SPCH 1311: Introduction to Speech Communication

Lumen Learning Support

CONTENTS

DEFINING COMMUNICATION STUDY

THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

Chapter OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain Communication Study.
- Define Communication.
- Explain the linear and transactional models of communication.
- Discuss the benefits of studying Communication.

You are probably reading this book because you are taking an introductory Communication course at your college or university. Many colleges and universities around the country require students to take some type of communication course in order to graduate. Introductory Communication classes include courses on public speaking, interpersonal communication, or a class that combines both. While these are some of the most common introductory Communication courses, many Communication departments are now offering an introductory course that explains what Communication is, how it is studied as an academic field, and what areas of specialization make up the field of Communication. In other words, these are survey courses similar to courses such as Introduction to Sociology or Introduction to Psychology. Our goal in this text is to introduce you to the field of Communication as an academic discipline of study.

Engaging in Conversation

Two women talking in Jerusalem

As professors, we hear a lot of people talk about communication both on and off our campuses. We're often surprised at how few people can actually explain what communication is, or what Communication departments are about. Even our majors sometimes have a hard time explaining to others what it is they study in college. Throughout this book we will provide you with the basics for understanding what communication is, what Communication scholars and students study, and how you can effectively use the study of Communication in your life — whether or not you are a Communication major. We accomplish this by taking you on a journey through time. The material in the text is framed chronologically, and is largely presented in context of the events that occurred before the industrial revolution (2500 BCE-1800's), and after the industrial revolution (1800's-Present). In each chapter we include boxes that provide examples on that chapter's topic in context of "then," "now," and "you" to help you grasp how the study of Communication at colleges and universities impacts life in the "real world."

To make it easier for you to have a general understanding of Communication study as an academic field, we divide the book into two parts: Chapters 1–6 provide you with the foundations of Communication as an academic field of study. In this chapter you will learn the definitions of Communication and Communication study, as well as understand possible careers that result from studying Communication. In Chapters 2 and 3 you will learn that verbal and nonverbal communication are the primary human acts we study in Communication. The history of Communication study in Chapter 4 lets you see the chronological development of the field, which determined our choices for how we ordered the chapters in Part II. Finally, Chapters 5 and 6 briefly highlight the different theories and research methods we use to study human communication.

Chapters 7–13 highlight many of the prominent Communication specializations that have shaped the field in the past 100 years. We present them in the chronological order in which they became part of the Communication discipline. While there are many more areas of specialization we would like to cover in this text, we have chosen to highlight the ones that have shaped what you likely recognize as part of the Communication departments at your colleges and universities. Because we cannot cover every specialization, we chose to include ones that were instrumental in the earlier development of the field that are still being explored today, as well as specializations we believe represent new directions in the field that examine communication in our ever-changing society.

Before we introduce you to verbal and nonverbal communication, history, theories, research methods, and the chronological development of Communication specializations, we want to set a foundation for you in this chapter by explaining Communication Study, Models of Communication, and Communication at work.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION STUDY

What is Communication Study?

When we tell others that we teach Communication, people often ask questions like, “Do you teach radio and television?” “Do you teach public speaking?” “Do you do news broadcasts?” “Do you work with computers?” “Do you study Public Relations?” “Is that Journalism or Mass Communication?” But, the most common question we get is, “What is that?” It’s interesting that most people will tell us they know what communication is, but they do not have a clear understanding of what it is Communication scholars study and teach in our academic discipline. In fact, many professors in other departments on our campus also ask us what it is we study and teach. If you’re a Communication major, you’ve probably been asked the same question, and like us, may have had a hard time answering it succinctly. If you memorize the definition below, you will have a quick and simple answer to those who ask you what you study as a Communication major.

Ancient Depiction of Human Communication

Bruce Smith, Harold Lasswell, and Ralph D. Casey provided a good and simple answer to the question, “What is Communication study?” They state that, **communication study** is an academic field whose primary focus is *“who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results.”*

Egyptian antiquities in the Brooklyn Museum

Although they gave this explanation almost 70 years ago, to this day it succinctly describes the focus of Communication scholars and professionals. As professors and students of Communication, we extensively examine the various forms and outcomes of human communication. On its website, the National Communication Association (NCA), states that **communication study** *“focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels and media. The discipline promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication.”* They go on to say, “*Communication is a diverse discipline which includes inquiry by social scientists, humanists, and critical and cultural studies scholars.*” Now, if people ask you what you’re studying in a Communication class, you have an answer!

In this course we will use Smith, Lasswell, and Casey’s definition to guide how we discuss the content in this book. Part I of this book sets the foundation by explaining the historical development of the Communication discipline, exploring the “what” and “channels” (verbal and nonverbal communication), and presenting the “whom” and “results” (theories and research methods). Before we get into those chapters, it is important for you to know how we define the actual term “communication” to give you context for our discussion of it throughout the book.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Define the term "communication" and explain the primary types of communication.
- Define the term "communication competence" and explain attributes of communication competence.
- Identify differences between linear and transactional communication models.
- Identify the components of interpersonal communication.

Now that you know how to define communication study, are you able to develop a simple definition of communication? Try to write a one-sentence definition of communication!

We're guessing it's more difficult than you think. Don't be discouraged. For decades communication professionals have had difficulty coming to any consensus about how to define the term communication (Hovland; Morris; Nilsen; Sapir; Schramm; Stevens). Even today, there is no single agreed-upon definition of communication. In 1970 and 1984 Frank Dance looked at 126 published definitions of communication in our literature and said that the task of trying to develop a single definition of communication that everyone likes is like trying to nail jello to a wall. Thirty years later, defining communication still feels like nailing jello to a wall.

Communication Study Then

Aristotle The Communication Researcher

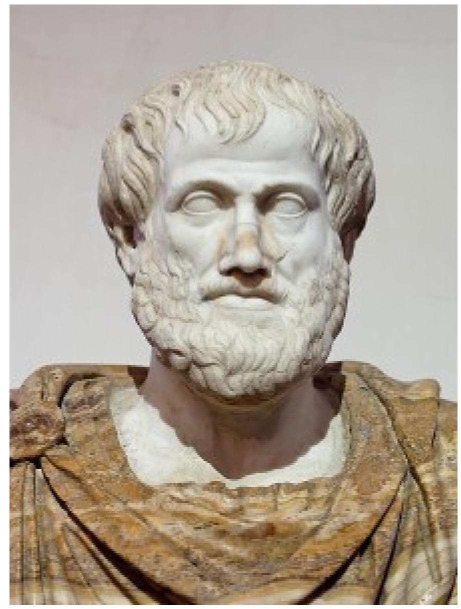
Aristotle said, "Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making — speaker, subject, and person addressed — it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object."

For Aristotle it was the "to whom" that determined if communication occurred and how effective it was. Aristotle, in his study of "who says what, through what channels, to whom, and what will be the results" focused on persuasion and its effect on the audience. Aristotle thought is was extremely important to focus on the audience in communication exchanges.

What is interesting is that when we think of communication we are often, "more concerned about ourselves as the communication's source, about our message, and even the channel we are going to use. Too often, the listener, viewer, reader fails to get any consideration at all (Lee).

Aristotle's statement above demonstrates that humans who have been studying communication have had solid ideas about how to communicate effectively for a very long time. Even though people have been formally studying communication for a long time, it is still necessary to continue studying communication in order to improve it.

Lee, Dick. Developing Effective Communications. *University of Missouri Extension. 31 March 2008. Web. Dec. 2014.*



Aristotle

We recognize that there are countless good definitions of communication, but we feel it's important to provide you with our definition so that you understand how we approach each chapter in this book. We are not arguing that this definition of communication is the only one you should consider viable, but you will understand the content of this text better if you understand how we have come to define communication. For the purpose of this text we define **communication** as *the process of using symbols to exchange meaning*.

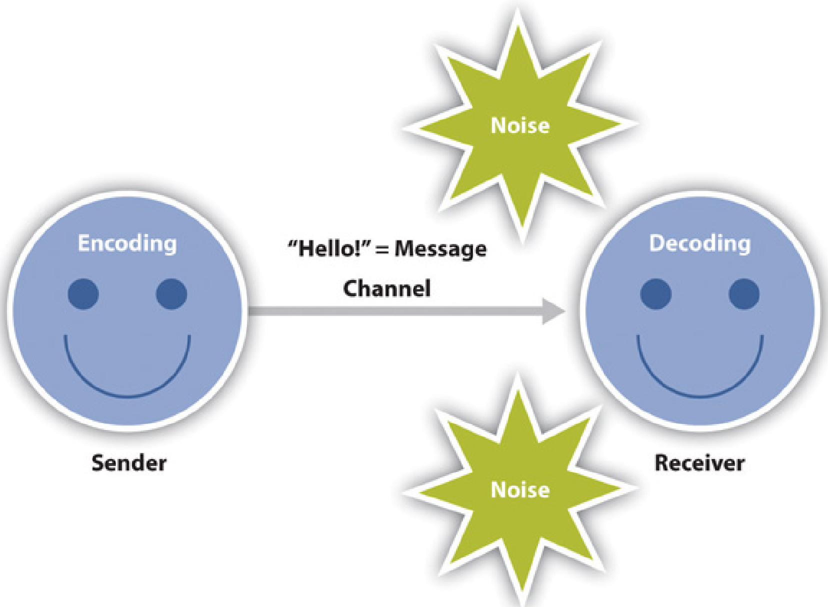
Let's examine two models of communication to help you further grasp this definition. Shannon and Weaver proposed a Mathematical Model of Communication (often called the Linear Model) that serves as a basic model of communication. This model suggests that communication is simply the transmission of a message from one source to another. Watching YouTube videos serves as an example of this. You act as the receiver when you watch videos, receiving messages from the source (the YouTube video). To better understand this, let's break down each part of this model.

The Linear Model of Communication is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction. The **Sender** encodes a **Message**, then uses a certain **Channel** (verbal/nonverbal communication) to send it to a **Receiver** who decodes (interprets) the message. **Noise** is anything that interferes with, or changes, the original encoded message.

• A **sender** is *someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel*. The sender is the initiator of communication. For example, when you text a friend, ask a teacher a question, or wave to someone you are the sender of a message.

• A **receiver** is *the recipient of a message*. Receivers must decode (interpret) messages in ways that are meaningful for them. For example, if you see your friend make eye contact, smile, wave, and say "hello" as you pass, you are receiving a message intended for you. When this happens you must decode the verbal and nonverbal communication in ways that are meaningful to you.

• A message is *the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand*. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or nonverbal, or any combination of these. For example, as you walk across campus you may see a friend walking toward you. When you make eye contact, wave, smile, and say "hello," you are offering a message that is intentional, spoken, verbal and nonverbal.



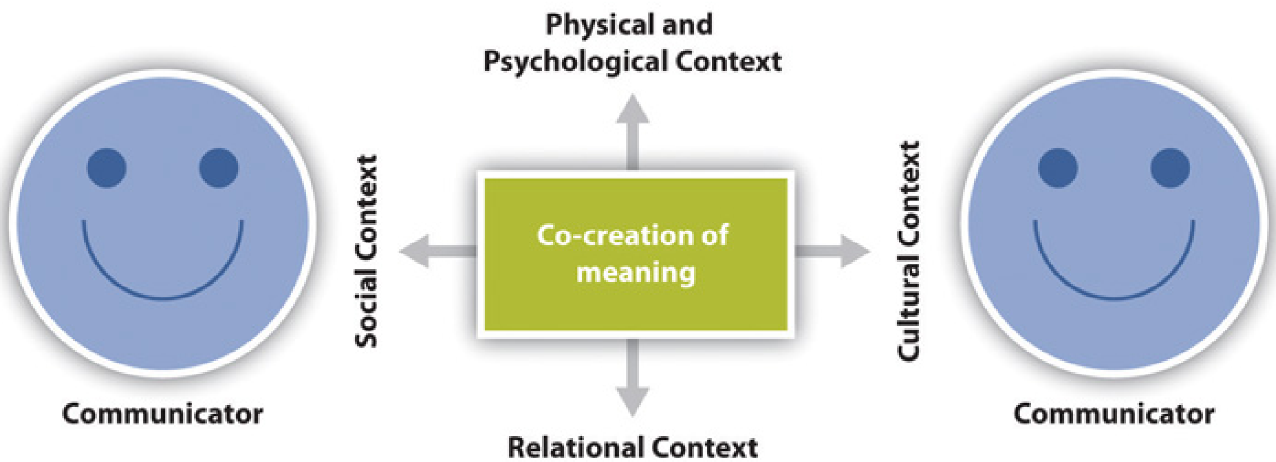
Linear Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

• A channel is *the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver*. The most common channels humans use are verbal and nonverbal communication which we will discuss in detail in Chapters 2 and 3. Verbal communication relies on language and includes speaking, writing, and sign language. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, facial expressions, paralanguage, and touch. We also use communication channels that are mediated (such as television or the computer) which may utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication. Using the greeting example above, the channels of communication include both verbal and nonverbal communication.

• Noise is *anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message*. Noise is external (a jack hammer outside your apartment window or loud music in a nightclub), and internal (physical pain, psychological stress, or nervousness about an upcoming test). External and internal noise make encoding and decoding messages more difficult. Using our ongoing example, if you are on your way to lunch and listening to music on your phone when your friend greets you, you may not hear your friend say "hello," and you may not wish to chat because you are hungry. In this case, both internal and external noise influenced the communication exchange. Noise is in every communication context, and therefore, NO message is received exactly as it is transmitted by a sender because noise distorts it in one way or another.

A major criticism of the Linear Model of Communication is that it suggests communication only occurs in one direction. It also does not show how context, or our personal experiences, impact communication. Television serves as a good example of the linear model. Have you ever talked back to your television while you were watching it? Maybe you were watching a sporting event or a dramatic show and you talked at the people in the television. Did they respond to you? We're sure they did not. Television works in one direction. No matter how much you talk to the television it will not respond to you. Now apply this idea to the communication in your relationships. It seems ridiculous to think that this is how we would communicate with each other on a regular basis. This example shows the limits of the linear model for understanding communication, particularly human to human communication.

Given the limitations of the Linear Model, Barnlund adapted the model to more fully represent what occurs in most human communication exchanges. The Transactional Model demonstrates that communication participants act as senders AND receivers simultaneously, creating reality through their interactions. Communication is not a simple one-way transmission of a message: The personal filters and experiences of the participants impact each communication exchange. The Transactional Model demonstrates that we are simultaneously senders and receivers, and that noise and personal filters always influence the outcomes of every communication exchange.



Transactional Model of Communication by Andy Schmitz

The Transactional Model of Communication adds to the Linear Model by suggesting that *both parties in a communication exchange act as both sender and receiver simultaneously, encoding and decoding messages to and from each other at the same time*.

While these models are overly simplistic representations of communication, they illustrate some of the complexities of defining and studying communication. Going back to Smith, Lasswell, and Casey, as Communication scholars we may choose to focus on one, all, or a combination of the following: senders of communication, receivers of communication, channels of communication, messages, noise, context, and/or the outcome of communication. We hope you recognize that studying communication is simultaneously detail-oriented (looking at small parts of human communication), and far-reaching (examining a broad range of communication exchanges).

ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Encoding and Decoding

Encoding refers to the process of taking an idea or mental image, associating that image with words, and then speaking those words in order to convey a message. So, if you wanted to explain to your aunt the directions to your new apartment, you would picture in your mind the landscape, streets and buildings, and then you would select the best words that describe the route so your aunt could find you.

Decoding is the reverse process of listening to words, thinking about them, and turning those words into mental images. If your aunt were trying to find her way to your apartment, she would listen to your words, associate these words with streets and landmarks that she knows, and then she would form a mental map of the way to get to you. Ramsey's "Using Language Well" (Chapter 10) provides additional insight into the encoding and decoding process.

Communicator

The term communicator refers to all of the people in the interaction or speech setting. It is used instead of sender and receiver, because when we are communicating with other people we are not only sending a message, we are receiving messages from others simultaneously. When we speak, we observe others' nonverbal behavior to see if they understand us and we gauge their emotional state. The information we gain from these observations is known as feedback. Over the telephone, we listen to paralinguistic cues, such as pitch, tone, volume and fillers (i.e., "um," "uh," "er," "like," and so on). This means that communication is not a one-way process. Even in a public speaking situation, we watch and listen to audience members' responses. If audience members are interested, agree, and understand us, they may lean forward in their seats, nod their heads, have positive or neutral facial expressions, and provide favorable vocal cues (such as laughter, "That's right," "Uh huh," or "Amen!"). If audience members are bored, disagree, or are confused by our message, they may be texting or looking away from us, shake their heads, have unhappy or confused expressions on their faces, or present oppositional vocal cues (like groans, "I don't think so," "That doesn't make sense," or "You're crazy!"). Thus, communication is always a transactional process—a give and take of messages.

Message

The message involves those verbal and nonverbal behaviors, enacted by communicators, that are interpreted with meaning by others. The verbal portion of the message refers to the words that we speak, while the nonverbal portion includes our tone of voice and other non-vocal components such as personal appearance, posture, gestures and body movements, eye behavior, the way we use space, and even the way that we smell. For instance, the person who gets up to speak wearing a nice suit will be interpreted more positively than a person giving the exact same speech wearing sweats and a graphic t-shirt. Or if a speaker tries to convince others to donate to a charity that builds wells in poor African villages using a monotone voice, she will not be as effective as the speaker who gives the same speech but speaks with a solemn tone of voice. If there is ever a conflict between the verbal and the non-verbal aspects of a message, people will generally believe the nonverbal portion of the message. To test this, tighten your muscles, clench your fists at your sides, pull your eye brows together, purse your lips, and tell someone in a harsh voice, "NO, I'm NOT angry!" See if they believe your words or your nonverbal behavior.

The message can also be intentional or unintentional. When the message is intentional, this means that we have an image in our mind that we wish to communicate to an audience or a person in a conversation, and we can successfully convey the image from our mind to others' minds with relative accuracy. An unintentional message is sent when the message that we wish to convey is not the same as the message the other person receives. Let's say you are returning from an outing with your significant other and she or he asks, "Did you have a good time?" You *did* have a good time but are distracted by a TV commercial when asked, so you reply in a neutral tone, "Sure, I had fun." Your significant other may interpret your apathetic tone of voice and lack of eye contact to mean that you did not enjoy the evening, when in fact you actually did. Thus as communicators, we cannot always be sure that the message we wish to communicate is interpreted as we intended.

Channel

The channel is very simply the means through which the message travels. In face-to-face communication the channel involves all of our senses, so the channel is what we see, hear, touch, smell and perhaps what we taste. When we're communicating with someone online, the channel is the computer; when texting the channel is the cell phone; and when watching a movie on cable, the channel is the TV. The channel can have a profound impact on the way a message is interpreted. Listening to a recording of a speaker does not have the same psychological impact as listening to the same speech in person or watching that person on television. One famous example of this is the 1960 televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon. According to History.com (2012), on camera, Nixon looked away from the camera at the reporters asking him questions, he was sweating and pale, he had facial hair stubble, and he wore a grey suit that faded into the set background. "Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley reportedly said [of Nixon], 'My God, they've embalmed him before he even died." (((Note: History.com. (2012). The Kennedy-Nixon Debates. History.com. Retrieved from http://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/kennedy-nixon-debates))) Kennedy, on the other hand, looked into the camera, was tanned, wore a dark suit that made him stand out from the background, and appeared to be calm after spending the entire weekend with aides practicing in a hotel room. Most of those who listened to the radio broadcast of the debate felt that it was a tie or that Nixon had won, while 70% of those watching the televised debate felt that Kennedy was the winner.

"Kennedy Nixon Debate" by United Press International. Public domain.

Noise

The next aspect of the model of communication is noise. **Noise** refers to anything that interferes with message transmission or reception (i.e., getting the image from your head into others' heads). There are several different types of noise. The first type of noise is **physiological noise**, and this refers to bodily processes and states that interfere with a message. For instance, if a speaker has a headache or the flu, or if audience members are hot or they're hungry, these conditions may interfere with message accuracy. The second type of noise is psychological noise. **Psychological noise** refers to mental states or emotional states that impede message transmission or reception. For example, if someone has just broken up with a significant other, or if they're worried about their grandmother who is in the hospital, or if they are thinking about their shopping list, this may interfere with communication processes as well. The third type of noise is actual **physical noise**, and this would be simply the actual sound level in a room. Loud music playing at a party, a number of voices of people talking excitedly, a lawnmower right outside the window, or anything that is overly loud will interfere with communication. The last type of noise is cultural noise. **Cultural noise** refers to message interference that results from differences in peoples' worldviews. Worldview is discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the greater the difference in worldview, the more difficult it is to understand one another and communicate effectively.

Worldview

Most people don't give a lot of thought to the communication process. In the majority of our interactions with others, we are operating on automatic pilot. Although the encoding and decoding process may appear to be fairly straightforward, it is actually much more complicated than it seems. The reason for this is because we all have different worldviews. **Worldview** is the overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it. There are five core components to our worldview.

"The 2nd most famous face in Pushkar" by Shreyans Bhansali. CC-BY-NC-SA.

1. **Epistemology** is the way that we acquire knowledge and/or what counts as knowledge. Think about the process of conducting research. Thirty years ago, to find a series of facts one had to use a card catalogue and scour the library stacks for books. Now researchers can access thousands of pages of information via their computer from the comfort of their own home. Epistemology is linked to public speaking because it governs audience members' preferred learning styles and who or what they consider to be credible sources.

2. **Ontology** refers to our belief system, how we see the nature of reality or what we see as true or false. We may (or may not) believe in aliens from outer space, that butter is bad for you, that the Steelers will win the Superbowl, or that humans will be extinct in 200 years. Speech writers should be careful not to presume that audience members share the same beliefs. If a speaker claims that illness can be aided with prayer, but several people in the audience are atheists, at best the speaker has lost credibility and at worst these audience members could be offended.

3. **Axiology** represents our value system, or what we see as right or wrong, good or bad, and fair or unfair. One of the ways that you can tell what people value is to ask them what their goals are, or to ask them what qualities they look for in a life partner. Our values represent the things that we hope for—they do not represent reality. Values can have an impact on multiple levels of the public speaking process, but in particular values impact speaker credibility and effectiveness in persuasion. For instance, some cultures value modest dress in women, so a female speaker wearing a sleeveless blouse while speaking could cause her to lose credibility with some audience members. Or if audience members value the freedom to bear arms over the benefits of government regulation, a speaker will have a difficult time convincing these audience members to vote for stricter gun control legislation.

4. **Cosmology** signifies the way that we see our relationship to the universe and to other people. Cosmology dictates our view of power relationships and may involve our religious or spiritual beliefs. Controversial speech topics (like universal health care and the death penalty) are often related to this aspect of worldview as we must consider our responsibilities to other human beings and our power to influence them. Interestingly, cosmology would also play a role in such logistical points as who is allowed to speak, the order of speakers on a schedule (e.g., from most to least important), the amount of time a speaker has to speak, the seating arrangement on the dais, and who gets the front seats in the audience.

5. Praxeology denotes our preferred method of completing everyday tasks or our approach to solving problems. Some speech writers may begin working on their outlines as soon as they know they will need to give a speech, while others may wait until a few days before their speech to begin preparing (we do not recommend this approach). Praxeology may also have an impact on a speaker's preference of delivery style, methods of arranging main points, and choice of slideware (i.e., Power Point versus Prezi).

"NFL Superfans" by HMJD02. CC-BY-SA.

It is always good to explore the stuff you don't agree with, to try and understand a different lifestyle or foreign worldview. I like to be challenged in that way, and always end up learning something I didn't know. – Laura Linney

It is important to understand worldview because it has a profound impact on the encoding and decoding process, and consequently on our ability to be understood by others. Try this simple experiment. Ask two or three people to silently imagine a dog while you imagine a dog at the same time. "Dog" is a very concrete word (a word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses), and it is one of the first words children in the United States learn in school. Wait a few seconds and then ask each person what type of dog they were thinking of. Was it a Chihuahua? A greyhound? Golden retriever? Rottweiler? Or some other dog? Most likely each person you asked had a different image in his or her mind than you had in yours. This is our worldview at work.

To further illustrate, you may tell a co-worker, "I can't wait to go home this weekend—we are having lasagna!" Seems like a fairly clear-cut statement, doesn't it? Unfortunately, it is not. While "lasagna" is also a concrete word, our worldviews cause us to interpret each word in the statement differently. Where is "home?" Who is making the meal? What ingredients will be used in the lasagna? Is this dish eaten as a regular meal or for a special occasion? Will there be leftovers? Are friends invited? Since everyone who has eaten lasagna has had a different experience of the cuisine, we all acquire a different image in our mind when we hear the statement "…we are having lasagna!"


"Lasagna" by David K. CC-BY-SA.

Complicating matters is the fact that the more abstract the word becomes, the more room there is for interpretation. Abstract words (words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality) like "peace," "love," "immoral," "justice," "freedom," "success," and "honor" can have a number of different meanings; each of which is predicated on one's worldview. Communicators have their own unique worldviews that shape both the encoding and decoding processes, which means that we can never be completely understood by another person. People from the Midwest may call carbonated beverages "pop," while those from the East Coast may say "soda," and those from Georgia may say "coke." Even when simple terms are used like "oak tree" or "fire hydrant," each listener will form a different mental image when decoding the message. Never take communication for granted, and never assume your listener will understand you. It takes hard work to make yourself understood by an audience.

