders of success. And here's where your co-operation skills will come to the fore. There are some things you should do in a GD. Some of these include:
- Acknowledging other's point of view
- Giving others a chance to speak
- If someone has said something that you agree with, re-phrase it coherently giving that person due credit.
- Motivate others to speak.

### 2. Elaborator

To elaborate means to expand your point by giving the details. You can elaborate by giving examples, by comparing, using folk tales or incidents or observations. Don't forget that facts carry more weightage than fake points.

### **3. Interpreter**

- A true leader never believes blindly. He/ she assess, verify and then take a decision. In the group discussion too, you should:
- First, analyze the topic and then speak up with a relevant statement, fact or statement.
- Blabbering without making any point will definitely take you to the bad books of the panelists. Make sure that whatever point you make has a direction.
- Be open to suggestions and different opinions.
- When the discussion is nearing its end, make sure to summarise/ conclude the group discussion with relevant points (inputs from all the members) and come to a conclusion.

### **4. Information giver & seeker**

- In a group discussion, panelists see how well you are aware of things/ events happening or taking place around you. Hence:
- You should read a lot and gain significant knowledge on various topics spanning commerce, politics, arts, law, media, social causes etc. so that speaking up in the discussion come naturally to you.
- Providing facts and figures (in numbers) give you an added advantage over other candidates in a group discussion.

### **5. Persuasive**

- Persuasiveness is the ability to influence others by your ideas. It is the ability to sell your ideas to others. This requires sound reasoning.
- Ability to analyze and persuade others to see the problem from multiple perspectives without hurting the group members.
- Example: While appreciating someone else's point of view, you should be able to effectively communicate your view without overtly hurting the other person.

### **6. Critic**

Criticism is the practice of judging the merits and faults of something.

With criticism it is always important to keep things in proportion, neither overdoing things, nor being too timid.

- People can be too critical, but they can also be insufficiently critical. It is important to strike a good balance: to be neither excessively critical nor completely uncritical.
- People who are too critical and focus only on the downside or limitation of things run into the problem that others perceive them as being "too negative", and lacking a "constructive attitude". If there is too much criticism, it gets in the way of getting anything done – people are just "anti", but "it does not lead anywhere".
- People who are uncritical, however, are often regarded as naive and superficial ("suckers"); they lack discernment, they are prone to being deceived and tricked, because they readily believe all kinds of things, which they should not accept just like that, for their own good. If they thought more critically, they would not give in so easily to what others say or do. The idea here is that "one should not be so open-minded that one's brains fall out."

## **7. Harmonizer**

Sometimes, two or more candidates have a heated discussion and start shouting at each other during a group discussion. The candidate who steps in and cools them down has conflict handling skills.

- Besides the above, be smart and pleasant. Your confidence during a GD can get you in the good books of the panelists.
- Smile while you greet everyone in the room (both panelists and your fellow students)
- Convey your point to other candidates coherently if you disagree, express the same, but politely citing the reasons.
- Never try and dominate other candidates. Let them speak without getting into a fight.
- Maintain your body posture, tapping your fist on the desk in anger.

## **8. Opinion giver**

- Clearly express and exchange your ideas, avoid misunderstandings, can grab attention of evaluators, It helps to negotiate on various issues in a group discussion, avoid professional glitches in a team discussion and it also show you are an active listener. It can show that you are stable, level headed, confident and quite well aware of the arguments. Communication skill is not just about speaking fluently in English. It's about being confident and the right attitude.

## **9. Leadership**

- a true leader takes his team through the maze of success. In a Group Discussion too, you should display true leadership qualities:
- Give others an opportunity to speak
- Acknowledge other's points with due credit
- If you disagree, put your point through politely stating the reasons
- Don't lose your temper or insult anyone
- Display a pleasing personality trait and uphold the etiquette of a group discussion

## **10. Summerizer**

Summarizing: If you have not been able to initiate the discussion, try to summaries and close it. Good summarizing would get you good reward points. A conclusion is where the whole group decides in favour or against the topic and most GDs do not have a closure. But every GD can be summarized by putting forth what the group has discussed in a nutshell. Keep the following points in mind while summarizing a discussion:

- Avoid raising new points.
- Avoid stating only your viewpoint.
- Avoid dwelling only on one aspect of the GD
- Keep it brief and concise.
- It must include all the important points that came out during the GD
- If you are asked to summarise a GD, it means the GD has come to an end.
- Do not add anything once the GD has been summarised.