Context is worth 80 IQ points.- Alan Kay

Context


"Talking technique" by The U.S. Army. *CC-BY.*

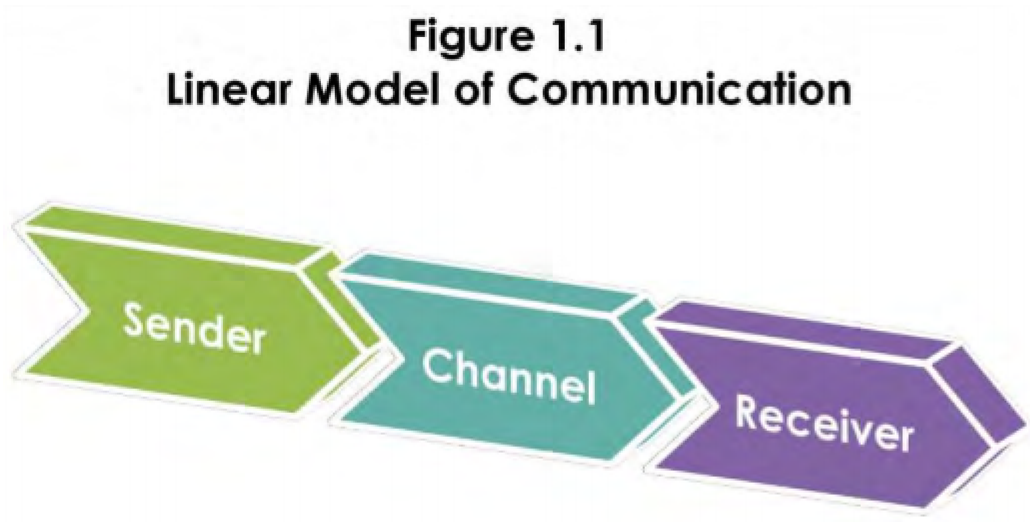
The last element of the communication process is the **context** in which the speech or interaction takes place. In the 1980's context was taught as the actual physical setting where communication occurred, such as in a place of worship, an apartment, a workplace, a noisy restaurant, or a grocery store. People communicate differently in each one of these places as there are unwritten rules of communication (called **norms**) that govern these settings. More recently the concept of context has evolved and expanded to include the type of relationships we have with others and the communicative rules that govern those relationships. So you do not speak the same way to your best friend as you do to a small child, your parent, your boss, your doctor or a police officer. And you may speak to your best friend differently in your apartment than you do in your parents' home, and your communication may also change when you are both out with friends on the weekend. In sum, the context refers to the norms that govern communication in different situations and relationships.

MODELS OF COMMUNICATION

It should be clear by now that public speaking happens all around us in many segments of our lives. However, to truly understand what is happening within these presentations, we need to take a step back and look at some of the key components of the communication process.

Linear Model of Communication

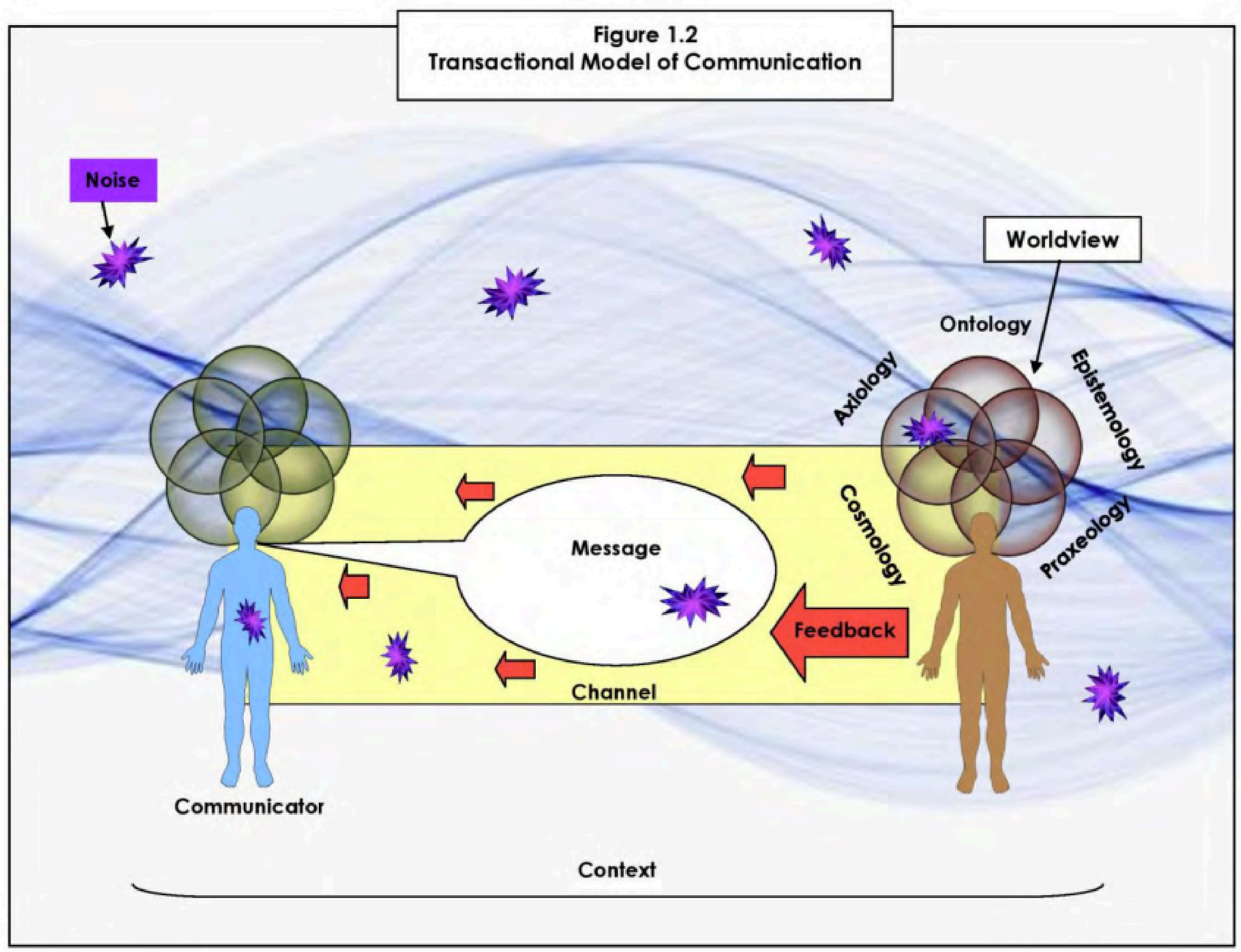
The first theoretical model of communication was proposed in 1949 by Shannon and Weaver for Bell Laboratories. (((Note: Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.))) This three-part model was intended to capture the radio and television transmission process. However it was later adapted to human communication and is now known as the linear model of communication. The first part of the model is the sender, and this is the person who is speaking. The second part of the model is the channel, which is the apparatus for carrying the message (i.e., the phone or TV). The third part of the model is the receiver, and this is the person who picks up the message. In this model, communication is seen as a one-way process of transmitting a message from one person to another person. This model can be found in Figure 1.1. If you think about situations when you communicate with another person face-to-face or when you give a speech, you probably realize that this model is inadequate—communication is much more complicated than firing off a message to others.



"Figure 1.1" by Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Transactional Model of Communication

Models of communication have evolved significantly since Shannon and Weaver first proposed their well- known conceptual model over sixty years ago. One of the most useful models for understanding public speaking is Barnlund's transactional model of communication. (((Note: Barnlund, D. C. (2008). *A transactional model of communication*. In. C. D. Mortensen (Eds.), Communication theory (2nd Ed), pp. 47–))57. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction.) In the transactional model, communication is seen as an ongoing, circular process. We are constantly affecting and are affected by those we communicate with. The transactional model has a number of interdependent processes and components, including the encoding and decoding processes, the communicator, the message, the channel and noise. Although not directly addressed in Barnlund's (2008) original transactional model, participants' worldviews and the context also play an important role in the communication process. See Figure 1.2 for an illustration.



"Figure 1.2" by Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying. ~ Friedrich Nietzsche

THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

In this chapter you have learned that the purpose of this book is to introduce you to the academic field of Communication by setting a foundation of communication history and study in the first six chapters, followed by the chronological presentation of some of the major specializations that make up this academic field.

Smith, Laswell, and Casey offer a simple definition of communication study: “who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results” (121). Now you can provide an answer to those who ask you what Communication study is about. Our definition of **communication**, *the process of using symbols to exchange meaning*, allows you to understand how we use this term throughout the book. The linear and transactional models of communication act as a visual representations of both communication study and communication. Finally, you are now aware of the importance of studying communication: that it impacts your personal, social, and professional life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to our definition, what is communication? What do we not consider to be communication?
2. Using our definition of communication study, explain how Communication is different from other majors such as Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, etc?
3. Name three people who you feel use communication effectively in their jobs? In what ways do they communicate effectively using verbal and nonverbal communication?

KEY TERMS

- channel
- communication
- communication study
- linear model
- message
- noise
- receiver
- sender
- transactional model

DEFINING COMMUNICATION STUDY GUIDE

Many Definitions of Communication

Communication study “focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, cultures, channels and media. The field promotes the effective and ethical practice of human communication” (NCA, 1995)

Smith, Laswell, and Casey offer a simple definition of communication study: “who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results”

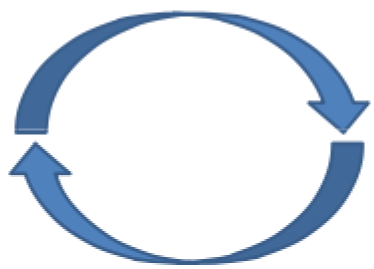
For the purpose of this text we define communication as the process of using symbols to exchange meaning.

The Mathematical or **Linear Model of Communication** is a model that suggests communication moves only in one direction.

- A **sender** is someone who encodes and sends a message to a receiver through a particular channel. The sender is the initiator of communication.
- A **receiver** is the recipient of a message. The receiver must decode messages in ways that are meaningful for him/her.
- A **message** is the particular meaning or content the sender wishes the receiver to understand. The message can be intentional or unintentional, written or spoken, verbal or nonverbal, or any combination of these.
- A **channel** is the method a sender uses to send a message to a receiver. The most common channels humans use are verbal and nonverbal communication

- **Noise** is anything that interferes with the sending or receiving of a message.
  - External and Internal Noise

The **Transactional Model of Communication** adds to the Linear Model by suggesting that both parties in a communication exchange act as both sender and receiver simultaneously, encoding and decoding messages to and from each other at the same time.



- Communication participants act as senders AND receivers simultaneously
- Communication is not a simple one-way transmission of a message
- The personal filters and experiences of the participants impact each communication exchange
- Noise and personal filters always influence the outcomes of every communication exchange

Key Terms

- channel
- communication
- communication study
- linear model
- message
- noise
- receiver
- sender
- transactional model

A PDF of this Defining Communication Study Guide can be downloaded here.

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GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Abstract Word	Words that refer to ideas or concepts that are removed from material reality.
Axiology	A part of worldview; refers to an individual or group's value system.
Channel	The means through which the message travels.
Communicator	The people in the interaction or speech setting who encode and decode messages simultaneously.
Concrete Word	A word that describes a tangible object that can be perceived through the senses.
Context	The communication rules that govern different physical settings and/or different types of relationships.
Cosmology	A part of worldview; refers to the way individuals and groups see themselves in relation to other people and their view of their place in the universe.
Cultural Noise	Differences in worldview that cause message interference.
Decoding	The process of listening to words and interpreting the words so they are associated with a mental image.

Encoding	The process of taking a mental image, associating the image with words, and then speaking those words.
Epistemology	A part of worldview; refers to the way an individual or group acquires knowledge or what counts as knowledge.
Listening	The psychological process of interpreting and making sense of the messages we receive.
Message	The words, nonverbal behavior, or other signals transmitted from one person to another.
Noise	Anything that interferes with the message transmission or the encoding and decoding process.
Nonverbal Behavior	All of the messages we send — except for the words we say. Can include appearance, eye behavior, kinesics (body movement), proxemics (use of space), touch, time, and smell.
Norms	The verbal and nonverbal rules (usually unspoken) that govern communicative behavior.
Ontology	A part of worldview; refers to an individual's or group's belief system.
Praxeology	A part of worldview; refers to the way an individual or group goes about tasks or solving problems.
Psychological Noise	Message interference that results from disturbed or excited mental states.
Physiological Noise	Message interference that results from bodily discomfort.
Physical Noise	Message interference that results when the noise level (as measured in decibels) makes it difficult to hear a message.
Public Speaking	The act of delivering a speech in front of a live audience.
Worldview	The overall framework through which an individual sees, thinks about, and interprets the world and interacts with it.

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ASSIGNMENT: SPEECH OF INTRODUCTION

http://www.public.iastate.edu/~aslagell/spcm212/Intro_sp_assign.pdf

LEARNING STYLES

Click on the links below to take a learning styles quiz, and then find out more about what different learning styles indicate about how you best learn.

- "Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire" by Barbara A. Soloman and Richard M. Felder, from North Carolina State University
- "Learning Styles and Strategies" by Richard M. Felder and Barbara A. Soloman, from North Carolina State University

DEFINING COMMUNICATION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click "Check Your Understanding" to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three "Maybe"/"Probably"/"Definitely" options to see if you were correct.
- Click "Next" to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

DISCUSSION: INTRODUCTIONS AND LEARNING STYLES

I would like you to introduce yourself to the group as your first assignment. The purpose of doing so is to introduce yourself so that others can get to know you individually, and you can share with others why you think communication is worth studying and how it might be helpful to you.

Complete this Learning Styles Quiz:
http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

Once you have completed the quiz, click here to read about what your learning style indicates about the way you learn:
http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/styles.htm

Click on the Discussion Board link above to access the Introductions and Learning Style Discussion Forum. Click Create Thread to compose a short post that includes the following information. Do not attach a word file. The following information should be placed in the message box:

1. Your name, major, your college and/or campus, whether you are a full time or part time student, your career or job information and what you hope to do when your degree is complete. Then share with the class something unique about yourself. Select something you think your classmates would enjoy knowing about you.
2. Add a photo of yourself. Please following the directions on Inserting a Picture in Blackboard to add your picture to your post.
3. Why do you think this class is required for your major?
4. Define in your own words what you think "communication" is, and why it might be important to study.
5. Post the results of your learning style. Do you think the results of your learning style are accurate? Are you surprised at the result?
6. Based on your learning style, name at least one way that you can change the way you approach learning in an online class (versus a face-to-face class) to help you be more successful.

Grading

- Original Post (15 pts.)
- Reply to at least 2 Classmate (5 pts.)

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Learning Objectives

1. Learn how to improve your own listening habits.
2. Learn how to handle personal communications in a career-friendly manner.
3. Learn what communication freezers are and how to avoid them.

By being sensitive to the errors outlined in this chapter and adopting active listening skills, you may increase your communication effectiveness, increasing your ability to carry out the managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. The following are additional tools for helping you increase your communication effectiveness.

Ten Ways to Improve Your Listening Habits

1. *Start by stopping*. Take a moment to inhale and exhale quietly before you begin to listen. Your job as a listener is to receive information openly and accurately.
2. *Don't worry about what you'll say when the time comes*. Silence can be a beautiful thing.
3. *Join the Sender's team*. When she pauses, summarize what you believe she has said. "What I'm hearing is that we need to focus on marketing as well as sales. Is that correct?" Be attentive to physical as well as verbal communications. "I hear you saying that we should focus on marketing. But the way you're shaking your head tells me the idea may not really appeal to you—is that right?"

4. *Don't multitask while listening*. Listening is a full-time job. It's tempting to multitask when you and the Sender are in different places, but doing that is counterproductive. The human mind can only focus on one thing at a time. Listening with only half your brain increases the chances that you'll have questions later, requiring more of the Speaker's time. (And when the speaker is in the same room, multitasking signals a disinterest that is considered rude.)
5. *Try to empathize with the Sender's point of view*. You don't have to agree; but can you find common ground?
6. Confused? *Ask questions*. There's nothing wrong with admitting you haven't understood the Sender's point. You may even help the Sender clarify the Message.
7. *Establish eye contact*. Making eye contact with the speaker (if appropriate for the culture) is important.
8. *What is the goal of this communication*? Ask yourself this question at different points during the communication to keep the information flow on track. Be polite. Differences in opinion can be the starting point of consensus.
9. *It's great to be surprised*. Listen with an open mind, not just for what you **want** to hear.
10. *Pay attention to what is not said*. Does the Sender's body language seem to contradict her Message? If so, clarification may be in order.

Career-Friendly Communications

Communication can occur without your even realizing it. Consider the following: Is your e-mail name professional? The typical convention for business e-mail contains some form of your name. While an e-mail name like "LazyGirl" or "DeathMonkey" may be fine for chatting online with your friends, they may send the wrong signal to individuals you e-mail such as professors and prospective employers.

- *Is your outgoing voice mail greeting professional*? If not, change it. Faculty and prospective recruiters will draw certain conclusions if, upon calling you, they hear a message that screams, "Party, party, party!"
- *Do you have a "private" social networking Web site on MySpace.com, Facebook.com, or Xanga.com*? If so, consider what it says about you to employers or clients. If it is information you wouldn't share at work, it probably shouldn't be there.
- *Googled yourself lately*? If not, you probably should. Potential employers have begun searching the Web as part of background checking and you should be aware of what's out there about you.

Communication Freezers

Communication freezers put an end to effective communication by making the Receiver feel judged or defensive. Typical communication stoppers include critizing, blaming, ordering, judging, or shaming the other person. The following are some examples of things to avoid saying:

1. Telling people what to do:
    - "You must…"
    - "You cannot…"
2. Threatening with "or else" implied:
    - "You had better…"
    - "If you don't…"
3. Making suggestions or telling other people what they ought to do:
    - "You should…"
    - "It's your responsibility to…"
4. Attempting to educate the other person:
    - "Let me give you the facts."
    - "Experience tells us that…"
5. Judging the other person negatively:
    - "You're not thinking straight."
    - "You're wrong."
6. Giving insincere praise:
    - "You have so much potential."
    - "I know you can do better than this."
7. Psychoanalyzing the other person:
    - "You're jealous."
    - "You have problems with authority."

8. Making light of the other person's problems by generalizing:
    - "Things will get better."
    - "Behind every cloud is a silver lining."
9. Asking excessive or inappropriate questions:
    - "Why did you do that?"
    - "Who has influenced you?"
10. Making light of the problem by kidding:
    - "Think about the positive side."
    - "You think *you've* got problems!"

Key Takeaway

By practicing the skills associated with active listening, you can become more effective in your personal and professional relationships. Managing your online communications appropriately can also help you avoid career pitfalls. Finally, be aware of the types of remarks that freeze communication and try not to use them.

Exercises

1. How can you assess if you are engaging in active listening?
2. How does it feel when someone does not seem to be listening to you?
3. Some companies have MySpace pages where employees can mingle and share ideas and information. Do you think this practice is a good idea? Why or why not?
4. What advice would you give to someone who is going to become a first time manager in terms of communication?

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

APPROACHES TO AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Whenever thinking about your speech, it is always a good idea to begin with a thorough awareness of your audience and the many factors comprising that particular audience. In speech communication, we simply call this “doing an audience analysis.” An audience analysis is when you consider all of the pertinent elements defining the makeup and **demographic characteristics** (also known as **demographics**) of your audience. (((Note: McQuail, D. (1997). *Audience analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.))) From the Greek prefix *demo* (of the people), we come to understand that there are detailed accounts of human population characteristics, such as age, gender, education, occupation, language, ethnicity, culture, background knowledge, needs and interests, and previously held attitudes, beliefs, and values. Demographics are widely used by advertising and public relations professionals to analyze specific audiences so that their products or ideas will carry influence. However, all good public speakers consider the demographic characteristics of their audience, as well. It is the fundamental stage of preparing for your speech. Table 5.1 shows some examples of demographics and how they may be used when developing your speech. Of course, this is not an all-inclusive list. But, it does help you get a good general understanding of the demographics of the audience you will be addressing.

Table 5.1: Tailoring a Speech to Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Do’s and Don’ts
Ethnicity	Don’t try to use words or phrases to “cuddle up” to one race or another. You would lose some credibility if you made a point in your speech and then said, “So get jiggy with it” or “You could enjoy that with your afternoon tea ceremony.” (((Note: Pearson, J.C., Nelson, P.E., Titsworth, S. & Harter, L. (2011). *Human communication* (4th Ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.)))
Age	Stay away from jargon from one age range or another, like “OMG” or “the cat’s pajamas” (((Note: Gamble, T.K. & Gamble, M. (2013). *Communication works*. New York: McGrawHill.)))
Sex/Gender	Use words that are not sex/gender-specific. Instead of policeman, fireman, and stewardess, use police officer, firefighter, and flight attendant. Do not use one sex/gender pronouns, like assuming a teacher is a “she” and a dentist is a “he.” (((Note: Eisenberg, I. & Wynn, D. (2013) *Think communication*. Boston: Pearson.)))
Income	Some people in your audience will have more money than others. So if you keep fit by maintaining membership in a prominent gym and you take classes there also, don’t assume everyone else can afford to do so. You can tell your audience what you do, but give them options like parking far from the store and working out with a yoga or pilates CD at home.
Occupation	Unless you are speaking at a convention where everyone in your audience works in the same field, make your speech more explanatory. Your audience has not had extensive training in medical terms nor legal terms. So you need to explain what you are talking about, without using the big words which would make your audience feel confused, stupid, and put down.

Table 5.1: Tailoring a Speech to Demographic Characteristics	
Demographic Characteristics	Do’s and Don’ts
Religion	Realize that your audience will likely have a wide variety of religions represented, an some people may have no religious or spiritual beliefs. So you can say that you read the Bible every night for 10 minutes, but that you are suggesting that everyone choose a religious or inspirational reading for presleep relaxation. (((Note: Gamble & Gamble 2013)))
Education Level	Even if you are speaking to an audience of college freshmen, not everyone has had the same educational experiences. For example, some of the people in your class may have completed a high school equivalency program like the GED, some may be high school students who are taking a college class, some may have gone to secondary school in another country, some may have been homeschooled, and some may have gone to a private honors-based prep school. You need to be careful not to talk down to your audience and not to use fancy sentences and words to try to impress your audience. Gauging the right level of communication for your speech is an important challenge.

So now you may be saying to yourself: “Gee, that’s great! How do I go about analyzing my particular audience?” First, you need to know that there are three overarching methods (or “paradigms”) for doing an audience analysis: audience analysis by direct observation, audience analysis by inference, and audience analysis through data collection. Once you get to know how these methods work, you should be able to select which one (or even combination of these methods) is right for your circumstances.

> Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life. – Marcus Aurelius

Direct Observation

Audience analysis by direct observation, or direct experience, is, by far, the most simple of the three paradigms for “getting the feel” of a particular audience. It is a form of qualitative data gathering. We perceive it through one or more of our five natural senses—hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and smelling. Knowledge that we acquire through personal experience has more impact on us than does knowledge that we learn indirectly. Knowledge acquired from personal experience is also more likely to affect our thinking and will be retained for a longer period of time.
We are more likely to trust what we hear, see, feel, taste, and smell rather than what we learn from secondary sources of information. (((Note: Pressat, R. (1972). *Demographic analysis; methods, results, applications*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.)))

All you really need to do for this method of observation is to examine your audience. If you are lucky enough to be able to do this before speaking to your audience, you will be able to gather some basic reflective data (How old are they? What racial mix does this audience have? Does their non-verbal behavior indicate that they are excited to hear this speech?) that will help you arrange your thoughts and arguments for your speech. (((Note: Nierenberg, G.I. & Calero, H.H. (1994) *How to read a person like a book*. New York: Barnes and Noble Books.)))

One excellent way to become informed about your audience is to ask them about themselves. In its most basic form, this is data collection. Whenever possible, have conversations with them—interact with members of your audience—get to know them on a personal level (Where did you go to school? Do you have siblings/pets? What kind of car do you drive?) Through these types of conversations, you will be able to get to know and appreciate each audience member as both a human being and as an audience member. You will come to understand what interests them, convinces them, or even makes them laugh. You might arouse interest and curiosity in your topic while you also gain valuable data.

"MobileHCI 2008 Audience" by Nhenze. *CC-BY-SA.*

For example, you want to deliver a persuasive speech about boycotting farm-raised fish. You could conduct a short attitudinal survey to discover what your audience thinks about the topic, if they eat farm-raised fish, and if they believe it is healthy for them. This information will help you when you construct your speech because you will know their attitudes about the subject. You would be able to avoid constructing a speech that potentially could do the opposite of what you intended.

Another example would be that you want to deliver an informative speech about your town's recreational activities and facilities. Your focus can be aligned with your audience if, before you begin working on your speech, you find out if your audience has senior citizens and/or high school students and/or new parents.

Clearly this cannot be done in every speaking situation, however. Often, we are required to give an **unacquainted-audience presentation**. Unacquainted-audience presentations are speeches when you are completely unfamiliar with the audience and its demographics. In these cases, it is always best to try and find some time to sit down and talk with someone you trust (or even several people) who might be familiar with the given audience. These conversations can be very constructive in helping you understand the context in which you will be speaking.

Not understanding the basic demographic characteristics of an audience, or further, that audience's beliefs, values, or attitudes about a given topic makes your presentation goals haphazard, at best. Look around the room at the people who will be listening to your speech. What types of gender, age, ethnicity, and educational- level characteristics are represented? What are their expectations for your presentation? This is all-important information you should know before you begin your research and drafting your outline. Who is it that I am going to be talking to?

> If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it? – Albert Einstein

Inference

Audience analysis by inference is merely a logical extension of your observations drawn in the method above. It is a form of critical thinking known as inductive reasoning, and another form of qualitative data gathering. An inference is when you make a reasoned tentative conclusion or logical judgment on the basis of available evidence. It is best used when you can identify patterns in your evidence that indicate something is expected to happen again or should hold true based upon previous experiences. A good speaker knows how to interpret information and draw conclusions from that information. As individuals we make inferences—or reasonable assumptions—all the time. For example, when we hear someone speaking Arabic, we infer that they are from the Middle East. When we see this person carrying a copy of The Koran, we infer that they are also a follower of the Muslim faith. These are reasoned conclusions that we make based upon the evidence available to us and our general knowledge about people and their traits.

When we reason, we make connections, distinctions, and predictions; we use what is known or familiar to us to reach a conclusion about something that is unknown or unfamiliar for it to make sense. Granted, of course, inferences are sometimes wrong. Here's a familiar example: You reach into a jar full of jelly beans, and they turn out to be all black. You love black jelly beans. You reach back into the jar and take another hand full, which turn out to be, again, all black. Since you can't see the jelly beans inside the jar you make an assumption based on empirical evidence (two handfuls of jelly beans) that all of the jelly beans are black. You reach into the jar a third time and take a hand full of jelly beans out, but this time they aren't any black jelly beans, but white, pink, and yellow. Your conclusion that all of the jelly beans were black turned out to be fallacious.

Data Sampling

Unlike audience analysis by direct observation and analysis by inference, audience analysis by data sampling uses statistical evidence to quantify and clarify the characteristics of your audience. These characteristics are also known as variables, (((Note: Tucker, K.T.; Weaver, II, R.L.; Berryman-Fink, C. (1981). *Research in speech communication*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.))) and are assigned a numerical value so we can systematically collect and classify them. They are reported as statistics, also known as quantitative analysis or quantitative data collection. Statistics are numerical summaries of facts, figures, and research findings. Audience analysis by data sampling requires you to survey your audience before you give your speech. You need to know the basics of doing a survey before you actually collect and interpret your data.

"Here's a Jellybean for You" by KaCey97078. CC-BY.

> If you make listening and observation your occupation, you will gain much more than you can by talk. – Robert Baden-Powell

Basic Questionnaire

There are a great number of survey methods available to the speaker. However, we will cover three primary types in this section because they are utilized the most. The first type of survey method you should know about is the basic questionnaire, which is a series of questions advanced to produce demographic and attitudinal data from your audience.

Clearly, audience members should not be required to identify themselves by name on the basic questionnaire. Anonymous questionnaires are more likely to produce truthful information. Remember, all you are looking for is a general read of your audience; you should not be looking for specific information about any respondent concerning your questionnaire in particular. It is a bulk sampling tool, only.

"Man With a Clipboard" by Elizabeth M. CC-BY.

While you can easily gather basic demographic data (examples of demographic questions are shown in the chart following this section), we need to adjust our questions a bit more tightly, or ask more focused questions, in order to understand the audience's "predispositions" to think or act in certain ways. For example, you can put an attitudinal extension on the basic questionnaire (examples of attitudinal questions are shown in Figure 5.1).

These questions probe more deeply into the psyche of your audience members, and will help you see where they stand on certain issues. Of course, you may need to tighten these questions to get to the heart of your specific topic. But, once you do, you'll have a wealth of data at your disposal that, ultimately, will tell you how to work with your target audience.

Ordered Categories

Another method of finding out your audience's value set is to survey them according to their value hierarchy. A value hierarchy is a person's value structure placed in relationship to a given value set. (((Note: Rokeach, M. (1968). *Beliefs, attitudes, and values; a theory of organization and change* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.))) The way to determine a person's value hierarchy is to use the ordered categories sampling method. Here, each audience member is given a list of values on a piece of paper, and each audience member writes these values on another piece of paper in order according to their importance to him/her. Each response is different, of course, because each audience member is different, but when analyzed by the speaker, common themes will present themselves in the overall data. Accordingly, the speaker can then identify with those common value themes. (Examples of an Ordered Value Set appear in Figure 5.1).

Likert-type Testing

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Figure 5.1: Examples of Survey Questions</th></tr>
<tr><td>Demographic Questions

1. Academic level in college
    1. freshman
    2. sophomore
    3. junior
    4. senior
2. Marital status
    1. single
    2. married
    3. divorced
    4. widowed
3. Age
    1. less than 18 years old
    2. 18–30 years old
    3. 31–45 years old
    4. over 46 years of age</td>
<td>Attitudinal Questions

1. I regard myself as
    1. conservative
    2. liberal
    3. socialist
    4. independent
2. I believe that abortion
    1. should be illegal
    2. should remain legal
    3. should be legal only in cases of rape
    4. not sure
3. I think that prayer should be permitted in public schools
    1. yes
    2. no
    3. undecided</td></tr>
<tr><td>Value Ordered Questions

Place the following list of values in order of importance, from most important (1) to least important (5).

Freedom
Liberty
Justice
Democracy
Safety

1. ___________
2. ___________
3. ___________
4. ___________
5. ___________</td>
<td>Likert-Type Questions

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each question.

1. Unsolicited email should be illegal.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree
2. Making unsolicited email illegal would be fundamentally unfair to businesses.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree
3. I usually delete unsolicited email before even opening it.
Strongly Agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Disagree</td></tr>
</table>

The final method of asserting your audience's attitudes deals with Likert-type testing. Likert-type testing is when you make a statement, and ask the respondent to gauge the depth of their sentiments toward that statement either positively, negatively, or neutrally. Typically, each scale will have 5 weighted response categories, being +2, +1, 0, -1, and -2. What the Likert-type test does, that other tests do not do, is measure the extent to which attitudes are held. See how the Likert-type test does this in the example on “unsolicited email” in Figure 5.1.

A small Likert-type test will tell you where your audience, generally speaking, stands on issues. As well, it will inform you as to the degree of the audience’s beliefs on these issues. The Likert-type test should be used when attempting to assess a highly charged or polarizing issue, because it will tell you, in rough numbers, whether or not your audience agrees or disagrees with your topic.

No matter what kind of data sampling you choose, you need to allow time to collect the information and then analyze it. For example, if you create a survey of five questions, and you have your audience of 20 people complete the survey, you will need to deal with 100 survey forms. At high levels such as political polling, the audience members quickly click on their answers on a webpage or on a hand-held “clicker,” and the specific survey software instantly collects and collates the information for researchers. If you are in a small community group or college class, it is more likely that you will be doing your survey “the old-fashioned way”–so you will need some time to mark each individual response on a “master sheet” and then average or summarize the results in an effective way to use in your speech-writing and speech-giving.

CATEGORIES OF AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

No matter which of the above inquiry methods you choose to do your audience analysis, you will, at some point, need to direct your attention to the five “categories” of audience analysis. These are the five categories through which you will learn to better appreciate your audience. Let’s now examine these categories and understand the variables and constraints you should use to estimate your audience’s information requirements.

Situational Analysis

The situational audience analysis category considers the situation for which your audience is gathered. This category is primarily concerned with why your audience is assembled in the first place. (((Note: Caernarven-Smith, P. (1983). *Audience analysis & response* (1st Ed.). Pembroke, MA: Firman Technical Publications.))) Are they willingly gathered to hear you speak? Have your audience members paid to hear you? Or, are your audience members literally “speech captives” who have somehow been socially or systematically coerced into hearing you? These factors are decisively important because they place a major responsibility upon you as a speaker, whichever is the case. The entire tone and agenda of your speech rests largely upon whether or not your audience even wants to hear from you.

Untitled by Konrad-Adenauer-Gemeinschaftshauptschule Wenden. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Many audiences are considered captive audiences in that they have no real choice regarding the matter of hearing a given speech. In general, these are some of the most difficult audiences to address because these members are being forced to listen to a message, and do not have the full exercise of their own free will. Consider for a moment when you have been called to a mandatory work meeting. Were you truly happy to listen to the speaker, in all honesty? Some might say “yes,” but usually most would rather be doing something else with their time. This is an important factor to keep in mind when preparing your speech: some people simply do not want to listen to a speech they believe is compulsory.

The voluntary audience situation, in stark contrast, is completely different. A voluntary audience is willingly assembled to listen to a given message. As a rule, these audiences are much easier to address because they are interested in hearing the speech. To visualize how this works, reflect upon the last speech, concert, or show you've chosen to attend. While the event may or may not have lived up to your overall expectations, the very fact that you freely went to the occasion speaks volumes about your predisposition to listen to—and perhaps even be persuaded by—the information being presented.

Sometimes audiences are mixed in their situational settings, too. Take the everyday classroom situation, for instance. While students choose to attend higher education, many people in the college classroom environment sadly feel as if they are still "trapped" in school and would rather be elsewhere. On the other hand, some students in college are truly there by choice, and attentively seek out knowledge from their teacher-mentors. What results from this mixed audience situation is a hybrid captive-voluntary audience, with those who are only partially interested in what is going on in the classroom and those who are genuinely involved. You literally get to hone your speech skills on both types of audiences, thereby learning a skill set that many never get to exercise. You should begin this wonderful opportunity by considering ways to inform, persuade, and humor a mixed situation audience. Think of it as a learning occasion, and you'll do just fine.

> Being popular with an audience is a very rickety ladder to be on. – Louis C. K.

Demographic Analysis

The second category of audience analysis is **demography**. As mentioned before, demographics are literally a classification of the characteristics of the people. Whenever addressing an audience, it is generally a good idea to know about its age, gender, major, year in school, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, et cetera. There are two steps in doing an accurate demographic analysis: gathering demographic data and interpreting this data. (((Note: Benjamin, B. (1969). *Demographic analysis.* New York: Praeger.)))

Sometimes, this information is gathered by the questionnaire sampling method, and is done formally. On other occasions, this information is already available in a database and is made available to the speaker. Some noteworthy speakers even have "scouts" who do demographic research on an audience prior to a speaking event, and make interpretations on that audience based upon key visual cues. For example, congresspersons and senators frequently make public appearances where they use stock speeches to appeal to certain audiences with specific demographic uniqueness. In order to know what type of audience he or she will be addressing, these politicians dispatch staff aides to an event to see how many persons of color, hecklers, and supporters will be in attendance. Of course, studying demographic characteristics is, indeed, more an art form than a science. Still, it is a common practice among many professional speakers.

"Wiki Conference 2011" by Sucheta Ghoshal. CC-BY-SA.

Consider for a moment how valuable it would be to you as a public speaker to know that your audience will be mostly female, between the ages of 25 and 40, mostly married, and Caucasian. Would you change your message to fit this demographic? Or, would you keep your message the same, no matter the audience you were addressing? Chances are you would be more inclined to talk to issues bearing upon those gender, age, and race qualities. Frankly, the smart speaker would shift his or her message to adapt to the audience. And, simply, that's the purpose of doing demographics: to embed within your message the acceptable parameters of your audience's range of needs.

This, of course, raises an extremely important ethical issue for the modern speaker. Given the ability to study demographic data and therefore to study your audience, does a speaker shift his or her message to play to the audience entirely? Ethically, a speaker should not shift his or her message and should remain true to his or her motives. Only you will be able to alleviate the tension between a speaker's need to adapt to an audience and his or her need to remain true to form. (((Note: Natalle, E.J. & Bodenheimer, F.R. (2004) *The woman's public speaking handbook.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.)))

> My greatest challenge has been to change the mindset of people. Mindsets play strange tricks on us. We see things the way our minds have instructed our eyes to see. – Muhammad Yunus

Psychological Analysis

Unless your selected speech topic is a complete mystery to your audience, your listeners will already hold "attitudes, beliefs, and values" toward the ideas you will inevitably present. As a result, it is always important to know where your audience stands on the issues you plan to address ahead of time. The best way to accomplish this is to sample your audience with a quick questionnaire or survey prior to the event. This is known as the third category of audience analysis, or **psychological description.** When performing a description you seek to identify the audience's attitudes, beliefs, and values. (((Note: Campbell, K.K. & Huxman, S.S. *The Rhetorical Act: Thinking, Speaking, and Writing Critically* (3rd Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.))) They are your keys to understanding how your audience thinks.

Attitudes

In basic terms, an **attitude** is a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a person, an object, an idea, or an event. (((Note: Jastrow, J. (1918). The psychology of conviction: A study of beliefs and attitudes. New York: Houghton Mifflin.))) Attitudes come in different forms. You are very likely to see an attitude present itself when someone says that they are "pro" or "anti" something. But, above all else, attitudes are learned and not necessarily enduring. Attitudes can change, and sometimes do, whereas beliefs and values do not shift as easily. A sample list of attitudes can be found in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Examples of Attitudes
Pro-/Anti-war
Pro-diversity
Anti-affirmative action
Pro-choice
Pro-life
Pro-/Anti-gambling
Pro-/Anti-prostitution
Pro-/Anti-capital punishment
Pro-/Anti-free trade
Pro-/Anti-outsourcing
Pro-/Anti-welfare
Pro-/Anti-corporate tax cuts
Pro-/Anti-censorship

These are just a small range of issues that one can either be “for” or “against.” And, while we are simplifying the social scientific idea of an attitude considerably here, these examples serve our purposes well. Remember, attitudes are not as durable as beliefs and values. But, they are good indicators of how people view the persons, objects, ideas, or events that shape their world.

> Other people’s beliefs may be myths, but not mine. – Mason Cooley

Beliefs

Beliefs are principles (((Note: Bem, D. J. (1970). *Beliefs, attitudes, and human affairs.* Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Pub. Co.))) or assumptions about the universe.

Beliefs are more durable than attitudes because beliefs are hinged to ideals and not issues. For example, you may believe in the principle: “what goes around comes around.” If you do, you believe in the notion of karma. And so, you may align your behaviors to be consistent with this belief philosophy. You do not engage in unethical or negative behavior because you believe that it will “come back” to you. Likewise, you may try to exude behaviors that are ethical and positive because you wish for this behavior to return, in kind. You may not think this at all, and believe quite the opposite. Either way, there is a belief in operation driving what you think. Some examples of beliefs are located in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Examples of Beliefs
The world was created by God.
Marijuana is an addictive gateway drug.
Ghosts are all around us.
Smoking causes cancer.
Anyone can acquire HIV.
Evolution is fact, not fiction.
Marijuana is neither addictive or harmful.
Ghosts are products of our imagination.
Smoking does not cause cancer.
Only high-risk groups acquire HIV.

Values

A value, on the other hand, is a guiding belief that regulates our attitudes. (((Note: Rokeach, M. (1968). *Beliefs, attitudes, and values; a theory of organization and change* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.))) Values are the core principles driving our attitudes. If you probe into someone’s attitudes and beliefs far enough, you will inevitably find an underlying value. Importantly, you should also know that we structure our values in accordance to our own value hierarchy, or mental schema of values placed in order of their relative individual importance. Each of us has our own values that we subscribe to and a value hierarchy that we use to navigate the issues of the world. But we really aren’t even aware that we have a value hierarchy until some of our values come in direct conflict with each other. Then, we have to negotiate something called cognitive dissonance, or the mental stress caused by the choice we are forced to make between two considerable alternatives.

For example, let’s assume that you value “having fun” a great deal. You like to party with your friends and truly enjoy yourself. And, in this day and age, who doesn’t? However, now that you are experiencing a significant amount of independence and personal freedom, you have many life options at your disposal. Let's also say that some of your close personal friends are doing drugs. You are torn. Part of you wants to experience the "fun" that your close friends may be experiencing; but, the more sane part of you wants to responsibly decline. In honesty, you are juxtaposed between two of your own values—having "fun" and being responsible. This real life example is somewhat exaggerated for your benefit. Realize that we make decisions small and grand, based on our value hierarchies. Some basic values common to people around the world can be found in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Examples of Values		
Inner harmony	Enjoyment	Belonging
Friendship	Trust	Equality
Control	Family	Security
Peace	Wisdom	Tradition
Unity	Achievement	Power
Generosity	Conformity	Intelligence
Leadership	Creativity	Responsibility
Health	Independence	Loyalty

> Values aren't buses… They're not supposed to get you anywhere. They're supposed to define who you are. – Jennifer Crusie

Multicultural Analysis

Demography looks at issues of race and ethnicity in a basic sense. However, in our increasingly diverse society, it is worthy to pay particular attention to the issue of speaking to a multicultural audience (as discussed in Chapter 14 *Speaking to a Global Audience*). Odds are that any real world audience that you encounter will have an underlying multicultural dimension. As a speaker, you need to recognize that the perspective you have on any given topic may not necessarily be shared by all of the members of your audience. (((Note: Ting-Toomey. S & Chung, L.C. (2005). *Understanding intercultural communication.* Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing.))) Therefore, it is imperative that you become a culturally effective speaker. Culturally effective speakers develop the capacity to appreciate other cultures and acquire the necessary skills to speak effectively to people with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Keep these factors in mind when writing a speech for a diverse audience.

Language

Many people speak different languages, so if you are translating words, do not use slang or jargon, which can be confusing. You could add a visual aid (a poster, a picture, a PowerPoint slide or two) which would show your audience what you mean – which instantly translates into the audience member's mind. (((Note: Klopf, D.W. & Cambra, R.E. (1991) *Speaking skills for prospective teachers* (2nd Ed.). Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing Company. Tauber, R.T. & Mester, C.S. *Acting Lessons for Teachers, Using Performance Skills in the Classroom.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.)))

Cognition

"Audience Applause at MIT meeting in Beijing" by Philip McMaster. *CC-BY-NC.*

Realize that different cultures have different cultural-cognitive processes, or ways of looking at the very concept of logic itself. Accordingly, gauge your audience as to their diverse ways of thinking and be sensitive to these differing logics.

Ethnocentricity

Remember that in many cases you will be appealing to people from other cultures. Do not assume that your culture is dominant or better than other cultures. That assumption is called ethnocentrism, and ethnocentric viewpoints have the tendency to drive a wedge between you and your audience. (((Note: Pearson, J.C., Nelson, P.E., Titsworth, S. & Harter, L. (2011). *Human communication* (4th Ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.)))

> Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman, Zoroastrian, stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the mystery, unique and not to be judged. – Rumi

Values

Not only do individuals have value systems of their own, but societies promote value systems, as well. Keep in mind the fact that you will be appealing to value hierarchies that are socially-laden, as well as those that are individually-borne.

Communication Styles

While you are trying to balance these language, cognition, cultural, and value issues, you should also recognize that some cultures prefer a more animated delivery style than do others. The intelligent speaker will understand this, and adapt his or her verbal and nonverbal delivery accordingly.

Interest and Knowledge Analysis

"25th March 2011" by Grace Flora. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Finally, if the goal of your speech is to deliver a unique and stirring presentation (and it should be), you need to know ahead of time if your audience is interested in what you have to say, and has any prior knowledge about your topic. You do not want to give a boring or trite speech. Instead, you want to put your best work forward, and let your audience see your confidence and preparation shine through. And, you don't want to make a speech that your audience already knows a lot about. So, your job here is to "test" your topic by sampling your audience for their topic interest and topic knowledge. Defined, topic interest is the significance of the topic to a given audience; often related to the uniqueness of a speaker's topic. Likewise, topic knowledge is the general amount of information that the audience possesses on a given topic. These are not mere definitions listed for the sake of argument; these are essential analytical components of effective speech construction.

> Anyone who teaches me deserves my respect, honoring and attention. – Sonia Rumzi

Unlike multicultural audience analysis, evaluating your audience's topic interest and topic knowledge is a fairly simple task. One can do this through informal question and answer dialogue, or through an actual survey. Either way, it is best to have some information, rather than none at all. Imagine the long list of topics that people have heard over and over and over. You can probably name some yourself, right now, without giving it much thought. If you started listing some topics to yourself, please realize that this is the point of this section of this module; your audience is literally thinking the same exact thing you are. Given that, topic preparation is strategically important to your overall speech success.

Again, do not underestimate the power of asking your audience whether or not your topic actually interests them. If you find that many people are not interested in your topic, or already know a lot about it, you have just saved yourself from a potentially mind- numbing exercise. After all, do you really want to give a speech where your audience could care less about your topic—or even worse— they know more about the topic than you do yourself? Not at all! The purpose of this section is to help you search for the highly sought-after public speaking concept called uniqueness, which is when a topic rises to the level of being singularly exceptional in interest and knowledge to a given audience.

We know that you wish to excel in giving your speech, and indeed you shall. But first, let's make sure that your audience is engaged by your topic and hasn't already heard the subject matter so much that they, themselves, could give the speech without much (if any) preparation.

One final note: There's an old adage in communication studies that reasons: "know what you know; know what you don't know; and, know the difference between the two." In other words, don't use puffery to blind your audience about your alleged knowledge on a particular subject. Remember, there is likely to be someone in your audience who knows as much about your topic, if not more, than you do. If you get caught trying to field an embarrassing question, you might just lose the most important thing you have as a speaker: your credibility. If you know the answer, respond accordingly. If you do not know the answer, respond accordingly. But, above all, try and be a resource for your audience. They expect you to be something of an expert on the topic you choose to address.

> Given the choice between trivial material brilliantly told versus profound material badly told, an audience will always choose the trivial told brilliantly. – Robert McKee

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND SELF

EXPLORE INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND SELF-CONCEPT

What You'll Learn To Do: Explore Intrapersonal Communication and Self-Concept

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define self-concept and discuss how we develop our self-concept
- Define Intrapersonal Communication
- Define self-esteem and discuss how we develop self-esteem
- Discuss how social norms, family, culture, and media influence self-perception
- Discuss how social norms, family, culture, and media influence self-perception
- Define self-presentation and discuss common self-presentation strategies
- Differentiate between attitudes, values and beliefs

Learning Activities

In order to successfully complete this module's work, you will need to do the following.

Required

- **Read**:
    - Identity Needs
    - Perceiving and Presenting Self Introduction
    - Self-Concept
    - Self-Esteem
    - Influences on Self-Perception
    - Self-Presentation
    - Perceiving and Presenting Self Key Takeways and Exercises
    - Intrapersonal Communication
    - Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values
- **Participate:** Virtual Meeting #1 using Blackboard Collaborate
- **Begin**: Dimensions of Self Activity (due in Module 4)

Optional

These will help you to prepare for Exam 1.

- **Read**: Intrapersonal Communication and Self Study Guide
- **Quiz**: Self Check

IDENTITY NEEDS

Identity needs include our need to present ourselves to others and be thought of in particular and desired ways. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself? Are you funny, smart, loyal, or quirky? Your answer isn't just based on who you think you are, since much of how we think of ourselves is based on our communication with other people. Our identity changes as we progress through life, but communication is the primary means of establishing our identity and fulfilling our identity needs. Communication allows us to present ourselves to others in particular ways. Just as many companies, celebrities, and politicians create a public image, we desire to present different faces in different contexts. The influential scholar Erving Goffman compared self-presentation to a performance and suggested we all perform different roles in different contexts. (((Note: (Note: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1959).)))) Indeed, competent communicators can successfully manage how others perceive them by adapting to situations and contexts. A parent may perform the role of stern head of household, supportive shoulder to cry on, or hip and culturally aware friend based on the situation they are in with their child. A newly hired employee may initially perform the role of motivated and agreeable coworker but later perform more leadership behaviors after being promoted. We will learn more about the different faces we present to the world and how we develop our self-concepts through interactions with others in this module.

PERCEIVING AND PRESENTING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define self-concept and discuss how we develop our self-concept.
2. Define self-esteem and discuss how we develop self-esteem.

3. Explain how social comparison theory and self-discrepancy theory influence self-perception.
4. Discuss how social norms, family, culture, and media influence self-perception.
5. Define self-presentation and discuss common self-presentation strategies.

Just as our perception of others affects how we communicate, so does our perception of ourselves. But what influences our self-perception? How much of our self is a product of our own making and how much of it is constructed based on how others react to us? How do we present ourselves to others in ways that maintain our sense of self or challenge how others see us? We will begin to answer these questions in this section as we explore self-concept, self-esteem, and self-presentation.

SELF-CONCEPT

Self-concept refers to the overall idea of who a person thinks he or she is. If I said, "Tell me who you are," your answers would be clues as to how you see yourself, your self-concept. Each person has an overall self-concept that might be encapsulated in a short list of overarching characteristics that he or she finds important. But each person's self-concept is also influenced by context, meaning we think differently about ourselves depending on the situation we are in. In some situations, personal characteristics, such as our abilities, personality, and other distinguishing features, will best describe who we are. You might consider yourself laid back, traditional, funny, open minded, or driven, or you might label yourself a leader or a thrill seeker. In other situations, our self-concept may be tied to group or cultural membership. For example, you might consider yourself a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity, a Southerner, or a member of the track team.

Men are more likely than women to include group memberships in their self-concept descriptions.

Our self-concept is also formed through our interactions with others and their reactions to us. The concept of the looking glass self explains that we see ourselves reflected in other people's reactions to us and then form our self-concept based on how we believe other people see us. (((Note: (Note: Charles Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1902).)))) This reflective process of building our self-concept is based on what other people have actually said, such as "You're a good listener," and other people's actions, such as coming to you for advice. These thoughts evoke emotional responses that feed into our self-concept. For example, you may think, "I'm glad that people can count on me to listen to their problems."

We also develop our self-concept through comparisons to other people. Social comparison theory states that we describe and evaluate ourselves in terms of how we compare to other people. Social comparisons are based on two dimensions: superiority/inferiority and similarity/difference. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 261.)))) In terms of superiority and inferiority, we evaluate characteristics like attractiveness, intelligence, athletic ability, and so on. For example, you may judge yourself to be more intelligent than your brother or less athletic than your best friend, and these judgments are incorporated into your self-concept. This process of comparison and evaluation isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can have negative consequences if our reference group isn't appropriate. Reference groups are the groups we use for social comparison, and they typically change based on what we are evaluating. In terms of athletic ability, many people choose unreasonable reference groups with which to engage in social comparison. If a man wants to get into better shape and starts an exercise routine, he may be discouraged by his difficulty keeping up with the aerobics instructor or running partner and judge himself as inferior, which could negatively affect his self-concept. Using as a reference group people who have only recently started a fitness program but have shown progress could help maintain a more accurate and hopefully positive self-concept.

We also engage in social comparison based on similarity and difference. Since self-concept is context specific, similarity may be desirable in some situations and difference more desirable in others. Factors like age and personality may influence whether or not we want to fit in or stand out. Although we compare ourselves to others throughout our lives, adolescent and teen years usually bring new pressure to be similar to or different from particular reference groups. Think of all the cliques in high school and how people voluntarily and involuntarily broke off into groups based on popularity, interest, culture, or grade level. Some kids in your high school probably wanted to fit in with and be similar to other people in the marching band but be different from the football players. Conversely, athletes were probably more apt to compare themselves, in terms of similar athletic ability, to other athletes rather than kids in show choir. But social comparison can be complicated by perceptual influences. As we learned earlier, we organize information based on similarity and difference, but these patterns don't always hold true. Even though students involved in athletics and students involved in arts may seem very different, a dancer or singer may also be very athletic, perhaps even more so than a member of the football team. As with other aspects of perception, there are positive and negative consequences of social comparison.