## The Six Thinking Hats

Solving problems using the six thinking hats model requires looking at problems with different types of thinking, each type is represented with a hat color, and at the end of the discussion session stakeholders should have better understanding to the problem from different approaches in order to reach creative and innovative solutions. During each critical thinking discussion meeting the facilitator determines which hat should be worn in specific part of the discussion as following:

### White hat

This hat represents the facts and the information available about the problem or the argument. During this part, the stockholders only share the information about the problem and take notes with it. No further development in the thinking process should be done. Questions in this part can be "what is the available information?" and "what are the facts we have?"

### Yellow hat

In contrast to the black hat, the yellow hat supposes to reflect the sun or an optimistic attitude. The stakeholders think from an optimistic point of view about the problem or suggestion. It helps to spotlight the advantages and benefits of the suggestions. During this the questions which are asked are "what are the advantages of applying the solution?" and "why do you think it is workable?"

### Black hat

Wearing the black hat drives attendees to think about the problem or suggestion cautiously and defensively. The aim of this part is to identify the cons of the suggestion and the disadvantages and why the suggestion may not work based on logical reasons.

Focusing on the warnings, risks or cautions, this helps the stakeholders to isolate the reasoning and think in the solutions in the yellow one. The question that can be asked during this discussion "what are the risks?" and "why is the suggestion not working?"

### Red hat

The emotions hat presents the stakeholders feelings about the problem and their gut reactions toward it. The target of using this hat is to understand the different emotional reactions such as love, hate, like and dislike. The red hat does not aim to understand the reason behind these feelings. The questions that can be asked during this part is "what do you feel about the suggestion?" and "what is your gut reaction toward the suggestion?"

### Green hat

This represents the creative thinking part of the discussion. During the critical thinking discussion, this hat fuels the stakeholders' thinking to innovate a thinking creative solution for the problems or look to the suggestions from a creative perspective. Creative tools can be applied to drive creativity during the conversations such as the Lego Serious Play and brainstorming techniques.

### Blue hat

This is the process control plan where the meeting leaders manage difficulties during the discussions. It makes sure that the guidelines of the six thinking hat process is applied. This hat can be used to drive the thinking process to better routes. For example, if there are no ideas, the facilitators can direct the discussion to the green hat route.

The blue hat is a control hat during the critical thinking discussions, it can also act as a moderation hat before and after each circle of thinking.

While the resources did not indicate a specific sequence between the hats, the sequence indicated above is similar to De Bono's six thinking hats website.

# Writing A Letter or Email



	<i>Formal</i>	<i>Informal</i>
<i>Opening formula</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dear Mr/ Mrs + surname</li> <li>- Dear Sir or Madam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hello/ Hi + name</li> <li>- Dear + name</li> <li>- Hi there!</li> </ul>
<i>Starting your letter / email</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thank you for your letter/ email about ... Many thanks for your letter/ email.</li> <li>- I am writing to request information about/ inform you about/ complain about, ...</li> <li>- I am writing with reference to your letter.</li> <li>- I would like to offer congratulations on ...</li> <li>- Let me congratulate you on ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thanks fot your letter/ email. Thanks for writing to me. It was great to hear from you again.</li> <li>- I am writing to tell you about ...</li> <li>- Guess what?</li> <li>- How are things with you? What's up?/ How are you?/ How was your holiday?</li> <li>- I'm sorry I haven't written for a while ...</li> </ul>
<i>Final remarks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I look forward to hear from you without delay.</li> <li>- I look forward to meeting you.</li> <li>- I hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hope to hear from you soon.</li> <li>- Looking forward to seeing you/ hearing from you.</li> <li>- I can't wait to meet up soon.</li> <li>- Write back soon.</li> </ul>
<i>Closing formula</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you start with "Dear Sir or Madam", finish with "Yours faithfully".</li> <li>- If you start with "Dear Mr/ Mrs ..., finish with "Yours sincerely".</li> <li>- Regards/ Best regards/ Kind regards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best wishes.</li> <li>- Love.</li> <li>- All the best.</li> <li>- Xoxo</li> <li>- Keep in touch.</li> </ul>