We generally want to know where we fall in terms of ability and performance as compared to others, but what people do with this information and how it affects self-concept varies. Not all people feel they need to be at the top of the list, but some won't stop until they get the high score on the video game or set a new school record in a track-and-field event. Some people strive to be first chair in the clarinet section of the orchestra, while another person may be content to be second chair. The education system promotes social comparison through grades and rewards such as honor rolls and dean's lists. Although education and privacy laws prevent me from displaying each student's grade on a test or paper for the whole class to see, I do typically report the aggregate grades, meaning the total number of As, Bs, Cs, and so on. This doesn't violate anyone's privacy rights, but it allows students to see where they fell in the distribution. This type of social comparison can be used as motivation. The student who was one of only three out of twenty-three to get a D on the exam knows that most of her classmates are performing better than she is, which may lead her to think, "If they can do it, I can do it." But social comparison that isn't reasoned can have negative effects and result in negative thoughts like "Look at how bad I did. Man, I'm stupid!" These negative thoughts can lead to negative behaviors, because we try to maintain internal consistency, meaning we act in ways that match up with our self-concept. So if the student begins to question her academic abilities and then incorporates an assessment of herself as a "bad student" into her self-concept, she may then behave in ways consistent with that, which is only going to worsen her academic performance. Additionally, a student might be comforted to learn that he isn't the only person who got a D and then not feel the need to try to improve, since he has company. You can see in this example that evaluations we place on our self-concept can lead to cycles of thinking and acting. These cycles relate to self-esteem and self-efficacy, which are components of our self-concept.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem refers to the judgments and evaluations we make about our self-concept. While self-concept is a broad description of the self, self-esteem is a more specifically an evaluation of the self. (((Note: (Note: Barbara M. Byrne, *Measuring Self-Concept across the Life Span: Issues and Instrumentation* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), 5.)))) If I again prompted you to "Tell me who you are," and then asked you to evaluate (label as good/bad, positive/negative, desirable/undesirable) each of the things you listed about yourself, I would get clues about your self-esteem. Like self-concept, self-esteem has general and specific elements. Generally, some people are more likely to evaluate themselves positively while others are more likely to evaluate themselves negatively. (((Note: (Note: Joel Brockner, *Self-Esteem at Work* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988), 11.)))) More specifically, our self-esteem varies across our life span and across contexts.

How we judge ourselves affects our communication and our behaviors, but not every negative or positive judgment carries the same weight. The negative evaluation of a trait that isn't very important for our self-concept will likely not result in a loss of self-esteem. For example, I am not very good at drawing. While I appreciate drawing as an art form, I don't consider drawing ability to be a very big part of my self-concept. If someone critiqued my drawing ability, my self-esteem wouldn't take a big hit. I do consider myself a good teacher, however, and I have spent and continue to spend considerable time and effort on improving my knowledge of teaching and my teaching skills. If someone critiqued my teaching knowledge and/or abilities, my self-esteem would definitely be hurt. This doesn't mean that we can't be evaluated on something we find important. Even though teaching is very important to my self-concept, I am regularly evaluated on it. Every semester, I am evaluated by my students, and every year, I am evaluated by my dean, department chair, and colleagues. Most of that feedback is in the form of constructive criticism, which can still be difficult to receive, but when taken in the spirit of self-improvement, it is valuable and may even enhance our self-concept and self-esteem. In fact, in professional contexts, people with higher self-esteem are more likely to work harder based on negative feedback, are less negatively affected by work stress, are able to handle workplace conflict better, and are better able to work independently and solve problems. (((Note: (Note: Joel Brockner, *Self-Esteem at Work* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1988), 2.)))) Self-esteem isn't the only factor that contributes to our self-concept; perceptions about our competence also play a role in developing our sense of self.

Self-esteem varies throughout our lives, but some people generally think more positively of themselves and some people think more negatively.

Self-Efficacy refers to the judgments people make about their ability to perform a task within a specific context. (((Note: (Note: Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York, NY: W. H. Freeman, 1997).)))) As you can see in Figure 2.2 "Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and Self-Concept," judgments about our self-efficacy influence our self-esteem, which influences our self-concept. The following example also illustrates these interconnections.

Figure 2.2 Relationship between Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, and Self-Concept

Pedro did a good job on his first college speech. During a meeting with his professor, Pedro indicates that he is confident going into the next speech and thinks he will do well. This skill-based assessment is an indication that

Pedro has a high level of self-efficacy related to public speaking. If he does well on the speech, the praise from his classmates and professor will reinforce his self-efficacy and lead him to positively evaluate his speaking skills, which will contribute to his self-esteem. By the end of the class, Pedro likely thinks of himself as a good public speaker, which may then become an important part of his self-concept. Throughout these points of connection, it's important to remember that self-perception affects how we communicate, behave, and perceive other things. Pedro's increased feeling of self-efficacy may give him more confidence in his delivery, which will likely result in positive feedback that reinforces his self-perception. He may start to perceive his professor more positively since they share an interest in public speaking, and he may begin to notice other people's speaking skills more during class presentations and public lectures. Over time, he may even start to think about changing his major to communication or pursuing career options that incorporate public speaking, which would further integrate being "a good public speaker" into his self-concept. You can hopefully see that these interconnections can create powerful positive or negative cycles. While some of this process is under our control, much of it is also shaped by the people in our lives.

People who feel that it's their duty to recycle but do not actually do it will likely experience a discrepancy between their actual and ought selves.

The verbal and nonverbal feedback we get from people affect our feelings of self-efficacy and our self-esteem. As we saw in Pedro's example, being given positive feedback can increase our self-efficacy, which may make us more likely to engage in a similar task in the future. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie,*Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 99.)))) Obviously, negative feedback can lead to decreased self-efficacy and a declining interest in engaging with the activity again. In general, people adjust their expectations about their abilities based on feedback they get from others. Positive feedback tends to make people raise their expectations for themselves and negative feedback does the opposite, which ultimately affects behaviors and creates the cycle. When feedback from others is different from how we view ourselves, additional cycles may develop that impact self-esteem and self-concept.

Self-discrepancy theory states that people have beliefs about and expectations for their actual and potential selves that do not always match up with what they actually experience. (((Note: (Note: E. Tory Higgins, "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," *Psychological Review* 94, no. 3 (1987): 320–21.)))) To understand this theory, we have to understand the different "selves" that make up our self-concept, which are the actual, ideal, and ought selves. The actual self consists of the attributes that you or someone else believes you *actually* possess. The ideal self consists of the attributes that you or someone else *would like you* to possess. The ought self consists of the attributes you or someone else believes you *should* possess.

These different selves can conflict with each other in various combinations. Discrepancies between the actual and ideal/ought selves can be motivating in some ways and prompt people to act for self-improvement. For example, if your ought self should volunteer more for the local animal shelter, then your actual self may be more inclined to do so. Discrepancies between the ideal and ought selves can be especially stressful. For example, many professional women who are also mothers have an ideal view of self that includes professional success and advancement. They may also have an ought self that includes a sense of duty and obligation to be a full-time mother. The actual self may be someone who does OK at both but doesn't quite live up to the expectations of either. These discrepancies do not just create cognitive unease—they also lead to emotional, behavioral, and communicative changes.

When we compare the actual self to the expectations of ourselves and others, we can see particular patterns of emotional and behavioral effects. When our actual self doesn't match up with our own ideals of self, we are not obtaining our own desires and hopes, which can lead to feelings of dejection including disappointment, dissatisfaction, and frustration. For example, if your ideal self has no credit card debt and your actual self does, you may be frustrated with your lack of financial discipline and be motivated to stick to your budget and pay off your credit card bills.

When our actual self doesn't match up with other people's ideals for us, we may not be obtaining significant others' desires and hopes, which can lead to feelings of dejection including shame, embarrassment, and concern for losing the affection or approval of others. For example, if a significant other sees you as an "A" student and you get a 2.8 GPA your first year of college, then you may be embarrassed to share your grades with that person.

When our actual self doesn't match up with what we think other people think we should obtain, we are not living up to the ought self that we think others have constructed for us, which can lead to feelings of agitation, feeling threatened, and fearing potential punishment. For example, if your parents think you should follow in their footsteps and take over the family business, but your actual self wants to go into the military, then you may be unsure of what to do and fear being isolated from the family.

Finally, when our actual self doesn't match up with what we think we should obtain, we are not meeting what we see as our duties or obligations, which can lead to feelings of agitation including guilt, weakness, and a feeling that we have fallen short of our moral standard. (((Note: (Note: E. Tory Higgins, "Self-Discrepancy: A Theory Relating Self and Affect," *Psychological Review* 94, no. 3 (1987): 322–23.)))) For example, if your ought self should volunteer more for the local animal shelter, then your actual self may be more inclined to do so due to the guilt of reading about the increasing number of animals being housed at the facility. The following is a review of the four potential discrepancies between selves:

- **Actual vs. own ideals.** We have an overall feeling that we are not obtaining our desires and hopes, which leads to feelings of disappointment, dissatisfaction, and frustration.
- **Actual vs. others' ideals.** We have an overall feeling that we are not obtaining significant others' desires and hopes for us, which leads to feelings of shame and embarrassment.
- **Actual vs. others' ought.** We have an overall feeling that we are not meeting what others see as our duties and obligations, which leads to feelings of agitation including fear of potential punishment.
- **Actual vs. own ought.** We have an overall feeling that we are not meeting our duties and obligations, which can lead to a feeling that we have fallen short of our own moral standards.

INFLUENCES ON SELF-PERCEPTION

We have already learned that other people influence our self-concept and self-esteem. While interactions we have with individuals and groups are definitely important to consider, we must also note the influence that larger, more systemic forces have on our self-perception. Social and family influences, culture, and the media all play a role in shaping who we think we are and how we feel about ourselves. Although these are powerful socializing forces, there are ways to maintain some control over our self-perception.

Social and Family Influences

Various forces help socialize us into our respective social and cultural groups and play a powerful role in presenting us with options about who we can be. While we may like to think that our self-perception starts with a blank canvas, our perceptions are limited by our experiences and various social and cultural contexts.

Parents and peers shape our self-perceptions in positive and negative ways. Feedback that we get from significant others, which includes close family, can lead to positive views of self. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie,*Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 99.)))) In the past few years, however, there has been a public discussion and debate about how much positive reinforcement people should give to others, especially children. The following questions have been raised: Do we have current and upcoming generations that have been overpraised? Is the praise given warranted? What are the positive and negative effects of praise? What is the end goal of the praise? Let's briefly look at this discussion and its connection to self-perception.

Whether praise is warranted or not is very subjective and specific to each person and context, but in general there have been questions raised about the potential negative effects of too much praise. Motivation is the underlying force that drives us to do things. Sometimes we are intrinsically motivated, meaning we want to do something for the love of doing it or the resulting internal satisfaction. Other times we are extrinsically motivated, meaning we do something to receive a reward or avoid punishment. If you put effort into completing a short documentary for a class because you love filmmaking and editing, you have been largely motivated by intrinsic forces. If you complete the documentary because you want an “A” and know that if you fail your parents will not give you money for your spring break trip, then you are motivated by extrinsic factors. Both can, of course, effectively motivate us. Praise is a form of extrinsic reward, and if there is an actual reward associated with the praise, like money or special recognition, some people speculate that intrinsic motivation will suffer. But what’s so good about intrinsic motivation? Intrinsic motivation is more substantial and long-lasting than extrinsic motivation and can lead to the development of a work ethic and sense of pride in one’s abilities. Intrinsic motivation can move people to accomplish great things over long periods of time and be happy despite the effort and sacrifices made. Extrinsic motivation dies when the reward stops. Additionally, too much praise can lead people to have a misguided sense of their abilities. College professors who are reluctant to fail students who produce failing work may be setting those students up to be shocked when their supervisor critiques their abilities or output once they get into a professional context. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice*(London: Routledge, 2011), 105–7.))))

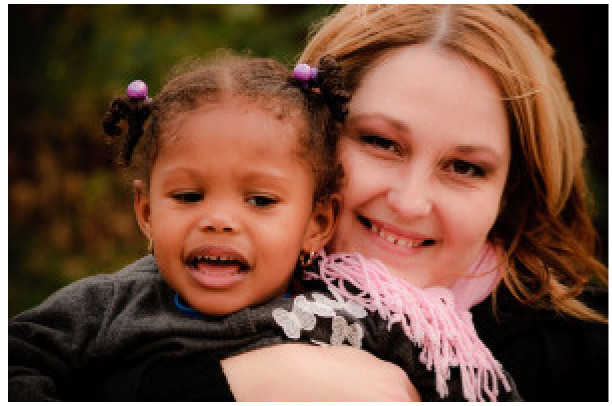
Some experts have warned that overpraising children can lead to distorted self-concepts.

There are cultural differences in the amount of praise and positive feedback that teachers and parents give their children. For example, teachers give less positive reinforcement in Japanese and Taiwanese classrooms than do teachers in US classrooms. Chinese and Kenyan parents do not regularly praise their children because they fear it may make them too individualistic, rude, or arrogant. (((Note: (Note: Anna Wierzbicka, “The English Expressions *Good Boy* and *Good Girl* and Cultural Models of Child Rearing,” *Culture and Psychology* 10, no. 3 (2004): 251–78.)))) So the phenomenon of overpraising isn’t universal, and the debate over its potential effects is not resolved.

Research has also found that communication patterns develop between parents and children that are common to many verbally and physically abusive relationships. Such patterns have negative effects on a child’s self-efficacy and self-esteem. (((Note: (Note: Wendy Morgan and Steven R. Wilson, “Explaining Child Abuse as a Lack of Safe Ground,” in *The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication*, eds. Brian H. Spitzberg and William R. Cupach (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007), 341.)))) As you’ll recall from our earlier discussion, attributions are links we make to identify the cause of a behavior. In the case of aggressive or abusive parents, they are not as able to distinguish between mistakes and intentional behaviors, often seeing honest mistakes as intended and reacting negatively to the child. Such parents also communicate generally negative evaluations to their child by saying, for example, “You can’t do anything right!” or “You’re a bad girl.” When children do exhibit positive behaviors, abusive parents are more likely to use external attributions that diminish the achievement of the child by saying, for example, “You only won because the other team was off their game.” In general, abusive parents have unpredictable reactions to their children’s positive and negative behavior, which creates an uncertain and often scary climate for a child that can lead to lower self-esteem and erratic or aggressive behavior. The cycles of praise and blame are just two examples of how the family as a socializing force can influence our self-perceptions. Culture also influences how we see ourselves.

Culture

How people perceive themselves varies across cultures. For example, many cultures exhibit a phenomenon known as the self-enhancement bias, meaning that we tend to emphasize our desirable qualities relative to other people. (((Note: (Note: Steve Loughnan et al., “Economic Inequality Is Linked to Biased Self-Perception,” *Psychological Science* 22, no. 10 (2011): 1254.)))) But the degree to which people engage in self-enhancement varies. A review of many studies in this area found that people in Western countries such as the United States were significantly more likely to self-enhance than people in countries such as Japan. Many scholars explain this variation using a common measure of cultural variation that claims people in individualistic cultures are more likely to engage in competition and openly praise accomplishments than people in collectivistic cultures. The difference in self-enhancement has also been tied to economics, with scholars arguing that people in countries with greater income inequality are more likely to view themselves as superior to others or want to be perceived as superior to others (even if they don't have economic wealth) in order to conform to the country's values and norms. This holds true because countries with high levels of economic inequality, like the United States, typically value competition and the right to boast about winning or succeeding, while countries with more economic equality, like Japan, have a cultural norm of modesty. (((Note: (Note: Steve Loughnan et al., "Economic Inequality Is Linked to Biased Self-Perception,"*Psychological Science* 22, no. 10 (2011): 1257.))))



Biracial individuals may have challenges with self-perception as they try to integrate both racial identities into their self-concept.

Race also plays a role in self-perception. For example, positive self-esteem and self-efficacy tend to be higher in African American adolescent girls than Caucasian girls. (((Note: (Note: Michelle B. Stockton et al., "Self-Perception and Body Image Associations with Body Mass Index among 8–10-Year-Old African American Girls," *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* 34, no. 10 (2009): 1144.)))) In fact, more recent studies have discounted much of the early research on race and self-esteem that purported that African Americans of all ages have lower self-esteem than whites. Self-perception becomes more complex when we consider biracial individuals—more specifically those born to couples comprising an African American and a white parent. (((Note: (Note: Dorcas D. Bowles, "Biracial Identity: Children Born to African-American and White Couples," *Clinical Social Work Journal* 21, no. 4 (1993): 418–22.)))) In such cases, it is challenging for biracial individuals to embrace both of their heritages, and social comparison becomes more difficult due to diverse and sometimes conflicting reference groups. Since many biracial individuals identify as and are considered African American by society, living and working within a black community can help foster more positive self-perceptions in these biracial individuals. Such a community offers a more nurturing environment and a buffer zone from racist attitudes but simultaneously distances biracial individuals from their white identity. Conversely, immersion into a predominantly white community and separation from a black community can lead biracial individuals to internalize negative views of people of color and perhaps develop a sense of inferiority. Gender intersects with culture and biracial identity to create different experiences and challenges for biracial men and women. Biracial men have more difficulty accepting their potential occupational limits, especially if they have white fathers, and biracial women have difficulty accepting their black features, such as hair and facial features. All these challenges lead to a sense of being marginalized from both ethnic groups and interfere in the development of positive self-esteem and a stable self-concept.

There are some general differences in terms of gender and self-perception that relate to self-concept, self-efficacy, and envisioning ideal selves. As with any cultural differences, these are generalizations that have been supported by research, but they do not represent all individuals within a group. Regarding self-concept, men are more likely to describe themselves in terms of their group membership, and women are more likely to include references to relationships in their self-descriptions. For example, a man may note that he is a Tarheel fan, a boat enthusiast, or a member of the Rotary Club, and a woman may note that she is a mother of two or a loyal friend.

Regarding self-efficacy, men tend to have higher perceptions of self-efficacy than women. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 105.)))) In terms of actual and ideal selves, men and women in a variety of countries both described their ideal self as more masculine. (((Note: (Note: Deborah L. Best and Jennifer J. Thomas, "Cultural Diversity and Cross-Cultural Perspectives," in *The Psychology of Gender,* 2nd ed., eds. Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall, and Robert J. Sternberg (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2004), 296–327.)))) As was noted earlier, gender differences are interesting to study but are very often exaggerated beyond the actual variations. Socialization and internalization of societal norms for gender differences accounts for much more of our perceived differences than do innate or natural differences between genders. These gender norms may be explicitly stated—for example, a mother may say to her son, "Boys don't play with dolls"—or they may be more implicit, with girls being encouraged to pursue historically feminine professions like teaching or nursing without others actually stating the expectation.

Media

The representations we see in the media affect our self-perception. The vast majority of media images include idealized representations of attractiveness. Despite the fact that the images of people we see in glossy magazines and on movie screens are not typically what we see when we look at the people around us in a classroom, at work, or at the grocery store, many of us continue to hold ourselves to an unrealistic standard of beauty and attractiveness. Movies, magazines, and television shows are filled with beautiful people, and less attractive actors, when they are present in the media, are typically portrayed as the butt of jokes, villains, or only as background extras. (((Note:) (Note: (Note: Gordon L. Patzer, *Looks: Why They Matter More than You Ever Imagined* (New York, NY: AMACOM, 2008), 147.))))Aside from overall attractiveness, the media also offers narrow representations of acceptable body weight.

Researchers have found that only 12 percent of prime-time characters are overweight, which is dramatically less than the national statistics for obesity among the actual US population. (((Note: (Note: Gordon L. Patzer, *Looks: Why They Matter More than You Ever Imagined* (New York, NY: AMACOM, 2008), 147–48.)))) Further, an analysis of how weight is discussed on prime-time sitcoms found that heavier female characters were often the targets of negative comments and jokes that audience members responded to with laughter. Conversely, positive comments about women's bodies were related to their thinness. In short, the heavier the character, the more negative the comments, and the thinner the character, the more positive the comments. The same researchers analyzed sitcoms for content regarding male characters' weight and found that although comments regarding their weight were made, they were fewer in number and not as negative, ultimately supporting the notion that overweight male characters are more accepted in media than overweight female characters. Much more attention has been paid in recent years to the potential negative effects of such narrow media representations. The following "Getting Critical" box explores the role of media in the construction of body image.

In terms of self-concept, media representations offer us guidance on what is acceptable or unacceptable and valued or not valued in our society. Mediated messages, in general, reinforce cultural stereotypes related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, and class. People from historically marginalized groups must look much harder than those in the dominant groups to find positive representations of their identities in media. As a critical thinker, it is important to question media messages and to examine who is included and who is excluded.

Advertising in particular encourages people to engage in social comparison, regularly communicating to us that we are inferior because we lack a certain product or that we need to change some aspect of our life to keep up with and be similar to others. For example, for many years advertising targeted to women instilled in them a fear of having a dirty house, selling them products that promised to keep their house clean, make their family happy, and impress their friends and neighbors. Now messages tell us to fear becoming old or unattractive, selling products to keep our skin tight and clear, which will in turn make us happy and popular.

"Getting Critical"

Body Image and Self-Perception

Take a look at any magazine, television show, or movie and you will most likely see very beautiful people. When you look around you in your daily life, there are likely not as many glamorous and gorgeous people. Scholars and media critics have critiqued this discrepancy for decades because it has contributed to many social issues and public health issues ranging from body dysmorphic disorder, to eating disorders, to lowered self-esteem.

Much of the media is driven by advertising, and the business of media has been to perpetuate a "culture of lack." (((Note: (Note: Shari L. Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs, *Body Panic* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009), 2.)))) This means that we are constantly told, via mediated images, that we lack something. In short, advertisements often tell us we don't have enough money, enough beauty, or enough material possessions. Over the past few decades, women's bodies in the media have gotten smaller and thinner, while men's bodies have gotten bigger and more muscular. At the same time, the US population has become dramatically more obese. As research shows that men and women are becoming more and more dissatisfied with their bodies, which ultimately affects their self-concept and self-esteem, health and beauty product lines proliferate and cosmetic surgeries and other types of enhancements become more and more popular. From young children to older adults, people are becoming more aware of and oftentimes unhappy with their bodies, which results in a variety of self-perception problems.

1. How do you think the media influences your self-perception and body image?
2. Describe the typical man that is portrayed in the media. Describe the typical woman that is portrayed in the media. What impressions do these typical bodies make on others? What are the potential positive and negative effects of the way the media portrays the human body?
3. Find an example of an "atypical" body represented in the media (a magazine, TV show, or movie). Is this person presented in a positive, negative, or neutral way? Why do you think this person was chosen?

SELF-PRESENTATION

How we perceive ourselves manifests in how we present ourselves to others. Self-presentation is the process of strategically concealing or revealing personal information in order to influence others' perceptions. (((Note: (Note: Lauren J. Human et al., "Your Best Self Helps Reveal Your True Self: Positive Self-Presentation Leads to More Accurate Personality Impressions,"*Social Psychological and Personality Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2012): 23.)))) We engage in this process daily and for different reasons. Although people occasionally intentionally deceive others in the process of self-presentation, in general we try to make a good impression while still remaining authentic. Since self-presentation helps meet our instrumental, relational, and identity needs, we stand to lose quite a bit if we are caught intentionally misrepresenting ourselves. In May of 2012, Yahoo!'s CEO resigned after it became known that he stated on official documents that he had two college degrees when he actually only had one. In a similar incident, a woman who had long served as the dean of admissions for the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology was dismissed from her position after it was learned that she had only attended one year of college and had falsely indicated she had a bachelor's and master's degree. (((Note: (Note: Lauren Webber and Melissa Korn, "Yahoo's CEO among Many Notable Resume Flaps," *Wall Street Journal Blogs*, May 7, 2012, accessed June 9, 2012, http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2012/05/07/yahoos-ceo-among-many-notable-resume-flaps.)))) Such incidents clearly show that although people can get away with such false self-presentation for a while, the eventual consequences of being found out are dire. As communicators, we sometimes engage in more subtle forms of inauthentic self-presentation. For example, a person may state or imply that they know more about a subject or situation than they actually do in order to seem smart or "in the loop." During a speech, a speaker works on a polished and competent delivery to distract from a lack of substantive content. These cases of strategic self-presentation may not ever be found out, but communicators should still avoid them as they do not live up to the standards of ethical communication.

Consciously and competently engaging in self-presentation can have benefits because we can provide others with a more positive and accurate picture of who we are. People who are skilled at impression management are typically more engaging and confident, which allows others to pick up on more cues from which to form impressions. (((Note: (Note: Lauren J. Human et al., "Your Best Self Helps Reveal Your True Self: Positive Self-Presentation Leads to More Accurate Personality Impressions," *Social Psychological and Personality Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2012): 27.)))) Being a skilled self-presenter draws on many of the practices used by competent communicators, including becoming a higher self-monitor. When self-presentation skills and self-monitoring skills combine, communicators can simultaneously monitor their own expressions, the reaction of others, and the situational and social context. (((Note: (Note: John J. Sosik, Bruce J. Avolio, and Dong I. Jung, "Beneath the Mask: Examining the Relationship of Self-Presentation Attributes and Impression Management to Charismatic Leadership," *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 217.)))) Sometimes people get help with their self-presentation. Although most people can't afford or wouldn't think of hiring an image consultant, some people have started generously donating their self-presentation expertise to help others. Many people who have been riding the tough job market for a year or more get discouraged and may consider giving up on their job search. Now a project called "Style Me Hired" has started offering free makeovers to jobless people in order to offer them new motivation and help them make favorable impressions and hopefully get a job offer. (((Note: (Note: "Style Me Hired," accessed June 6, 2012, http://www.stylemehired.com.))))

There are two main types of self-presentation: prosocial and self-serving. (((Note: (Note: John J. Sosik, Bruce J. Avolio, and Dong I. Jung, “Beneath the Mask: Examining the Relationship of Self-Presentation Attributes and Impression Management to Charismatic Leadership,”*The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 217.)))) **Prosocial self-presentation** entails behaviors that present a person as a role model and make a person more likable and attractive. For example, a supervisor may call on her employees to uphold high standards for business ethics, model that behavior in her own actions, and compliment others when they exemplify those standards. **Self-serving self-presentation** entails behaviors that present a person as highly skilled, willing to challenge others, and someone not to be messed with. For example, a supervisor may publicly take credit for the accomplishments of others or publicly critique an employee who failed to meet a particular standard. In summary, prosocial strategies are aimed at benefiting others, while self-serving strategies benefit the self at the expense of others.

People who have been out of work for a while may have difficulty finding the motivation to engage in the self-presentation behaviors needed to form favorable impressions.

In general, we strive to present a public image that matches up with our self-concept, but we can also use self-presentation strategies to enhance our self-concept. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 99–100.))))When we present ourselves in order to evoke a positive evaluative response, we are engaging in self-enhancement. In the pursuit of self-enhancement, a person might try to be as appealing as possible in a particular area or with a particular person to gain feedback that will enhance one’s self-esteem. For example, a singer might train and practice for weeks before singing in front of a well-respected vocal coach but not invest as much effort in preparing to sing in front of friends. Although positive feedback from friends is beneficial, positive feedback from an experienced singer could enhance a person’s self-concept. Self-enhancement can be productive and achieved competently, or it can be used inappropriately. Using self-enhancement behaviors just to gain the approval of others or out of self-centeredness may lead people to communicate in ways that are perceived as phony or overbearing and end up making an unfavorable impression. (((Note: (Note: John J. Sosik, Bruce J. Avolio, and Dong I. Jung, “Beneath the Mask: Examining the Relationship of Self-Presentation Attributes and Impression Management to Charismatic Leadership,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002): 236.))))

“Getting Plugged In”

Self-Presentation Online: Social Media, Digital Trails, and Your Reputation

Although social networking has long been a way to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, the advent of social media has made the process of making connections and those all-important first impressions much more complex. Just looking at Facebook as an example, we can clearly see that the very acts of constructing a profile, posting status updates, “liking” certain things, and sharing various information via Facebook features and apps is self-presentation. (((Note: (Note: Junghyun Kim and Jong-Eun Roselyn Lee, “The Facebook Paths to Happiness: Effects of the Number of Facebook Friends and Self-Presentation on Subjective Well-Being,” *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 14, no. 6 (2011): 360.))))People also form impressions based on the number of friends we have and the photos and posts that other people tag us in. All this information floating around can be difficult to manage. So how do we manage the impressions we make digitally given that there is a permanent record?

Research shows that people overall engage in positive and honest self-presentation on Facebook. (((Note: (Note: Junghyun Kim and Jong-Eun Roselyn Lee, “The Facebook Paths to Happiness: Effects of the Number of Facebook Friends and Self-Presentation on Subjective Well-Being,” *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 14, no. 6 (2011): 360.)))) Since people know how visible the information they post is, they may choose to only reveal things they think will form favorable impressions. But the mediated nature of Facebook also leads some people to disclose more personal information than they might otherwise in such a public or semipublic forum. These hyperpersonal disclosures run the risk of forming negative impressions based on who sees them. In general, the ease of digital communication, not just on Facebook, has presented new challenges for our self-control and information management. Sending someone a sexually provocative image used to take some effort before the age of digital cameras, but now “sexting” an explicit photo only takes a few seconds. So people who would have likely not engaged in such behavior before are more tempted to now, and it is the desire to present oneself as desirable or cool that leads people to send photos they may later regret. (((Note: (Note: Natalie DiBlasio, “Demand for Photo-Erasing iPhone App Heats up Sexting Debate,” *USA Today*, May 7, 2012, accessed June 6, 2012,http://content.usatoday.com/communities/ondeadline/post/2012/05/demand-for-photo-erasing-iphone-app-heats-up-sexting-debate/1.)))) In fact, new technology in the form of apps is trying to give people a little more control over the exchange of digital information. An iPhone app called “Snapchat” allows users to send photos that will only be visible for a few seconds. Although this isn’t a guaranteed safety net, the demand for such apps is increasing, which illustrates the point that we all now leave digital trails of information that can be useful in terms of our self-presentation but can also create new challenges in terms of managing the information floating around from which others may form impressions of us.

1. What impressions do you want people to form of you based on the information they can see on your Facebook page?
2. Have you ever used social media or the Internet to do “research” on a person? What things would you find favorable and unfavorable?
3. Do you have any guidelines you follow regarding what information about yourself you will put online or not? If so, what are they? If not, why?

PERCEPTION EXERCISES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Our self-concept is the overall idea of who we think we are. It is developed through our interactions with others and through social comparison that allows us to compare our beliefs and behaviors to others.
- Our self-esteem is based on the evaluations and judgments we make about various characteristics of our self-concept. It is developed through an assessment and evaluation of our various skills and abilities, known as self-efficacy, and through a comparison and evaluation of who we are, who we would like to be, and who we should be (self-discrepancy theory).
- Social comparison theory and self-discrepancy theory affect our self-concept and self-esteem because through comparison with others and comparison of our actual, ideal, and ought selves we make judgments about who we are and our self-worth. These judgments then affect how we communicate and behave.
- Socializing forces like family, culture, and media affect our self-perception because they give us feedback on who we are. This feedback can be evaluated positively or negatively and can lead to positive or negative patterns that influence our self-perception and then our communication.
- Self-presentation refers to the process of strategically concealing and/or revealing personal information in order to influence others’ perceptions. Prosocial self-presentation is intended to benefit others and self-serving self-presentation is intended to benefit the self at the expense of others. People also engage in self-enhancement, which is a self-presentation strategy by which people intentionally seek out positive evaluations.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of characteristics that describe who you are (your self-concept). After looking at the list, see if you can come up with a few words that summarize the list to narrow in on the key features of your self-concept. Go back over the first list and evaluate each characteristic, for example noting whether it is something you do well/poorly, something that is good/bad, positive/negative, desirable/undesirable. Is the overall list more positive or more negative? After doing these exercises, what have you learned about your self-concept and self-esteem?
2. Discuss at least one time in which you had a discrepancy or tension between two of the three selves described by self-discrepancy theory (the actual, ideal, and ought selves). What effect did this discrepancy have on your self-concept and/or self-esteem?
3. Take one of the socializing forces discussed (family, culture, or media) and identify at least one positive and one negative influence that it/they have had on your self-concept and/or self-esteem.
4. Getting integrated: Discuss some ways that you might strategically engage in self-presentation to influence the impressions of others in an academic, a professional, a personal, and a civic context.

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself using internal vocalization or reflective thinking. Like other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication is triggered by some internal or external stimulus. We may, for example, communicate with our self about what we want to eat due to the internal stimulus of hunger, or we may react intrapersonally to an event we witness. Unlike other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication takes place only inside our heads. The other forms of communication must be perceived by someone else to count as communication. So what is the point of intrapersonal communication if no one else even sees it?

Intrapersonal communication is communication with ourselves that takes place in our heads.

Intrapersonal communication serves several social functions. Internal vocalization, or talking to ourselves, can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment. (((Note: (Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson,*Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 51.)))) For example, a person may use self-talk to calm himself down in a stressful situation, or a shy person may remind herself to smile during a social event. Intrapersonal communication also helps build and maintain our self-concept. We form an understanding of who we are based on how other people communicate with us and how we process that communication intrapersonally. The shy person in the earlier example probably internalized shyness as a part of her self-concept because other people associated her communication behaviors with shyness and may have even labeled her "shy" before she had a firm grasp on what that meant. We also use intrapersonal communication or "self-talk" to let off steam, process emotions, think through something, or rehearse what we plan to say or do in the future. As with the other forms of communication, competent intrapersonal communication helps facilitate social interaction and can enhance our well-being. Conversely, the breakdown in the ability of a person to intrapersonally communicate is associated with mental illness. (((Note: (Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 55.))))

Sometimes we intrapersonally communicate for the fun of it. I'm sure we have all had the experience of laughing aloud because we thought of something funny. We also communicate intrapersonally to pass time. I bet there is a lot of intrapersonal communication going on in waiting rooms all over the world right now. In both of these cases, intrapersonal communication is usually unplanned and doesn't include a clearly defined goal. (((Note: (Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 28.)))) We can, however, engage in more intentional intrapersonal communication. In fact, deliberate self-reflection can help us become more competent communicators as we become more mindful of our own behaviors. For example, your internal voice may praise or scold you based on a thought or action.

Of the forms of communication, intrapersonal communication has received the least amount of formal study. It is rare to find courses devoted to the topic, and it is generally separated from the remaining four types of communication. The main distinction is that intrapersonal communication is not created with the intention that another person will perceive it. In all the other levels, the fact that the communicator anticipates consumption of their message is very important.

ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND VALUES

When you consider what makes you *you*, the answers multiply as do the questions. As a baby, you learned to recognize that the face in the mirror was your face. But as an adult, you begin to wonder what and who you are. While we could discuss the concept of self endlessly and philosophers have wrestled and will continue to wrestle with it, for our purposes, let's focus on **self**, which is defined as one's own sense of individuality, motivations, and personal characteristics. (((Note: (Note: McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.)))) We also must keep in mind that this concept is not fixed or absolute; instead it changes as we grow and change across our lifetimes.

One point of discussion useful for our study about ourselves as communicators is to examine our attitudes, beliefs, and values. These are all interrelated, and researchers have varying theories as to which comes first and which springs from another. We learn our values, beliefs, and attitudes through interaction with others. Table 3.1 "Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values" defines these terms and provides an example of each.

	Definition	Changeable?	Example
Attitudes	Learned predispositions to a concept or object	Subject to change	I enjoyed the writing exercise in class today.
Beliefs	Convictions or expressions of confidence	Can change over time	This course is important because I may use the communication skills I am learning in my career.
Values	Ideals that guide our behavior	Generally long lasting	Effective communication is important.

An **attitude** is your immediate disposition toward a concept or an object. Attitudes can change easily and frequently. You may prefer vanilla while someone else prefers peppermint, but if someone tries to persuade you of how delicious peppermint is, you may be willing to try it and find that you like it better than vanilla.

Beliefs are ideas based on our previous experiences and convictions and may not necessarily be based on logic or fact. You no doubt have beliefs on political, economic, and religious issues. These beliefs may not have been formed through rigorous study, but you nevertheless hold them as important aspects of self. Beliefs often serve as a frame of reference through which we interpret our world. Although they can be changed, it often takes time or strong evidence to persuade someone to change a belief.

Values are core concepts and ideas of what we consider good or bad, right or wrong, or what is worth the sacrifice. Our values are central to our self-image, what makes us who we are. Like beliefs, our values may not be based on empirical research or rational thinking, but they are even more resistant to change than are beliefs. To undergo a change in values, a person may need to undergo a transformative life experience.

For example, suppose you highly value the freedom to make personal decisions, including the freedom to choose whether or not to wear a helmet while driving a motorcycle. This value of individual choice is central to your way of thinking and you are unlikely to change this value. However, if your brother was driving a motorcycle without a helmet and suffered an accident that fractured his skull and left him with permanent brain damage, you might reconsider this value. While you might still value freedom of choice in many areas of life, you might become an advocate for helmet laws—and perhaps also for other forms of highway safety, such as stiffer penalties for cell-phone talking and texting while driving.

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND SELF STUDY GUIDE

Self-concept overall idea of who we think we are. It is developed through our interactions with others and through social comparison that allows us to compare our beliefs and behaviors to others.

Looking glass self explains that we see ourselves reflected in other people's reactions to us and then form our self-concept based on how we believe other people see us.

Social Comparison Theory states that we describe and evaluate ourselves in terms of how we compare to other people based on two dimensions:
superiority/inferiority (attractiveness, intelligence, athletic ability, and so on) similarity/difference.

Self-esteem refers to the judgments and evaluations we make about our self-concept; more specifically an evaluation of the self; general and specific elements

Self-Efficacy refers to the judgments people make about their ability to perform a task within a specific context

Self-discrepancy theory states that people have beliefs about and expectations for their actual and potential selves that do not always match up with what they actually experience

The **actual self** consists of the attributes that you or someone else believes you actually possess

The **ideal self** consists of the attributes that you or someone else would like you to possess The **ought self** consists of the attributes you or someone else believes you should possess.

Self-presentation is the process of strategically concealing or revealing personal information in order to influence others' perceptions.

Self-serving self-presentation entails behaviors that present a person as highly skilled, willing to challenge others, and someone not to be messed with.

Prosocial self-presentation entails behaviors that present a person as a role model and make a person more likable and attractive.

Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself using internal vocalization or reflective thinking; triggered by some internal or external stimulus; takes place only inside our heads

Internal vocalization, or talking to ourselves, can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment.

We also use "self-talk" to let off steam, process emotions, think through something, or rehearse what we plan to say or do in the future.

Here is a fun example of Intrapersonal Communication from a Seinfeld episode

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/2aMISACsgXQ

	Definition	Changeable?	Example
Attitudes	Learned predispositions to a concept or object	Subject to change	I enjoyed the writing exercise in class today.
Beliefs	Convictions or expressions of confidence	Can change over time	This course is important because I may use the communication skills I am learning in my career.
Values	Ideals that guide our behavior	Generally long lasting	Effective communication is important.

Key Terms

- Self-concept
- Looking glass self
- Social Comparison Theory
- Self-esteem
- Self-Efficacy
- Self-discrepancy theory
- actual self
- ideal self
- ought self
- Self-presentation
- Self-serving self-presentation
- Prosocial self-presentation
- Intrapersonal communication
- Attitude
- Value
- Belief

A PDF of this Intrapersonal Communication and Self Study Guide can be downloaded here.

RESOURCE: PERSONALITY TESTS

Click on these links to access some common personality tests (note that some of the tests were already found within the readings in this module).

1. Big Five personality test: http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive/
2. Kiersey Temperament Sorter http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx. This test is very similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
3. Another Myers-Briggs type test: http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp
4. Cattell's 16PF questionnaire: http://personality-testing.info/tests/16PF.php
5. Basic version of the color personality test: http://www.colorcode.com/choose_personality_test/

INTRAPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click “Check Your Understanding” to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three “Maybe”/”Probably”/”Definitely” options to see if you were correct.
- Click “Next” to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Discuss the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory
- Recognize and describe common projective tests used in personality assessment

Roberto, Mikhail, and Nat are college friends and all want to be police officers. Roberto is quiet and shy, lacks self-confidence, and usually follows others. He is a kind person, but lacks motivation. Mikhail is loud and boisterous, a leader. He works hard, but is impulsive and drinks too much on the weekends. Nat is thoughtful and well liked. He is trustworthy, but sometimes he has difficulty making quick decisions. Of these three men, who would make the best police officer? What qualities and personality factors make someone a good police officer? What makes someone a bad or dangerous police officer?

A police officer’s job is very high in stress, and law enforcement agencies want to make sure they hire the right people. Personality testing is often used for this purpose—to screen applicants for employment and job training. Personality tests are also used in criminal cases and custody battles, and to assess psychological disorders. This section explores the best known among the many different types of personality tests.

SELF-REPORT INVENTORIES

Self-report inventories are a kind of objective test used to assess personality. They typically use multiple-choice items or numbered scales, which represent a range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). They often are called Likert scales after their developer, Rensis Likert (1932).

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	No Opinion	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
I am easygoing.	○	○	○	○	○
I have high standards.	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy time alone.	○	○	○	○	○
I work well with others.	○	○	○	○	○
I dislike confrontation.	○	○	○	○	○
I prefer crowds over intimacy.	○	○	○	○	○

If you've ever taken a survey, you are probably familiar with Likert-type scale questions. Most personality inventories employ these types of response scales.

One of the most widely used personality inventories is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), first published in 1943, with 504 true/false questions, and updated to the MMPI-2 in 1989, with 567 questions. The original MMPI was based on a small, limited sample, composed mostly of Minnesota farmers and psychiatric patients; the revised inventory was based on a more representative, national sample to allow for better standardization. The MMPI-2 takes 1–2 hours to complete. Responses are scored to produce a clinical profile composed of 10 scales: hypochondriasis, depression, hysteria, psychopathic deviance (social deviance), masculinity versus femininity, paranoia, psychasthenia (obsessive/compulsive qualities), schizophrenia, hypomania, and social introversion. There is also a scale to ascertain risk factors for alcohol abuse. In 2008, the test was again revised, using more advanced methods, to the MMPI-2-RF. This version takes about one-half the time to complete and has only 338 questions. Despite the new test's advantages, the MMPI-2 is more established and is still more widely used. Typically, the tests are administered by computer. Although the MMPI was originally developed to assist in the clinical diagnosis of psychological disorders, it is now also used for occupational screening, such as in law enforcement, and in college, career, and marital counseling (Ben-Porath & Tellegen, 2008).

	True	False
1. I like gardening magazines.	O	O
2. I am unhappy with my sex life.	O	O
3. I feel like no one understands me.	O	O
4. I think I would enjoy the work of a teacher.	O	O
5. I am not easily awakened by noise.	O	O

These true/false questions resemble the kinds of questions you would find on the MMPI.

In addition to clinical scales, the tests also have validity and reliability scales. (Recall the concepts of reliability and validity from your study of psychological research.) One of the validity scales, the Lie Scale (or "L" Scale), consists of 15 items and is used to ascertain whether the respondent is "faking good" (underreporting psychological problems to appear healthier). For example, if someone responds "yes" to a number of unrealistically positive items such as "I have never told a lie," they may be trying to "fake good" or appear better than they actually are.

Reliability scales test an instrument's consistency over time, assuring that if you take the MMPI-2-RF today and then again 5 years later, your two scores will be similar. Beutler, Nussbaum, and Meredith (1988) gave the MMPI to newly recruited police officers and then to the same police officers 2 years later. After 2 years on the job, police officers' responses indicated an increased vulnerability to alcoholism, somatic symptoms (vague, unexplained physical complaints), and anxiety. When the test was given an additional 2 years later (4 years after starting on the job), the results suggested high risk for alcohol-related difficulties.

PROJECTIVE TESTS

Another method for assessment of personality is projective testing. This kind of test relies on one of the defense mechanisms proposed by Freud—projection—as a way to assess unconscious processes. During this type of testing, a series of ambiguous cards is shown to the person being tested, who then is encouraged to project his feelings, impulses, and desires onto the cards—by telling a story, interpreting an image, or completing a sentence. Many projective tests have undergone standardization procedures (for example, Exner, 2002) and can be used to access whether someone has unusual thoughts or a high level of anxiety, or is likely to become volatile. Some examples of projective tests are the Rorschach Inkblot Test, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), the Contemporized-Themes Concerning Blacks test, the TEMAS (Tell-Me-A-Story), and the Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank (RISB).

The Rorschach Inkblot Test was developed in 1921 by a Swiss psychologist named Hermann Rorschach (pronounced "ROAR-shock"). It is a series of symmetrical inkblot cards that are presented to a client by a psychologist. Upon presentation of each card, the psychologist asks the client, "What might this be?" What the test-taker sees reveals unconscious feelings and struggles (Piotrowski, 1987; Weiner, 2003). The Rorschach has been standardized using the Exner system and is effective in measuring depression, psychosis, and anxiety.

A second projective test is the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), created in the 1930s by Henry Murray, an American psychologist, and a psychoanalyst named Christiana Morgan. A person taking the TAT is shown 8–12 ambiguous pictures and is asked to tell a story about each picture. The stories give insight into their social world, revealing hopes, fears, interests, and goals. The storytelling format helps to lower a person's resistance divulging unconscious personal details (Cramer, 2004). The TAT has been used in clinical settings to evaluate psychological disorders; more recently, it has been used in counseling settings to help clients gain a better understanding of themselves and achieve personal growth. Standardization of test administration is virtually nonexistent among clinicians, and the test tends to be modest to low on validity and reliability (Aronow, Weiss, & Rezinkoff, 2001; Lilienfeld, Wood, & Garb, 2000). Despite these shortcomings, the TAT has been one of the most widely used projective tests.

A third projective test is the Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank (RISB) developed by Julian Rotter in 1950 (recall his theory of locus of control, covered earlier in this chapter). There are three forms of this test for use with different age groups: the school form, the college form, and the adult form. The tests include 40 incomplete sentences that people are asked to complete as quickly as possible. The average time for completing the test is approximately 20 minutes, as responses are only 1–2 words in length. This test is similar to a word association test, and like other types of projective tests, it is presumed that responses will reveal desires, fears, and struggles. The RISB is used in screening college students for adjustment problems and in career counseling (Holaday, Smith, & Sherry, 2010; Rotter & Rafferty 1950).

1. I feel...	
2. I regret...	
3. At home...	
4. My mother...	
5. My greatest worry...	

These incomplete sentences resemble the types of questions on the RISB. How would you complete these sentences?

For many decades, these traditional projective tests have been used in cross-cultural personality assessments. However, it was found that test bias limited their usefulness (Hoy-Watkins & Jenkins-Moore, 2008). It is difficult to assess the personalities and lifestyles of members of widely divergent ethnic/cultural groups using personality instruments based on data from a single culture or race (Hoy-Watkins & Jenkins-Moore, 2008). For example, when the TAT was used with African-American test takers, the result was often shorter story length and low levels of cultural identification (Duzant, 2005). Therefore, it was vital to develop other personality assessments that explored factors such as race, language, and level of acculturation (Hoy-Watkins & Jenkins-Moore, 2008). To address this need, Robert Williams developed the first culturally specific projective test designed to reflect the everyday life experiences of African Americans (Hoy-Watkins & Jenkins-Moore, 2008). The updated version of the instrument is the Contemporized-Themes Concerning Blacks Test (C-TCB) (Williams, 1972). The C-TCB contains 20 color images that show scenes of African-American lifestyles. When the C-TCB was compared with the TAT for African Americans, it was found that use of the C-TCB led to increased story length, higher degrees of positive feelings, and stronger identification with the C-TCB (Hoy, 1997; Hoy-Watkins & Jenkins-Moore, 2008).

The TEMAS Multicultural Thematic Apperception Test is another tool designed to be culturally relevant to minority groups, especially Hispanic youths. TEMAS—standing for “Tell Me a Story” but also a play on the Spanish word *temas* (themes)—uses images and storytelling cues that relate to minority culture (Constantino, 1982).

Summary

Personality tests are techniques designed to measure one’s personality. They are used to diagnose psychological problems as well as to screen candidates for college and employment. There are two types of personality tests:

self-report inventories and projective tests. The MMPI is one of the most common self-report inventories. It asks a series of true/false questions that are designed to provide a clinical profile of an individual. Projective tests use ambiguous images or other ambiguous stimuli to assess an individual's unconscious fears, desires, and challenges. The Rorschach Inkblot Test, the TAT, the RISB, and the C-TCB are all forms of projective tests.

Visit this course online to take this short practice quiz:

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

Self Check Questions

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why might a prospective employer screen applicants using personality assessments?

2. Why would a clinician give someone a projective test?

Personal Application Questions

3. How objective do you think you can be about yourself in answering questions on self-report personality assessment measures? What implications might this have for the validity of the personality test?

Answers

1. They can help an employer predict a candidate's reactions and attitudes to various situations they might encounter on the job, thus helping choose the right person for the job. This is particularly important in hiring for a high-risk job such as law enforcement. Personality tests can also reveal a potential employee's desirable qualities such as honesty, motivation, and conscientiousness.

2. A projective test could give the clinician clues about dreams, fears, and personal struggles of which the client may be unaware, since these tests are designed to reveal unconscious motivations and attitudes. They can also help clinicians diagnose psychological disorders.

Glossary

Contemporized-Themes Concerning Blacks Test (C-TCB) projective test designed to be culturally relevant to African Americans, using images that relate to African-American culture
Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) personality test composed of a series of true/false questions in order to establish a clinical profile of an individual
Projective test personality assessment in which a person responds to ambiguous stimuli, revealing hidden feelings, impulses, and desires
Rorschach Inkblot Test projective test that employs a series of symmetrical inkblot cards that are presented to a client by a psychologist in an effort to reveal the person's unconscious desires, fears, and struggles
Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank (RISB) projective test that is similar to a word association test in which a person completes sentences in order to reveal their unconscious desires, fears, and struggles
TEMAS Multicultural Thematic Apperception Test projective test designed to be culturally relevant to minority groups, especially Hispanic youths, using images and storytelling that relate to minority culture
Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) projective test in which people are presented with ambiguous images, and they then make up stories to go with the images in an effort to uncover their unconscious desires, fears, and struggles

VIDEO: MEASURING PERSONALITY

How would you measure a personality? What, exactly, is the self? Well, as you've come to expect, it's not that easy to nail down an answer for those questions. Whether you're into blood, bile, earth, wind, fire, or those Buzzfeed questionnaires, there are LOTS of ways to get at who we are and why.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/sUrV6oZ3zsk

COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTION

UNDERSTANDING THE FORMATION OF PERCEPTION

What You'll Learn To Do: Understand the Formation of Perception

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Define perception
- Name the factors that affect one's perceptual processes
- Describe several principles of organization
- Explain how interpretation influences our perception
- Determine how perception differs between people

Learning Activities

In order to successfully complete this module's work, you will need to do the following.

Required

- **Read**:
  - Communication and Perception
    - Perception Process
    - Organizing Information
    - Interpreting Information
    - Communication and Perception Key Takeaways and Exercises
  - Perceiving Others
    - Attribution
    - Impressions and Interpretation
    - Culture, Personality, and Perception
    - Perceiving Others Key Takeaways and Exercises
- **Submit:** Dimensions of Self Activity (50 points)

Optional

These will help you to prepare for Exam 1.

- **Read**:Perception Study Guide
- **Quiz**: Self Check

COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTION

Think back to the first day of classes. Did you plan ahead for what you were going to wear? Did you get the typical school supplies together? Did you try to find your classrooms ahead of time or look for the syllabus online? Did you look up your professors on an online professor evaluation site? Based on your answers to these questions, I could form an impression of who you are as a student. But would that perception be accurate? Would it match up with how you see yourself as a student? And perception, of course, is a two-way street. You also formed impressions about your professors based on their appearance, dress, organization, intelligence, and approachability. As a professor who teaches others how to teach, I instruct my student-teachers to really take the first day of class seriously. The impressions that both teacher and student make on the first day help set the tone for the rest of the semester.

As we go through our daily lives we perceive all sorts of people and objects, and we often make sense of these perceptions by using previous experiences to help filter and organize the information we take in. Sometimes we encounter new or contradictory information that changes the way we think about a person, group, or object. The perceptions that we make of others and that others make of us affect how we communicate and act. In this module, we will learn about the perception process, how we perceive others, how we perceive and present ourselves, and how we can improve our perceptions.

PERCEPTION PROCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define perception.
2. Discuss how salience influences the selection of perceptual information.
3. Explain the ways in which we organize perceptual information.
4. Discuss the role of schemata in the interpretation of perceptual information.

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process, which is shown in Figure 2.1 "The Perception Process," includes the perception of select stimuli that pass through our perceptual filters, are organized into our existing structures and patterns, and are then interpreted based on previous experiences. Although perception is a largely cognitive and psychological process, how we perceive the people and objects around us affects our communication. We respond differently to an object or person that we perceive favorably than we do to something we find unfavorable. But how do we filter through the mass amounts of incoming information, organize it, and make meaning from what makes it through our perceptual filters and into our social realities?

Selecting Information

We take in information through all five of our senses, but our perceptual field (the world around us) includes so many stimuli that it is impossible for our brains to process and make sense of it all. So, as information comes in through our senses, various factors influence what actually continues on through the perception process. (((Note: (Note: Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor, *Social Cognition,* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1991).)))) Selecting is the first part of the perception process, in which we focus our attention on certain incoming sensory information. Think about how, out of many other possible stimuli to pay attention to, you may hear a familiar voice in the hallway, see a pair of shoes you want to buy from across the mall, or smell something cooking for dinner when you get home from work. We quickly cut through and push to the background all kinds of sights, smells, sounds, and other stimuli, but how do we decide what to select and what to leave out?

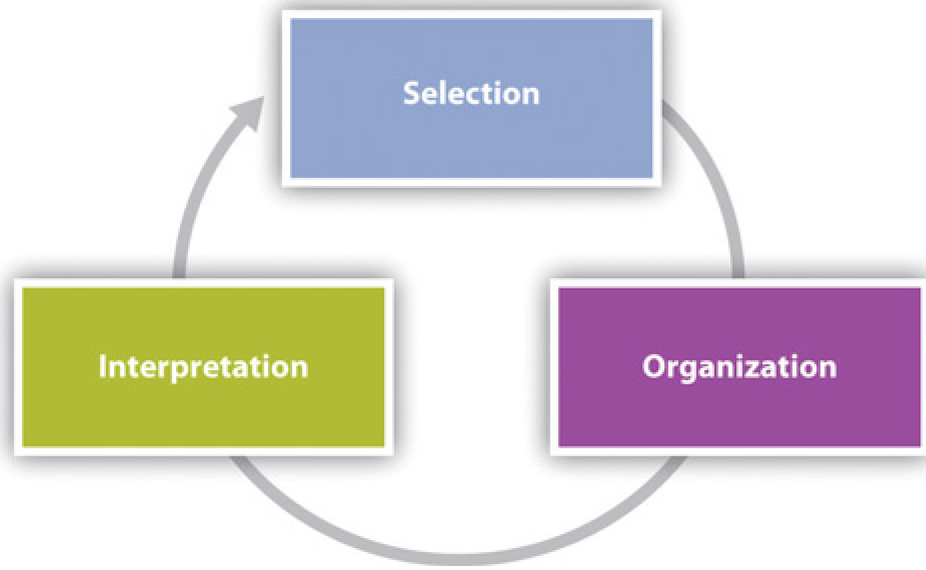


Figure 2.1 The Perception Process

We tend to pay attention to information that is salient. Salience is the degree to which something attracts our attention in a particular context. The thing attracting our attention can be abstract, like a concept, or concrete, like an object. For example, a person's identity as a Native American may become salient when they are protesting at the Columbus Day parade in Denver, Colorado. Or a bright flashlight shining in your face while camping at night is sure to be salient. The degree of salience depends on three features. (((Note: (Note: Susan T. Fiske and Shelley E. Taylor,*Social Cognition,* 2nd ed. (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1991), 186.)))) We tend to find salient things that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our needs or interests. Lastly, expectations affect what we find salient.

Visual and Aural Stimulation

It is probably not surprising to learn that visually and/or aurally stimulating things become salient in our perceptual field and get our attention. Creatures ranging from fish to hummingbirds are attracted to things like silver spinners on fishing poles or red and yellow bird feeders. Having our senses stimulated isn't always a positive thing though. Think about the couple that won't stop talking during the movie or the upstairs neighbor whose subwoofer shakes your ceiling at night. In short, stimuli can be attention-getting in a productive or distracting way. As communicators, we can use this knowledge to our benefit by minimizing distractions when we have something important to say. It's probably better to have a serious conversation with a significant other in a quiet place rather than a crowded food court. As we will learn later, altering the rate, volume, and pitch of your voice, known as vocal variety, can help keep your audience engaged, as can gestures and movement. Conversely, nonverbal adaptors, or nervous movements we do to relieve anxiety like pacing or twirling our hair, can be distracting. Aside from minimizing distractions and delivering our messages enthusiastically, the content of our communication also affects salience.

Needs and Interests

We tend to pay attention to information that we perceive to meet our needs or interests in some way. This type of selective attention can help us meet instrumental needs and get things done. When you need to speak with a financial aid officer about your scholarships and loans, you sit in the waiting room and listen for your name to be called. Paying close attention to whose name is called means you can be ready to start your meeting and hopefully get your business handled. When we don't think certain messages meet our needs, stimuli that would normally get our attention may be completely lost. Imagine you are in the grocery store and you hear someone say your name. You turn around, only to hear that person say, "Finally! I said your name three times. I thought you forgot who I was!" A few seconds before, when you were focused on figuring out which kind of orange juice to get, you were attending to the various pulp options to the point that you tuned other stimuli out, even something as familiar as the sound of someone calling your name. Again, as communicators, especially in persuasive contexts, we can use this to our advantage by making it clear how our message or proposition meets the needs of our audience members. Whether a sign helps us find the nearest gas station, the sound of a ringtone helps us find our missing cell phone, or a speaker tells us how avoiding processed foods will improve our health, we select and attend to information that meets our needs.

If you're engrossed in an interesting video game, you may not notice other perceptual cues.

We also find salient information that interests us. Of course, many times, stimuli that meet our needs are also interesting, but it's worth discussing these two items separately because sometimes we find things interesting that don't necessarily meet our needs. I'm sure we've all gotten sucked into a television show, video game, or random project and paid attention to that at the expense of something that actually meets our needs like cleaning or spending time with a significant other. Paying attention to things that interest us but don't meet specific needs seems like the basic formula for procrastination that we are all familiar with.

In many cases we know what interests us and we automatically gravitate toward stimuli that match up with that. For example, as you filter through radio stations, you likely already have an idea of what kind of music interests you and will stop on a station playing something in that genre while skipping right past stations playing something you aren't interested in. Because of this tendency, we often have to end up being forced into or accidentally experiencing something new in order to create or discover new interests. For example, you may not realize you are interested in Asian history until you are required to take such a course and have an engaging professor who sparks that interest in you. Or you may accidentally stumble on a new area of interest when you take a class you wouldn't otherwise because it fits into your schedule. As communicators, you can take advantage of this perceptual tendency by adapting your topic and content to the interests of your audience.

Expectations

The relationship between salience and expectations is a little more complex. Basically, we can find expected things salient and find things that are unexpected salient. While this may sound confusing, a couple examples should illustrate this point. If you are expecting a package to be delivered, you might pick up on the slightest noise of a truck engine or someone's footsteps approaching your front door. Since we expect something to happen, we may be extra tuned in to clues that it is coming. In terms of the unexpected, if you have a shy and soft-spoken friend who you overhear raising the volume and pitch of his voice while talking to another friend, you may pick up on that and assume that something out of the ordinary is going on. For something unexpected to become salient, it has to reach a certain threshold of difference. If you walked into your regular class and there were one or two more students there than normal, you may not even notice. If you walked into your class and there was someone dressed up as a wizard, you would probably notice. So, if we expect to experience something out of the routine, like a package delivery, we will find stimuli related to that expectation salient. If we experience something that we weren't expecting and that is significantly different from our routine experiences, then we will likely find it salient. We can also apply this concept to our communication. I always encourage my students to include supporting material in their speeches that defies our expectations. You can help keep your audience engaged by employing good research skills to find such information.

There is a middle area where slight deviations from routine experiences may go unnoticed because we aren't expecting them. To go back to the earlier example, if you aren't expecting a package, and you regularly hear vehicle engines and sidewalk foot traffic outside your house, those pretty routine sounds wouldn't be as likely to catch your attention, even if it were slightly more or less traffic than expected. This is because our expectations are often based on previous experience and patterns we have observed and internalized, which allows our brains to go on "autopilot" sometimes and fill in things that are missing or overlook extra things. Look at the following sentence and read it aloud: Perception is based on patterns, maening we otfen raech a conclusion witouht considering ecah individual element. This example illustrates a test of our expectations and an annoyance to every college student. We have all had the experience of getting a paper back with typos and spelling errors circled. This can be frustrating, especially if we actually took the time to proofread. When we first learned to read and write, we learned letter by letter. A teacher or parent would show us a card with *A-P-P-L-E* written on it, and we would sound it out. Over time, we learned the patterns of letters and sounds and could see combinations of letters and pronounce the word quickly. Since we know what to expect when we see a certain pattern of letters, and know what comes next in a sentence since we wrote the paper, we don't take the time to look at each letter as we proofread. This can lead us to overlook common typos and spelling errors, even if we proofread something multiple times. As a side note, I'll share two tips to help you avoid proofreading errors: First, have a friend proofread your paper. Since they didn't write it, they have fewer expectations regarding the content. Second, read your papers backward. Since patterns of speech aren't the same in reverse you have to stop and focus on each word. Now that we know how we select stimuli, let's turn our attention to how we organize the information we receive.

ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Organizing is the second part of the perception process, in which we sort and categorize information that we perceive based on innate and learned cognitive patterns. Three ways we sort things into patterns are by using proximity, similarity, and difference. (((Note: (Note: Stanley Coren, "Principles of Perceptual Organization and Spatial Distortion: The Gestalt Illusions," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 6, no. 3 (1980): 404–12.)))) In terms of proximity, we tend to think that things that are close together go together. For example, have you ever been waiting to be helped in a business and the clerk assumes that you and the person standing beside you are together? The slightly awkward moment usually ends when you and the other person in line look at each other, then back at the clerk, and one of you explains that you are not together. Even though you may have never met that other person in your life, the clerk used a basic perceptual organizing cue to group you together because you were standing in proximity to one another.

We also group things together based on similarity. We tend to think similar-looking or similar-acting things belong together. I have two friends that I occasionally go out with, and we are all three males, around the same age, of the same race, with short hair and glasses. Aside from that, we don't really look alike, but on more than one occasion a server at a restaurant has assumed that we're brothers. Despite the fact that many of our other features are different, the salient features are organized based on similarity and the three of us are suddenly related.

Since we organize perceptual information based on proximity, a person may perceive that two people are together, just because they are standing close together in line.

We also organize information that we take in based on difference. In this case, we assume that the item that looks or acts different from the rest doesn't belong with the group. Perceptual errors involving people and assumptions of difference can be especially awkward, if not offensive. My friend's mother, who is Vietnamese American, was attending a conference at which another attendee assumed she was a hotel worker and asked her to throw something away for her. In this case, my friend's mother was a person of color at a convention with mostly white attendees, so an impression was formed based on the other person's perception of this difference.

These strategies for organizing information are so common that they are built into how we teach our children basic skills and how we function in our daily lives. I'm sure we all had to look at pictures in grade school and determine which things went together and which thing didn't belong. If you think of the literal act of organizing something, like your desk at home or work, we follow these same strategies. If you have a bunch of papers and mail on the top of your desk, you will likely sort papers into separate piles for separate classes or put bills in a separate place than personal mail. You may have one drawer for pens, pencils, and other supplies and another drawer for files. In this case you are grouping items based on similarities and differences. You may also group things based on proximity, for example, by putting financial items like your checkbook, a calculator, and your pay stubs in one area so you can update your budget efficiently. In summary, we simplify information and look for patterns to help us more efficiently communicate and get through life.

Simplification and categorizing based on patterns isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, without this capability we would likely not have the ability to speak, read, or engage in other complex cognitive/behavioral functions. Our brain innately categorizes and files information and experiences away for later retrieval, and different parts of the brain are responsible for different sensory experiences. In short, it is natural for things to group together in some ways. There are differences among people, and looking for patterns helps us in many practical ways. However, the judgments we place on various patterns and categories are not natural; they are learned and culturally and contextually relative. Our perceptual patterns do become unproductive and even unethical when the judgments we associate with certain patterns are based on stereotypical or prejudicial thinking.

We also organize interactions and interpersonal experiences based on our firsthand experiences. When two people experience the same encounter differently, misunderstandings and conflict may result. Punctuation refers to the structuring of information into a timeline to determine the cause (stimulus) and effect (response) of our communication interactions. (((Note: (Note: Allan L. Sillars, "Attributions and Communication in Roommate Conflicts," *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 3 (1980): 180–200.))))Applying this concept to interpersonal conflict can help us see how the perception process extends beyond the individual to the interpersonal level. This concept also helps illustrate how organization and interpretation can happen together and how interpretation can influence how we organize information and vice versa.

Where does a conflict begin and end? The answer to this question depends on how the people involved in the conflict punctuate, or structure, their conflict experience. Punctuation differences can often escalate conflict, which can lead to a variety of relationship problems. (((Note: (Note: Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin Bavelas, and Don D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication: A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1967), 56.)))) For example, Linda and Joe are on a project team at work and have a deadline approaching. Linda has been working on the project over the weekend in anticipation of her meeting with Joe first thing Monday morning. She has had some questions along the way and has e-mailed Joe for clarification and input, but he hasn't responded. On Monday morning, Linda walks into the meeting room, sees Joe, and says, "I've been working on this project all weekend and needed your help. I e-mailed you three times!

What were you doing?” Joe responds, “I had no idea you e-mailed me. I was gone all weekend on a camping trip.” In this instance, the conflict started for Linda two days ago and has just started for Joe. So, for the two of them to most effectively manage this conflict, they need to communicate so that their punctuation, or where the conflict started for each one, is clear and matches up. In this example, Linda made an impression about Joe’s level of commitment to the project based on an interpretation she made after selecting and organizing incoming information. Being aware of punctuation is an important part of perception checking, which we will discuss later. Let’s now take a closer look at how interpretation plays into the perception process.

INTERPRETING INFORMATION

Although selecting and organizing incoming stimuli happens very quickly, and sometimes without much conscious thought, interpretation can be a much more deliberate and conscious step in the perception process. Interpretation is the third part of the perception process, in which we assign meaning to our experiences using mental structures known as schemata. Schemata are like databases of stored, related information that we use to interpret new experiences. We all have fairly complicated schemata that have developed over time as small units of information combine to make more meaningful complexes of information.

Schemata are like lenses that help us make sense of the perceptual cues around us based on previous knowledge and experience.

We have an overall schema about education and how to interpret experiences with teachers and classmates. This schema started developing before we even went to preschool based on things that parents, peers, and the media told us about school. For example, you learned that certain symbols and objects like an apple, a ruler, a calculator, and a notebook are associated with being a student or teacher. You learned new concepts like grades and recess, and you engaged in new practices like doing homework, studying, and taking tests. You also formed new relationships with teachers, administrators, and classmates. As you progressed through your education, your schema adapted to the changing environment. How smooth or troubling schema reevaluation and revision is varies from situation to situation and person to person. For example, some students adapt their schema relatively easily as they move from elementary, to middle, to high school, and on to college and are faced with new expectations for behavior and academic engagement. Other students don’t adapt as easily, and holding onto their old schema creates problems as they try to interpret new information through old, incompatible schema. We’ve all been in a similar situation at some point in our lives, so we know that revising our schemata can be stressful and that such revision takes effort and usually involves some mistakes, disappointments, and frustrations. But being able to adapt our schemata is a sign of cognitive complexity, which is an important part of communication competence. So, even though the process may be challenging, it can also be a time for learning and growth.

It’s important to be aware of schemata because our interpretations affect our behavior. For example, if you are doing a group project for class and you perceive a group member to be shy based on your schema of how shy people communicate, you may avoid giving him presentation responsibilities in your group project because you do not think shy people make good public speakers. Schemata also guide our interactions, providing a script for our behaviors. We know, in general, how to act and communicate in a waiting room, in a classroom, on a first date, and on a game show. Even a person who has never been on a game show can develop a schema for how to act in that environment by watching *The Price Is Right*, for example. People go to great lengths to make shirts with clever sayings or act enthusiastically in hopes of being picked to be a part of the studio audience and hopefully become a contestant on the show.

As we have seen, schemata are used to interpret others' behavior and form impressions about who they are as a person. To help this process along, we often solicit information from people to help us place them into a preexisting schema. In the United States and many other Western cultures, people's identities are often closely tied to what they do for a living. When we introduce others, or ourselves, occupation is usually one of the first things we mention. Think about how your communication with someone might differ if he or she were introduced to you as an artist versus a doctor. We make similar interpretations based on where people are from, their age, their race, and other social and cultural factors. We will learn more about how culture, gender, and other factors influence our perceptions as we continue through the chapter. In summary, we have schemata about individuals, groups, places, and things, and these schemata filter our perceptions before, during, and after interactions. As schemata are retrieved from memory, they are executed, like computer programs or apps on your smartphone, to help us interpret the world around us. Just like computer programs and apps must be regularly updated to improve their functioning, competent communicators update and adapt their schemata as they have new experiences.

"Getting Real"

Police Officers, Schemata, and Perception/Interpretation

Prime-time cable and network television shows like the *Law and Order* franchise and*Southland* have long offered viewers a glimpse into the lives of law enforcement officers.*COPS*, the first and longest-running prime-time reality television show, and newer reality-themed and educational shows like *The First 48* and *Lockdown*, offer a more realistic look into techniques used by law enforcement. Perception is a crucial part of an officer's skill set. Specifically, during police-citizen encounters, where tensions may be high and time for decision making limited, officers rely on schemata developed through personal experience off the job and training and experience on the job. (((Note:) (Note: (Note: Richard M. Rozelle and James C. Baxter, "Impression Formation and Danger Recognition in Experienced Police Officers," *Journal of Social Psychology* 96 (1975): 54.)))) Moreover, police officers often have to make perceptions based on incomplete and sometimes unreliable information. So, how do police officers use perception to help them do their jobs?
Research has examined how police officers use perception to make judgments about personality traits, credibility, deception, and the presence or absence of a weapon, among others things, and just like you and me, officers use the same process of selection, organization, and interpretation. This research has found that officers, like us, rely on schema to help them make decisions under time and situational constraints. In terms of selection, expectations influence officer perception. At preshift meetings, officers are briefed on ongoing issues and "things to be on the lookout for," which provides them with a set of expectations—for example, the make and model of a stolen car—that can guide their selection process. They must also be prepared for things that defy their expectations, which is not a job skill that many other professionals have to consider every day. They never know when a traffic stop could turn into a pursuit or a seemingly gentle person could turn violent. These expectations can then connect to organization strategies. For example, if an officer knows to be alert for a criminal suspect, they will actively organize incoming perceptual information into categories based on whether or not people look similar to or different from the suspect description. Proximity also plays into police work. If a person is in a car with a driver who has an unregistered handgun, the officer is likely to assume that the other person also has criminal intent. While these practices are not inherently bad, there are obvious problems that can develop when these patterns become rigid schema. Some research has shown that certain prejudices based on racial schema can lead to perceptual errors—in this case, police officers mistakenly perceiving a weapon in the possession of black suspects more often than white suspects. (((Note: (Note: B. Keith Payne, "Prejudice and Perception: The Role of Automatic and Controlled Processes in Misperceiving a Weapon," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 2 (2001): 181–92.))))Additionally, racial profiling (think of how profiles are similar to schemata) has become an issue that's gotten much attention since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the passage of immigration laws in states like Arizona and Alabama that have been critiqued as targeting migrant workers and other undocumented immigrants. As you can see, law enforcement officers and civilians use the same perception process, but such a career brings with it responsibilities and challenges that highlight the imperfect nature of the perception process.

1. What communication skills do you think are key for a law enforcement officer to have in order to do their job effectively and why?

2. Describe an encounter that you have had with a law enforcement officer (if you haven't had a direct experience you can use a hypothetical or fictional example). What were your perceptions of the officer? What do you think his or her perceptions were of you? What schemata do you think contributed to each of your interpretations?
3. What perceptual errors create potential ethical challenges in law enforcement? For example, how should the organizing principles of proximity, similarity, and difference be employed?

COMMUNICATION AND PERCEPTION EXERCISES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information. This process affects our communication because we respond to stimuli differently, whether they are objects or persons, based on how we perceive them.
- Given the massive amounts of stimuli taken in by our senses, we only select a portion of the incoming information to organize and interpret. We select information based on salience. We tend to find salient things that are visually or aurally stimulating and things that meet our needs and interests. Expectations also influence what information we select.
- We organize information that we select into patterns based on proximity, similarity, and difference.
- We interpret information using schemata, which allow us to assign meaning to information based on accumulated knowledge and previous experience.

EXERCISES

1. Take a moment to look around wherever you are right now. Take in the perceptual field around you. What is salient for you in this moment and why? Explain the degree of salience using the three reasons for salience discussed in this section.
2. As we organize information (sensory information, objects, and people) we simplify and categorize information into patterns. Identify some cases in which this aspect of the perception process is beneficial. Identify some cases in which it could be harmful or negative.
3. Getting integrated: Think about some of the schemata you have that help you make sense of the world around you. For each of the following contexts—academic, professional, personal, and civic—identify a schema that you commonly rely on or think you will rely on. For each schema you identified note a few ways that it has already been challenged or may be challenged in the future.

PERCEIVING OTHERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
1. Differentiate between internal and external attributions. 2. Explain two common perceptual errors: the fundamental attribution error and the self-serving bias. 3. Discuss how the primacy and recency effects relate to first and last impressions. 4. Discuss how physical and environmental factors influence perception. 5. Explain the horn and halo effects. 6. Recognize the roles that culture and personality play in the perception of others.

Are you a good judge of character? How quickly can you "size someone up?" Interestingly, research shows that many people are surprisingly accurate at predicting how an interaction with someone will unfold based on initial impressions. Fascinating research has also been done on the ability of people to make a judgment about a person's competence after as little as 100 milliseconds of exposure to politicians' faces. Even more surprising is that people's judgments of competence, after exposure to two candidates for senate elections, accurately predicted election outcomes. (((Note: (Note: Charles C. Ballew II and Alexander Todorov, "Predicting Political Elections from Rapid and Unreflective Face Judgments," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 104, no. 46 (2007): 17948.)))) In short, after only minimal exposure to a candidate's facial expressions, people made judgments about the person's competence, and those candidates judged more competent were people who actually won elections! As you read this section, keep in mind that these principles apply to how you perceive others and to how others perceive you. Just as others make impressions on us, we make impressions on others. We have already learned how the perception process works in terms of selecting, organizing, and interpreting. In this section, we will focus on how we perceive others, with specific attention to how we interpret our perceptions of others.

ATTRIBUTION

I'm sure you have a family member, friend, or coworker with whom you have ideological or political differences. When conversations and inevitable disagreements occur, you may view this person as "pushing your buttons" if you are invested in the issue being debated, or you may view the person as "on their soapbox" if you aren't invested. In either case, your existing perceptions of the other person are probably reinforced after your conversation and you may leave the conversation thinking, "She is never going to wake up and see how ignorant she is! I don't know why I even bother trying to talk to her!" Similar situations occur regularly, and there are some key psychological processes that play into how we perceive others' behaviors. By examining these processes, attribution in particular, we can see how our communication with others is affected by the explanations we create for others' behavior. In addition, we will learn some common errors that we make in the attribution process that regularly lead to conflict and misunderstanding.

Attribution

In most interactions, we are constantly running an attribution script in our minds, which essentially tries to come up with explanations for what is happening. Why did my neighbor slam the door when she saw me walking down the hall? Why is my partner being extra nice to me today? Why did my officemate miss our project team meeting this morning? In general, we seek to attribute the cause of others' behaviors to internal or external factors. Internal attributions connect the cause of behaviors to personal aspects such as personality traits. External attributions connect the cause of behaviors to situational factors. Attributions are important to consider because our reactions to others' behaviors are strongly influenced by the explanations we reach. Imagine that Gloria and Jerry are dating. One day, Jerry gets frustrated and raises his voice to Gloria. She may find that behavior more offensive and even consider breaking up with him if she attributes the cause of the blow up to his personality, since personality traits are usually fairly stable and difficult to control or change.

Frustrated drivers often use internal attributions to explain other drivers' behaviors.

Conversely, Gloria may be more forgiving if she attributes the cause of his behavior to situational factors beyond Jerry's control, since external factors are usually temporary. If she makes an internal attribution, Gloria may think, "Wow, this person is really a loose cannon. Who knows when he will lose it again?" If she makes an external attribution, she may think, "Jerry has been under a lot of pressure to meet deadlines at work and hasn't been getting much sleep. Once this project is over, I'm sure he'll be more relaxed." This process of attribution is ongoing, and, as with many aspects of perception, we are sometimes aware of the attributions we make, and sometimes they are automatic and/or unconscious. Attribution has received much scholarly attention because it is in this part of the perception process that some of the most common perceptual errors or biases occur.

One of the most common perceptual errors is the fundamental attribution error, which refers to our tendency to explain others' behaviors using internal rather than external attributions. (((Note: (Note: Allan L. Sillars, "Attributions and Communication in Roommate Conflicts," *Communication Monographs* 47, no. 3 (1980): 183.)))) For example, when I worked at an urban college in Denver, Colorado, I often had students come into class irritated, saying, "I got a parking ticket! I can't believe those people. Why don't they get a real job and stop ruining my life!" If you Google some clips from the reality television show *Parking Wars*, you will see the ire that people often direct at parking enforcement officers. In this case, illegally parked students attribute the cause of their situation to the malevolence of the parking officer, essentially saying they got a ticket because the officer was a mean/bad person, which is an internal attribution. Students were much less likely to acknowledge that the officer was just doing his or her job (an external attribution) and the ticket was a result of the student's decision to park illegally.

Perceptual errors can also be biased, and in the case of the self-serving bias, the error works out in our favor. Just as we tend to attribute others' behaviors to internal rather than external causes, we do the same for ourselves, especially when our behaviors have led to something successful or positive. When our behaviors lead to failure or something negative, we tend to attribute the cause to external factors. Thus the self-serving bias is a perceptual error through which we attribute the cause of our successes to internal personal factors while attributing our failures to external factors beyond our control. When we look at the fundamental attribution error and the self-serving bias together, we can see that we are likely to judge ourselves more favorably than another person, or at least less personally.

The professor-student relationship offers a good case example of how these concepts can play out. I have often heard students who earned an unsatisfactory grade on an assignment attribute that grade to the strictness, unfairness, or incompetence of their professor. I have also heard professors attribute a poor grade to the student's laziness, attitude, or intelligence. In both cases, the behavior is explained using an internal attribution and is an example of the fundamental attribution error. Students may further attribute their poor grade to their busy schedule or other external, situational factors rather than their lack of motivation, interest, or preparation (internal attributions). On the other hand, when students gets a good grade on a paper, they will likely attribute that cause to their intelligence or hard work rather than an easy assignment or an "easy grading" professor. Both of these examples illustrate the self-serving bias. These psychological processes have implications for our communication because when we attribute causality to another person's personality, we tend to have a stronger emotional reaction and tend to assume that this personality characteristic is stable, which may lead us to avoid communication with the person or to react negatively. Now that you aware of these common errors, you can monitor them more and engage in perception checking, which we will learn more about later, to verify your attributions.

IMPRESSIONS AND INTERPRETATION

As we perceive others, we make impressions about their personality, likeability, attractiveness, and other characteristics. Although much of our impressions are personal, what forms them is sometimes based more on circumstances than personal characteristics. All the information we take in isn't treated equally. How important are first impressions? Does the last thing you notice about a person stick with you longer because it's more recent? Do we tend to remember the positive or negative things we notice about a person? This section will help answer these questions, as we explore how the timing of information and the content of the messages we receive can influence our perception.

First and Last Impressions

The old saying "You never get a second chance to make a good impression" points to the fact that first impressions matter. The brain is a predictive organ in that it wants to know, based on previous experiences and patterns, what to expect next, and first impressions function to fill this need, allowing us to determine how we will proceed with an interaction after only a quick assessment of the person with whom we are interacting. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 280.)))) Research shows that people are surprisingly good at making accurate first impressions about how an interaction will unfold and at identifying personality characteristics of people they do not know. Studies show that people are generally able to predict how another person will behave toward them based on an initial interaction. People's accuracy and ability to predict interaction based on first impressions vary, but people with high accuracy are typically socially skilled and popular and have less loneliness, anxiety, and depression; more satisfying relationships; and more senior positions and higher salaries. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 281.)))) So not only do first impressions matter, but having the ability to form accurate first impressions seems to correlate to many other positive characteristics.

People who are able to form accurate first impressions tend to have more satisfying relationships and more quickly advance in their careers.

First impressions are enduring because of the primacy effect, which leads us to place more value on the first information we receive about a person. So if we interpret the first information we receive from or about a person as positive, then a positive first impression will form and influence how we respond to that person as the interaction continues. Likewise, negative interpretations of information can lead us to form negative first impressions. If you sit down at a restaurant and servers walk by for several minutes and no one greets you, then you will likely interpret that negatively and not have a good impression of your server when he finally shows up. This may lead you to be short with the server, which may lead him to not be as attentive as he normally would. At this point, a series of negative interactions has set into motion a cycle that will be very difficult to reverse and make positive.

The recency effect leads us to put more weight on the most recent impression we have of a person's communication over earlier impressions. Even a positive first impression can be tarnished by a negative final impression. Imagine that a professor has maintained a relatively high level of credibility with you over the course of the semester. She made a good first impression by being organized, approachable, and interesting during the first days of class. The rest of the semester went fairly well with no major conflicts. However, during the last week of the term, she didn't have final papers graded and ready to turn back by the time she said she would, which left you with some uncertainty about how well you needed to do on the final exam to earn an A in the class. When you did get your paper back, on the last day of class, you saw that your grade was much lower than you expected. If this happened to you, what would you write on the instructor evaluation? Because of the recency effect, many students would likely give a disproportionate amount of value to the professor's actions in the final week of the semester, negatively skewing the evaluation, which is supposed to be reflective of the entire semester. Even though the professor only returned one assignment late, that fact is very recent in students' minds and can overshadow the positive impression that formed many weeks earlier.

Physical and Environmental Influences on Perception

We make first impressions based on a variety of factors, including physical and environmental characteristics. In terms of physical characteristics, style of dress and grooming are important, especially in professional contexts. We have general schema regarding how to dress and groom for various situations ranging from formal, to business casual, to casual, to lounging around the house.

You would likely be able to offer some descriptors of how a person would look and act from the following categories: a goth person, a prep, a jock, a fashionista, a hipster. The schema associated with these various cliques or styles are formed through personal experience and through exposure to media representations of these groups. Different professions also have schema for appearance and dress. Imagine a doctor, mechanic, congressperson, exotic dancer, or mail carrier. Each group has clothing and personal styles that create and fit into general patterns. Of course, the mental picture we have of any of the examples above is not going to be representative of the whole group, meaning that stereotypical thinking often exists within our schema. We will learn more about the negative effects of stereotypical thinking later in the chapter, but it's important to understand how persuasive various physical perceptual influences can be.

Think about the harm that has been done when people pose as police or doctors to commit crimes or other acts of malice. Seeing someone in a white lab coat automatically leads us to see that person as an authority figure, and we fall into a scripted pattern of deferring to the "doctor" and not asking too many questions. The Milgram experiments offer a startling example of how powerful these influences are. In the experiments, participants followed instructions from a man in a white lab coat (who was actually an actor), who prompted them to deliver electric shocks to a person in another room every time the other person answered a memory question incorrectly. The experiment was actually about how people defer to authority figures instead of acting independently. Although no one was actually being shocked in the other room, many participants continued to "shock," at very high levels of voltage, the other person even after that person supposedly being shocked complained of chest pains and became unresponsive. (((Note: (Note: Gregorio Billikopf Encina, "Milgram's Experiment on Obedience to Authority," *The Regents of the University of California*, 2003, accessed June 6, 2012,http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ucce50/ag-labor/7article/article35.htm.))))

Just as clothing and personal style help us form impressions of others, so do physical body features. The degree to which we perceive people to be attractive influences our attitudes about and communication with them. Facial attractiveness and body weight tend to be common features used in the perception of physical attractiveness. In general people find symmetrical faces and nonoverweight bodies attractive. People perceived as attractive are generally evaluated more positively and seen as more kind and competent than people evaluated as less attractive. Additionally, people rated as attractive receive more eye contact, more smiles, and closer proximity to others (people stand closer to them). Unlike clothing and personal style, these physical features are more difficult, if not impossible, to change.

Clothing, like a doctor's lab coat, forms powerful impressions that have noticeable effects on people's behavior.

Finally, the material objects and people that surround a person influence our perception. In the MTV show *Room Raiders*, contestants go into the bedrooms of three potential dates and choose the one they want to go on the date with based on the impressions made while examining each potential date's cleanliness, decorations, clothes, trophies and awards, books, music, and so on. Research supports the reliability of such impressions, as people have been shown to make reasonably accurate judgments about a person's personality after viewing his or her office or bedroom. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 282.)))) Although the artificial scenario set up in *Room Raiders* doesn't exactly match up with typical encounters, the link between environmental cues and perception is important enough for many companies to create policies about what can and can't be displayed in personal office spaces. It would seem odd for a bank manager to have an *Animal House* poster hanging in his office, and that would definitely influence customers' perceptions of the manager's personality and credibility. The arrangement of furniture also creates impressions. Walking into a meeting and sitting on one end of a long boardroom table is typically less inviting than sitting at a round table or on a sofa.

Although some physical and environmental features are easier to change than others, it is useful to become aware of how these factors, which aren't necessarily related to personality or verbal and nonverbal communication, shape our perceptions. These early impressions also affect how we interpret and perceive later encounters, which can be further explained through the halo and horn effects.

The Halo and Horn Effects

We have a tendency to adapt information that conflicts with our earlier impressions in order to make it fit within the frame we have established. This is known as selective distortion, and it manifests in the halo and horn effects. The angelic halo and devilish horn are useful metaphors for the lasting effects of positive and negative impressions.

The halo effect occurs when initial positive perceptions lead us to view later interactions as positive. The horn effect occurs when initial negative perceptions lead us to view later interactions as negative. (((Note: (Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 281.)))) Since impressions are especially important when a person is navigating the job market, let's imagine how the horn and halo effects could play out for a recent college graduate looking to land her first real job. Nell has recently graduated with her degree in communication studies and is looking to start her career as a corporate trainer. If one of Nell's professors has a relationship with an executive at an area business, his positive verbal recommendation will likely result in a halo effect for Nell. Since the executive thinks highly of his friend the professor, and the professor things highly of Nell, then the executive will start his interaction with Nell with a positive impression and interpret her behaviors more positively than he would otherwise. The halo effect initiated by the professor's recommendation may even lead the executive to dismiss or overlook some negative behaviors. Let's say Nell doesn't have a third party to help make a connection and arrives late for her interview. That negative impression may create a horn effect that carries through the interview. Even if Nell presents as competent and friendly, the negative first impression could lead the executive to minimize or ignore those positive characteristics, and the company may not hire her.

CULTURE, PERSONALITY, AND PERCEPTION

Our cultural identities and our personalities affect our perceptions. Sometimes we are conscious of the effects and sometimes we are not. In either case, we have a tendency to favor others who exhibit cultural or personality traits that match up with our own. This tendency is so strong that is often leads us to assume that people we like are more similar to us than they actually are. Knowing more about how these forces influence our perceptions can help us become more aware of and competent in regards to the impressions we form of others.

Culture

Race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, nationality, and age all affect the perceptions that we make. The schemata through which we interpret what we perceive are influenced by our cultural identities. As we are socialized into various cultural identities, we internalize beliefs, attitudes, and values shared by others in our cultural group. Schemata held by members of a cultural identity group have similarities, but schemata held by different cultural groups may vary greatly. Unless we are exposed to various cultural groups and learn how others perceive us and the world around them, we will likely have a narrow or naïve view of the world and assume that others see things the way we do. Exposing yourself to and experiencing cultural differences in perspective doesn't mean that you have to change your schema to match another cultural group's. Instead, it may offer you a chance to better understand why and how your schemata were constructed the way they were.

How we interpret basic sensory information, like smells, varies by culture. In some cultures, natural body odor isn't considered an offensive smell like it generally is in the United States.

As we have learned, perception starts with information that comes in through our senses. How we perceive even basic sensory information is influenced by our culture, as is illustrated in the following list:

- Sight. People in different cultures "read" art in different ways, differing in terms of where they start to look at an image and the types of information they perceive and process.
- Sound. "Atonal" music in some Asian cultures is unpleasing; it is uncomfortable to people who aren't taught that these combinations of sounds are pleasing.
- Touch. In some cultures it would be very offensive for a man to touch—even tap on the shoulder—a woman who isn't a relative.
- Taste. Tastes for foods vary greatly around the world. "Stinky tofu," which is a favorite snack of people in Taipei, Taiwan's famous night market, would likely be very off-putting in terms of taste and smell to many foreign tourists.
- Smell. While US Americans spend considerable effort to mask natural body odor, which we typically find unpleasant, with soaps, sprays, and lotions, some other cultures would not find unpleasant or even notice what we consider "b.o." Those same cultures may find a US American's "clean" (soapy, perfumed, deodorized) smell unpleasant.

Aside from differences in reactions to basic information we take in through our senses, there is also cultural variation in how we perceive more complicated constructs, like marriage, politics, and privacy. In May of 2012, French citizens elected a new president. François Hollande moved into the presidential palace with his partner of five years, Valerie Trierweiler. They are the first unmarried couple in the country's history to occupy the presidential palace. (((Note: (Note: Maa de la Baume, "First Lady without a Portfolio (or a Ring) Seeks Her Own Path," *The New York Times*, May 15, 2012, accessed June 6, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/16/world/europe/frances-first-lady-valerie-trierweiler-seeks-her-own-path.html?pagewanted=all.)))) Even though new census statistics show that more unmarried couples are living together than ever before in the United States, many still disapprove of the practice, and it is hard to imagine a US president in a similar circumstance as France's Hollande. Other places like Saudi Arabia and the Vatican have strong cultural aversions to such a practice, which could present problems when France's first couple travels abroad.

As we've already learned, our brain processes information by putting it into categories and looking for predictability and patterns. The previous examples have covered how we do this with sensory information and with more abstract concepts like marriage and politics, but we also do this with people. When we categorize people, we generally view them as "like us" or "not like us." This simple us/them split affects subsequent interaction, including impressions and attributions. For example, we tend to view people we perceive to be like us as more trustworthy, friendly, and honest than people we perceive to be not like us. (((Note: (Note: Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Psychology of Prejudice: Ingroup Love or Outgroup Hate?" *Journal of Social Issues* 55, no. 3 (1999): 429–44.)))) We are also more likely to use internal attribution to explain negative behavior of people we perceive to be different from us. If a person of a different race cuts another driver off in traffic, the driver is even more likely to attribute that action to the other driver's internal qualities (thinking, for example, "He or she is inconsiderate and reckless!") than they would someone of their own race. Having such inflexible categories can have negative consequences, and later we will discuss how forcing people into rigid categories leads to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Of course, race isn't the only marker of difference that influences our perceptions, and the problem with our rough categorization of people into "like us" and "not like us" categories is that these differences aren't really as easy to perceive as we think. We cannot always tell whether or not someone is culturally like us through visual cues. For some cultural identities, like sexual orientation and ability, our awareness of any differences may only come when the other person discloses their identity to us.

Although gender stereotypes are perpetuated in the media and internalized by many people, men and women actually communicate much more similarly than differently.

You no doubt frequently hear people talking and writing about the "vast differences" between men and women. Whether it's communication, athletic ability, expressing emotions, or perception, people will line up to say that women are one way and men are the other way. While it is true that gender affects our perception, the reason for this difference stems more from social norms than genetic, physical, or psychological differences between men and women. We are socialized to perceive differences between men and women, which leads us to exaggerate and amplify what differences there actually are. (((Note: (Note: Steven McCornack, *Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 93.)))) We basically see the stereotypes and differences we are told to see, which helps to create a reality in which gender differences are "obvious." However, numerous research studies have found that, especially in relation to multiple aspects of communication, men and women communicate much more similarly than differently. In summary, various cultural identities shape how we perceive others because beliefs, attitudes, and values of the cultural groups to which we belong are incorporated into our schema. Our personalities also present interesting perceptual advantages and challenges that we will now discuss.

Personality

I occasionally have potential employers of students I have taught or supervised call me to do "employment verifications" during which they ask general questions about the applicant. While they may ask a few questions about intellectual ability or academic performance, they typically ask questions that try to create a personality profile of the applicant. They basically want to know what kind of leader, coworker, and person he or she is. This is a smart move on their part, because our personalities greatly influence how we see ourselves in the world and how we perceive and interact with others.

Personality refers to a person's general way of thinking, feeling, and behaving based on underlying motivations and impulses. (((Note: (Note: Steven McCornack, *Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 95.)))) These underlying motivations and impulses form our personality traits. Personality traits are "underlying," but they are fairly enduring once a person reaches adulthood. That is not to say that people's personalities do not change, but major changes in personality are not common unless they result from some form of trauma. Although personality scholars believe there are thousands of personalities, they all comprise some combination of the same few traits. Much research has been done on personality traits, and the "Big Five" that are most commonly discussed are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. (((Note: (Note: Robert R. McCrea, "Trait Psychology and Culture," *Journal of Personality* 69, no. 6 (2001): 825.)))) These five traits appear to be representative of personalities across cultures, and you can read more about what each of these traits entails below. If you are interested in how you rank in terms of personality traits, there are many online tests you can take. A Big Five test can be taken at the following website: http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive.

The Big Five Personality Traits

- Extraversion. Refers to a person's interest in interacting with others. People with high extraversion are sociable and often called "extroverts." People with low extraversion are less sociable and are often called "introverts."

- **Agreeableness.** Refers to a person's level of trustworthiness and friendliness. People with high agreeableness are cooperative and likable. People with low agreeableness are suspicious of others and sometimes aggressive, which makes it more difficult for people to find them pleasant to be around.
- **Conscientiousness.** Refers to a person's level of self-organization and motivation. People with high conscientiousness are methodical, motivated, and dependable. People with low conscientiousness are less focused, less careful, and less dependable.
- **Neuroticism.** Refers to a person's level of negative thoughts regarding himself or herself. People high in neuroticism are insecure and experience emotional distress and may be perceived as unstable. People low in neuroticism are more relaxed, have less emotional swings, and are perceived as more stable.
- **Openness.** Refers to a person's willingness to consider new ideas and perspectives. People high in openness are creative and are perceived as open minded. People low in openness are more rigid and set in their thinking and are perceived as "set in their ways."

Scholarship related to personality serves many purposes, and some of them tie directly to perception. Corporations and television studios spend millions of dollars on developing personality profiles and personality testing. Corporations can make hiring and promotion decisions based on personality test results, which can save them money and time if they can weed out those who don't "fit" the position before they get in the door and drain resources. Television studios make casting decisions based on personality profiles because they know that certain personalities evoke strong and specific reactions from viewers. The reality television show *Survivor* has done more than one season where they bring back "Heroes and Villains," which already indicates that the returning cast members made strong impressions on the show's producers and audience members. Think about the reality television stars that you love to root for, want to see lose, and can't stand to look at or look away from. Shows like*Celebrity Rehab* intentionally cast fading stars who already have strong personalities and emotional and addiction issues in order to create the kind of human train wrecks that attract millions of viewers. So why does this work?

It is likely that you have more in common with that reality TV star than you care to admit. We tend to focus on personality traits in others that we feel are important to our own personality. What we like in ourselves, we like in others, and what we dislike in ourselves, we dislike in others. (((Note: (Note: Steven McCornack,*Reflect and Relate: An Introduction to Interpersonal Communication* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St Martin's, 2007), 95.)))) If you admire a person's loyalty, then loyalty is probably a trait that you think you possess as well. If you work hard to be positive and motivated and suppress negative and unproductive urges within yourself, you will likely think harshly about those negative traits in someone else. After all, if you can suppress your negativity, why can't they do the same? This way of thinking isn't always accurate or logical, but it is common.

The concept of assumed similarity refers to our tendency to perceive others as similar to us. When we don't have enough information about a person to know their key personality traits, we fill in the gaps—usually assuming they possess traits similar to those we see in ourselves. We also tend to assume that people have similar attitudes, or likes and dislikes, as us. If you set your friend up with a man you think she'll really like only to find out there was no chemistry when they met, you may be surprised to realize your friend doesn't have the same taste in men as you. Even though we may assume more trait and taste similarity between our significant others and ourselves than there actually is, research generally finds that while people do interpersonally group based on many characteristics including race, class, and intelligence, the findings don't show that people with similar personalities group together. (((Note: (Note: Andrew Beer and David Watson, "Personality Judgement at Zero Acquiantance: Agreement, Assumed Similarity, and Implicit Simplicity," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 90, no. 3 (2008): 252.))))

In summary, personality affects our perception, and we all tend to be amateur personality scholars given the amount of effort we put into assuming and evaluating others' personality traits. This bank of knowledge we accumulate based on previous interactions with people is used to help us predict how interactions will unfold and help us manage our interpersonal relationships. When we size up a person based on their personality, we are auditioning or interviewing them in a way to see if we think there is compatibility. We use these implicit personality theories to generalize a person's overall personality from the traits we can perceive. The theories are "implicit" because they are not of academic but of experience-based origin, and the information we use to theorize about people's personalities isn't explicitly known or observed but implied. In other words, we use previous experience to guess other people's personality traits. We then assume more about a person based on the personality traits we assign to them.

This process of assuming has its advantages and drawbacks. In terms of advantages, the use of implicit personality theories offers us a perceptual shortcut that can be useful when we first meet someone. Our assessment of their traits and subsequent assumptions about who they are as a person makes us feel like we "know the person," which reduces uncertainty and facilitates further interaction. In terms of drawbacks, our experience-based assumptions aren't always correct, but they are still persuasive and enduring. As we have already learned, first impressions carry a lot of weight in terms of how they influence further interaction. Positive and negative impressions formed early can also lead to a halo effect or a horn effect, which we discussed earlier. Personality-based impressions can also connect to impressions based on physical and environmental cues to make them even stronger. For example, perceiving another person as attractive can create a halo effect that then leads you to look for behavioral cues that you can then tie to positive personality traits. You may notice that the attractive person also says "please" and "thank you," which increases his or her likeability. You may notice that the person has clean and fashionable shoes, which leads you to believe he or she is professional and competent but also trendy and hip. Now you have an overall positive impression of this person that will affect your subsequent behaviors. (((Note: (Note: Andrew Beer and David Watson, "Personality Judgement at Zero Acquiantance: Agreement, Assumed Similarity, and Implicit Simplicity," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 90, no. 3 (2008): 252.)))) But how accurate were your impressions? If on your way home you realize you just bought a car from this person, who happened to be a car salesperson, that was $7,000 over your price range, you might have second thoughts about how good a person he or she actually is.

PERCEIVING OTHERS EXERCISES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

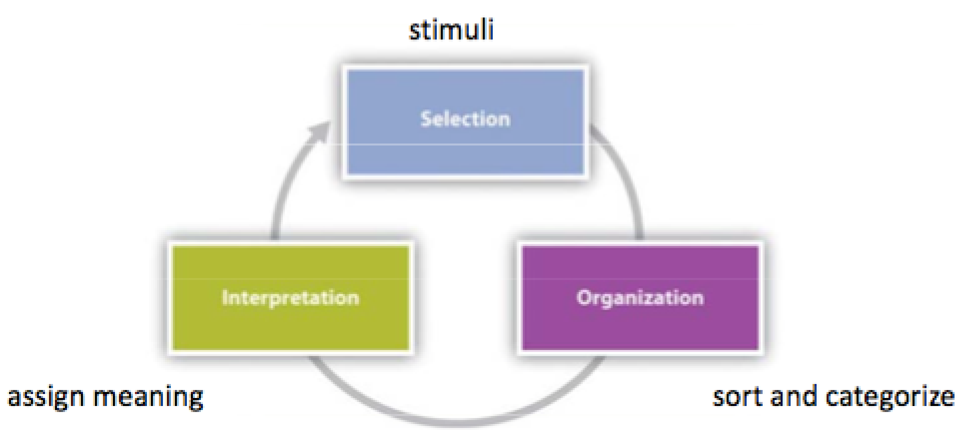
- We use attributions to interpret perceptual information, specifically, people's behavior. Internal attributions connect behavior to internal characteristics such as personality traits. External attributions connect behavior to external characteristics such as situational factors.
- Two common perceptual errors that occur in the process of attribution are the fundamental attribution error and the self-serving bias.
    - The fundamental attribution error refers to our tendency to overattribute other people's behaviors to internal rather than external causes.
    - The self-serving bias refers to our tendency to overattribute our successes to internal factors and overattribute our failures to external factors.
- First and last impressions are powerful forces in the perception process. The primacy effect is a perceptual tendency to place more importance on initial impressions than later impressions. The recency effect is the perceptual tendency to place more importance on the most recent impressions over earlier impressions.
- Physical and environmental cues such as clothing, grooming, attractiveness, and material objects influence the impressions that we form of people.
- The halo effect describes a perceptual effect that occurs when initial positive impressions lead us to view later interactions as positive. The horn effect describes a perceptual effect that occurs when initial negative impressions lead us to view later interactions as negative.
- Cultural identities such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, nationality, and age all affect the perceptions that we make about basic sensory information such as sounds and smells as well as larger concepts such as marriage and privacy. Despite the fact that much popular knowledge claims that women and men communicate very differently, communication processes for each gender are more similar than different.
- Personality affects perception in many ways. Our personality traits, which are our underlying and enduring motivations for thinking and behaving the way we do, affect how we see others and ourselves. We use observed and implied personality traits to form impressions of others, which then influence how we act toward them.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a recent conflict and how you explained the behavior that caused the conflict and subsequently formed impressions about the other person based on your perceptions. Briefly describe the conflict situation and then identify internal and external attributions for your behavior and the behavior of the other person. Is there any evidence of the fundamental attribution error or self-serving bias in this conflict encounter? If so, what?
2. Describe a situation in which you believe the primacy and/or recency effect influenced your perceptions of a person or event.
3. Has your perception of something ever changed because of exposure to cultural difference? For example, have you grown to like a kind of food, music, clothing, or other custom that you earlier perceived unfavorably?

PERCEPTION STUDY GUIDE

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting information



The halo effect occurs when initial positive perceptions lead us to view later interactions as positive.

The horn effect occurs when initial negative perceptions lead us to view later interactions as negative.

Fundamental attribution error, which refers to our tendency to explain others' behaviors using internal rather than external attributions.

External attributions connect the cause of behaviors to situational factors.

The **self-serving bias** is a perceptual error through which we attribute the cause of our successes to internal personal factors while attributing
our failures to external factors beyond our control.

As we perceive others, we make impressions about their personality, likeability, attractiveness, and other characteristics.

"You never get a second chance to make a good impression" points to the fact that first impressions matter.

First impressions are enduring because of the **primacy effect**, which leads us to place more value on the first information we receive about a person.

The **recency effect** leads us to put more weight on the most recent impression we have of a person's communication over earlier impressions.

We make first impressions based on a variety of factors, including physical and environmental characteristics.

- **Sight.** People in different cultures "read" art in different ways, differing in terms of where they start to look at an image and the types of information they perceive and process.
- **Sound.** "Atonal" music in some Asian cultures is unpleasing; it is uncomfortable to people who aren't taught that these combinations of sounds are pleasing.
- **Touch.** In some cultures it would be very offensive for a man to touch— even tap on the shoulder—a woman who isn't a relative.
- **Taste.** Tastes for foods vary greatly around the world. "Stinky tofu," which is a favorite snack of people in Taipei, Taiwan's famous night market, would likely be very off-putting in terms of taste and smell to many foreign tourists.
- **Smell.** While US Americans spend considerable effort to mask natural body odor, which we typically find unpleasant, with soaps, sprays, and lotions, some other cultures would not find unpleasant or even notice what we consider "b.o." Those same cultures may find a US American's "clean" (soapy, perfumed, deodorized) smell unpleasant.

Personality refers to a person's general way of thinking, feeling, and behaving based on underlying motivations and impulses.

The Big Five Personality Traits

- **Extraversion.** Refers to a person's interest in interacting with others.
- **Agreeableness.** Refers to a person's level of trustworthiness and friendliness.
- **Conscientiousness.** Refers to a person's level of self-organization and Motivation
- **Neuroticism.** Refers to a person's level of negative thoughts regarding himself or herself.
- **Openness.** Refers to a person's willingness to consider new ideas and perspectives.

Key Terms

- Perception
- Perception Process
- Attribution
- Fundamental attribution error
- Self-serving bias
- selective attention
- selective distortion
- halo and horn effects
- Personality
- personality traits
- The Big Five Personality Traits
- primacy effect
- recency effect

A PDF of this Perception Study Guide is available for download here.

ACTIVITY: DIMENSIONS OF SELF

Identify at least 9 of the following principles for yourself in the map:

- **Racial Identity**: your identification with a particular racial group or groups
- **National Identity**: your citizenship(s)Ethnic Identity: your identification with a particular group
- **Gender Identity**: how and to what extent you identify with the social constructs of masculinity and femininity
- **Sexual Identity**: which of the various categories of sexuality one identifies with
- **Age Identity**: combination of how your feel about your age as well as what others understand age to mean
- **Social Class Identity**: your perception of where you fit in the informal ranking of people based on income, education, occupation etc.
- **Religious Identity**: your identification as defined by your spiritual beliefs
- **Disability Identity**: your identification as defined by a physical or emotional impairment
- **Roles**: the different roles you play (mom, student, secretary etc)
- **Perception Checking**: Conduct at least two interviews (one family, one friend) and discover how they "see you". Discover how close (or far) from your self concept their perceptions are to yours. You are only asking for "attributes" here. Make sure you understand the text regarding self concept. For example, if you see yourself as shy, does your best friend think you are shy? Or extroverted?

Be creative and have fun discovering YOU!

Your self map can be created using any basic word processing software by inserting a picture, and then using text boxes to group your self profile attributes. If you like to draw, you may scan your drawing and upload as well.

Click on the link for the Dimensions of Self Activity found in Week 4 to submit your assignment.

Grading

- Nine Applied Principles: 36 pts. (4 pts. each*)
- Clarity, Neatness and Creativity: 14 pts.
- Total: 50 points

* Dimensions of self must be categorized correctly under each principle in order to achieve the full points for each principle.

PERCEPTION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click “Check Your Understanding” to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three “Maybe”/”Probably”/”Definitely” options to see if you were correct.
- Click “Next” to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION

VERBAL COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
After reading this chapter you should be able to: • Define verbal communication and explain its main characteristics. • Understand the three qualities of symbols. • Describe the rules governing verbal communication. • Explain the differences between written and spoken communication. • Describe the functions of verbal communication.

"Consciousness can't evolve any faster than language" – Terence McKenna

Imagine for a moment that you have no language with which to communicate. It's hard to imagine isn't it? It's probably even harder to imagine that with all of the advancements we have at our disposal today, there are people in our world who actually do not have, or cannot use, language to communicate.

Nearly 25 years ago, the Nicaraguan government started bringing deaf children together from all over the country in an attempt to educate them. These children had spent their lives in remote places and had no contact with other deaf people. They had never learned a language and could not understand their teachers or each other. Likewise, their teachers could not understand them. Shortly after bringing these students together, the teachers noticed that the students communicated with each other in what appeared to be an organized fashion: they had literally brought together the individual gestures they used at home and composed them into a new language. Although the teachers still did not understand what the kids were saying, they were astonished at what they were witnessing—the birth of a new language in the late 20th century! This was an unprecedented discovery.

In 1986 American linguist Judy Kegl went to Nicaragua to find out what she could learn from these children without language. She contends that our brains are open to language until the age of 12 or 13, and then language becomes difficult to learn. She quickly discovered approximately 300 people in Nicaragua who did not have language and says, "They are invaluable to research – among the only people on Earth who can provide clues to the beginnings of human communication." To access the full transcript, view the following link: CBS News: Birth of a Language.

Adrien Perez, one of the early deaf students who formed this new language (referred to as Nicaraguan Sign Language), says that without verbal communication, "You can't express your feelings. Your thoughts may be there but you can't get them out. And you can't get new thoughts in." As one of the few people on earth who has experienced life with and without verbal communication, his comments speak to the heart of communication: it is the essence of who we are and how we understand our world. We use it to form our identities, initiate and maintain relationships, express our needs and wants, construct and shape world-views, and achieve personal goals (Pelley).

In this chapter, we want to provide and explain our definition of verbal communication, highlight the differences between written and spoken verbal communication, and demonstrate how verbal communication functions in our lives.

DEFINING VERBAL COMMUNICATION

When people ponder the word communication, they often think about the act of talking. We rely on verbal communication to exchange messages with one another and develop as individuals. The term verbal communication often evokes the idea of spoken communication, but written communication is also part of verbal communication. Reading this book you are decoding the authors' written verbal communication in order to learn more about communication. Let's explore the various components of our definition of verbal communication and examine how it functions in our lives.

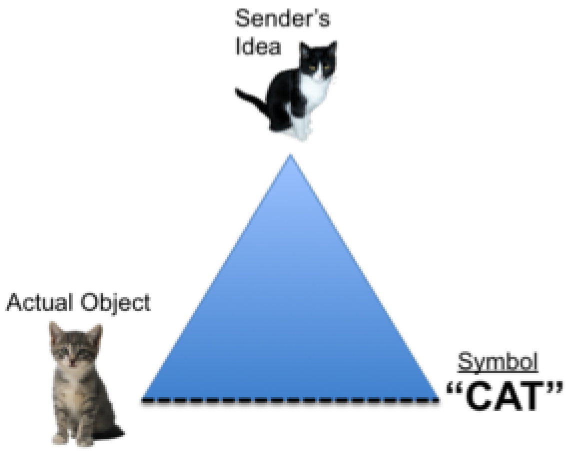
Verbal communication is about language, both written and spoken. In general, verbal communication refers to our use of words while nonverbal communication refers to communication that occurs through means other than words, such as body language, gestures, and silence. Both verbal and nonverbal communication can be spoken and written. Many people mistakenly assume that verbal communication refers only to spoken communication. However, you will learn that this is not the case. Let's say you tell a friend a joke and he or she laughs in response. Is the laughter verbal or nonverbal communication? Why? As laughter is not a word we would consider this vocal act as a form of nonverbal communication. For simplification, the box below highlights the kinds of communication that fall into the various categories. You can find many definitions of verbal communication in our literature, but for this text, we define **Verbal Communication** as *an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning.* Let's examine each component of this definition in detail.

	Verbal Communication	Nonverbal Communication
Oral	Spoken Language	Laughing, Crying, Coughing, etc.
Non Oral	Written Language/Sign Language	Gestures, Body Language, etc.

A System of Symbols

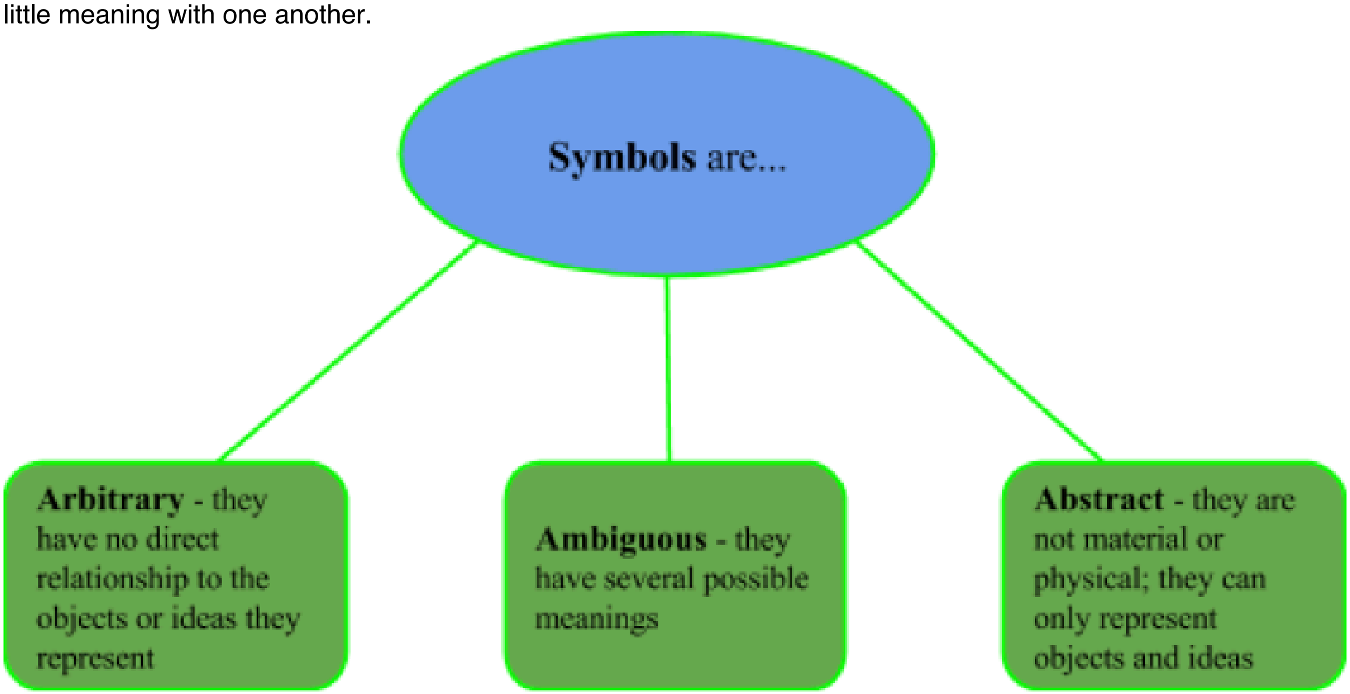
Symbols are *arbitrary representations of thoughts, ideas, emotions, objects, or actions used to encode and decode meaning* (Nelson & Kessler Shaw). Symbols stand for, or represent, something else. For example, there is nothing inherent about calling a cat a cat.

Rather, English speakers have agreed that these symbols (words), whose components (letters) are used in a particular order each time, stand for both the actual object, as well as our interpretation of that object. This idea is illustrated by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richard's triangle of meaning. The word "cat" is not the actual cat. Nor does it have any direct connection to an actual cat. Instead, it is a symbolic representation of our idea of a cat, as indicated by the line going from the word "cat" to the speaker's idea of "cat" to the actual object.



Symbols have three distinct qualities: they are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. Notice that the picture of the cat on the left side of the triangle more closely represents a real cat than the word "cat." However, we do not use pictures as language, or verbal communication. Instead, we use words to represent our ideas. This example demonstrates our agreement that the word "cat" represents or stands for a real cat AND our idea of a cat. The symbols we use are **arbitrary** and have *no direct relationship to the objects or ideas they represent*. We generally consider communication successful when we reach agreement on the meanings of the symbols we use (Duck).

Not only are symbols arbitrary, they are **ambiguous** — that is, they have *several possible meanings*. Imagine your friend tells you she has an apple on her desk. Is she referring to a piece of fruit or her computer? If a friend says that a person he met is cool, does he mean that person is cold or awesome? The meanings of symbols change over time due to changes in social norms, values, and advances in technology. You might be asking, "If symbols can have multiple meanings then how do we communicate and understand one another?" We are able to communicate because there are a finite number of possible meanings for our symbols, a range of meanings which the members of a given language system agree upon. Without an agreed-upon system of symbols, we could share relatively little meaning with one another.



A simple example of ambiguity can be represented by one of your classmates asking a simple question to the teacher during a lecture where she is showing PowerPoint slides: "can you go to the last slide please?" The teacher is half way through the presentation. Is the student asking if the teacher can go back to the previous slide? Or does the student really want the lecture to be over with and is insisting that the teacher jump to the final slide of the presentation? Chances are the student missed a point on the previous slide and would like to see it again to quickly take notes. However, suspense may have overtaken the student and they may have a desire to see the final slide. Even a simple word like "last" can be ambiguous and open to more than one interpretation.

The verbal symbols we use are also **abstract**, meaning that, *words are not material or physical. A certain level of abstraction is inherent in the fact that symbols can only represent objects and ideas*. This abstraction allows us to use a phrase like "the public" in a broad way to mean all the people in the United States rather than having to distinguish among all the diverse groups that make up the U.S. population. Similarly, in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* book series, wizards and witches call the non-magical population on earth "muggles" rather than having to define all the separate cultures of muggles. Abstraction is helpful when you want to communicate complex concepts in a simple way. However, the more abstract the language, the greater potential there is for confusion.

Rule-Governed

Verbal communication is **rule-governed**. *We must follow agreed-upon rules to make sense of the symbols we share*. Let's take another look at our example of the word cat. What would happen if there were no rules for using the symbols (letters) that make up this word? If placing these symbols in a proper order was not important, then cta, tac, tca, act, or atc could all mean cat. Even worse, what if you could use any three letters to refer to cat? Or still worse, what if there were no rules and anything could represent cat? Clearly, it's important that we have rules to govern our verbal communication. There are four general rules for verbal communication, involving the sounds, meaning, arrangement, and use of symbols.

Case In Point

Sounds and Letters: A Poem for English Students

When in English class we speak,
Why is break not rhymed with freak?
Will you tell me why it's true
That we say sew, but also few?
When a poet writes a verse
Why is horse not rhymed with worse?
Beard sounds not the same as heard
Lord sounds not the same as word
Cow is cow, but low is low
Shoe is never rhymed with toe.
Think of nose and dose and lose
Think of goose, but then of choose.
Confuse not comb with tomb or bomb,
Doll with roll, or home with some.
We have blood and food and good.
Mould is not pronounced like could.
There's pay and say, but paid and said.
"I will read", but "I have read".
Why say done, but gone and lone –
Is there any reason known?
To summarise, it seems to me
Sounds and letters disagree.
Taken from:http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Ideas/Fun/Wordplay.htm

- **Phonology** is *the study of speech sounds*. The pronunciation of the word cat comes from the rules governing how letters sound, especially in relation to one another. The context in which words are spoken may provide answers for how they should be pronounced. When we don't follow phonological rules, confusion results. One way to understand and apply phonological rules is to use syntactic and pragmatic rules to clarify phonological rules.

- **Semantic rules** help us understand *the difference in meaning between the word cat and the word dog*. Instead of each of these words meaning any four-legged domestic pet, we use each word to specify what four-legged domestic pet we are talking about. You've probably used these words to say things like, "I'm a cat person" or "I'm a dog person." Each of these statements provides insight into what the sender is trying to communicate. The Case in Point, "A Poem for English Students," not only illustrates the idea of phonology, but also semantics. Even though many of the words are spelled the same, their meanings vary depending on how they are pronounced and in what context they are used. We attach meanings to words; meanings are not inherent in words themselves. As you've been reading, words (symbols) are arbitrary and attain meaning only when people give them meaning. While we can always look to a dictionary to find a *standardized definition of a word*, or its **denotative meaning**, meanings do not always follow standard, agreed-upon definitions when used in various contexts. For example, think of the word "sick." The denotative definition of the word is ill or unwell. However, **connotative meanings**, *the meanings we assign based on our experiences and beliefs*, are quite varied. Sick can have a connotative meaning that describes something as good or awesome as opposed to its literal meaning of illness, which usually has a negative association. The denotative and connotative definitions of "sick" are in total contrast of one another which can cause confusion. Think about an instance where a student is asked by their parent about a friend at school. The student replies that the friend is "sick." The parent then asks about the new teacher at school and the student describes the teacher as "sick" as well. The parent must now ask for clarification as they do not know if the teacher is in bad health, or is an excellent teacher, and if the friend of their child is ill or awesome.

- **Syntactics** is *the study of language structure and symbolic arrangement*. Syntactics focuses on the rules we use to combine words into meaningful sentences and statements. We speak and write according to agreed-upon syntactic rules to keep meaning coherent and understandable. Think about this sentence: "The pink and purple elephant flapped its wings and flew out the window." While the content of this sentence is fictitious and unreal, you can understand and visualize it because it follows syntactic rules for language structure.
- **Pragmatics** is *the study of how people actually use verbal communication*. For example, as a student you probably speak more formally to your professors than to your peers. It's likely that you make different word choices when you speak to your parents than you do when you speak to your friends. Think of the words "bowel movements," "poop," "crap," and "shit." While all of these words have essentially the same denotative meaning, people make choices based on context and audience regarding which word they feel comfortable using. These differences illustrate the pragmatics of our verbal communication. Even though you use agreed-upon symbolic systems and follow phonological, syntactic, and semantic rules, you apply these rules differently in different contexts. Each communication context has different rules for "appropriate" communication. We are trained from a young age to communicate "appropriately" in different social contexts.

It is only through an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols that we can exchange verbal communication in an effective manner. Without agreement, rules, and symbols, verbal communication would not work. The reality is, after we learn language in school, we don't spend much time consciously thinking about all of these rules, we simply use them. However, rules keep our verbal communication structured in ways that make it useful for us to communicate more effectively.

Communication Now

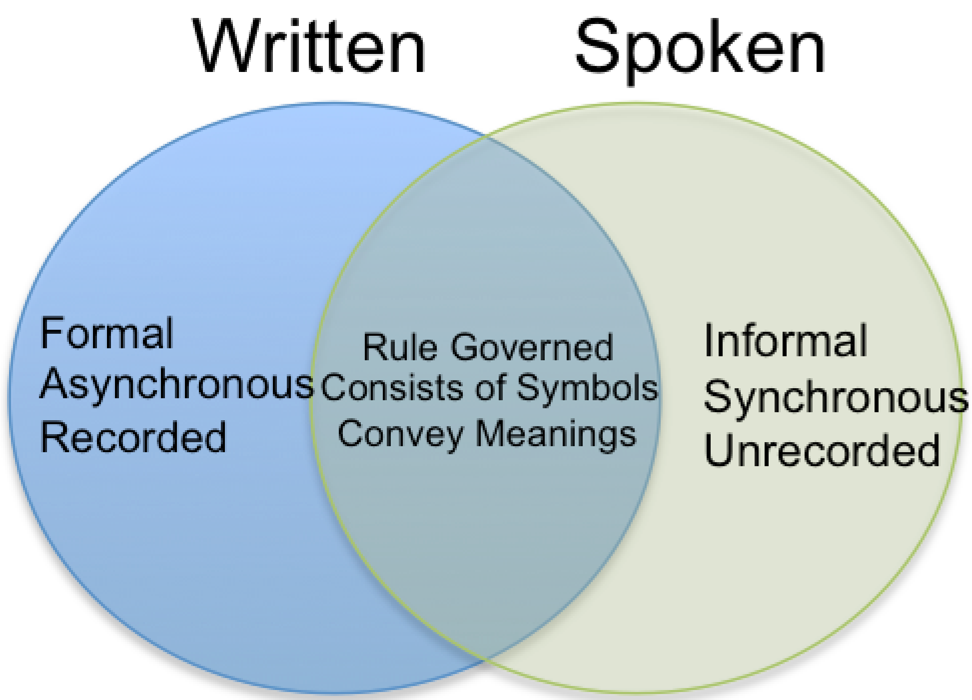
Look It Up

We all know we can look up words in the dictionary, such as Webster's Dictionary. When we do this, we are looking up the Denotative Meaning of words. However, given that there are so many Connotative Meanings of words, we now have a resource to look up those meanings as well. Urban Dictionary is a resource for people to find out how words that have certain denotative meanings are used connotatively. Go ahead, give it a try!

SPOKEN VERSUS WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

What's the Difference?

While both spoken and written communication function as agreed-upon rule-governed systems of symbols used to convey meaning, there are enough differences in pragmatic rules between writing and speaking to justify discussing some of their differences. Imagine for a moment that you're a college student who desperately needs money. Rather than looking for a job you decide that you're going to ask your parents for the money you need to make it through the end of the semester. Now, you have a few choices for using verbal communication to do this. You might choose to call your parents or talk to them in person. You may take a different approach and write them a letter or send them an email. You can probably identify your own list of pros and cons for each of these approaches. But really, what's the difference between writing and talking in these situations? Let's look at four of the major differences between the two: 1) formal versus informal, 2) synchronous versus asynchronous, 3) recorded versus unrecorded, and 4) privacy.



Case In Point

Informal versus Formal Communication

Text VersionFYI… we're meeting on friday. wanna go to the office party after? its byob so bring w/e you want. Last years was sooo fun. Your dancing made everyone lol! hope to see ya there ?
-T
Letter Version

Ann,
For your information, we are having a meeting on Friday, November 6th. Afterwards, there will be an office party. Do you want to go? It will be a Bring Your Own Beverage party, so feel welcome to bring whatever you like. Last year's was so fun, your dancing made everyone laugh out loud!
I hope to see you there,
Tesia

The first difference between spoken and written communication is that we generally use spoken communication **informally** while we use written communication **formally**. Consider how you have been trained to talk versus how you have been trained to write. Have you ever turned in a paper to a professor that "sounds" like how you talk? How was that paper graded compared to one that follows the more formal structures and rules of the English language? In western societies like the U.S., we follow more formal standards for our written communication than our spoken communication. With a few exceptions, we generally tolerate verbal mistakes (e.g. "should of" rather than "should have") and qualifiers (e.g. "uh" "um" "you know," etc.) in our speech, but not our writing. Consider a written statement such as, "I should of, um, gone and done somethin' 'bout it' but, um, I I didn't do nothin'." In most written contexts, this is considered unacceptable written verbal communication. However, most of us would not give much thought to hearing this statement spoken aloud by someone. While we may certainly notice mistakes in another's speech, we are generally not inclined to correct those mistakes as we would in written contexts. Even though most try to speak without qualifiers and verbal mistakes, there is something to be said about those utterances in our speech while engaging in an interpersonal conversation. According to John Du Bois, the way two people use utterances and structure their sentences during conversation creates an opportunity to find new meaning within the language and develop "parallelism" which can lead to a natural feeling of liking or sympathy in the conversation partner. So, even though it may seem like formal language is valued over informal, this informal language that most of us use when we speak inadvertently contributes to bringing people closer together.

While writing is generally more formal and speech more informal, there are some exceptions to the rule, especially with the growing popularity of new technologies. For the first time in history, we are now seeing exceptions in our uses of speech and writing. Using text messaging and email, people are engaging in forms of writing using more informal rule structures, making their writing "sound" more like conversation. Likewise, this style of writing often attempts to incorporate the use of "nonverbal" communication (known as emoticons) to accent the writing. Consider the two examples in the box. One is an example of written correspondence using text while the other is a roughly equivalent version following the more formal written guidelines of a letter.

Notice the informality in the text version. While it is readable, it reads as if Tesia was actually speaking in a conversation rather than writing a document. Have you noticed that when you turn in written work that has been written in email programs, the level of formality of the writing decreases? However, when students use a word processing program like Microsoft Word, the writing tends to follow formal rules more often. As we continue using new technologies to communicate, new rule systems for those mediums will continue altering the rule systems in other forms of communication.

The second difference between spoken and written forms of verbal communication is that spoken communication or speech is almost entirely synchronous while written communication is almost entirely asynchronous. Synchronous communication is *communication that takes place in real time*, such as a conversation with a friend. When we are in conversation and even in public speaking situations, immediate feedback and response from the receiver is the rule. For instance, when you say "hello" to someone, you expect that the person will respond immediately. You do not expect that the person will get back to you sometime later in response to your greeting. In contrast, asynchronous communication is *communication that is not immediate and occurs over longer periods of time*, such as letters, email, or even text messages at times. When someone writes a book, letter, email, or text, there is no expectation from the sender that the receiver will provide an immediate response. Instead, the expectation is that the receiver will receive the message, and respond to it when they have time. This is one of the reasons people sometimes choose to send an email instead of calling another person, because it allows the receiver to respond when they have time rather than "putting them on the spot" to respond right away.

Just as new technologies are changing the rules of formality and informality, they are also creating new situations that break the norms of written communication as asynchronous and spoken communication as synchronous. Voicemail has turned the telephone and our talk into asynchronous forms of communication. Even though we speak in these contexts, we understand that if we leave a message on voicemail we will not get an immediate reply. Instead, we understand that the receiver will call us back at their convenience. In this example, even though the channel of communication is speaking, there is no expectation for immediate response to the sent message. Similarly, texting is a form of written communication that follows the rules of spoken conversation in that it functions as synchronous communication. When you type a text to someone you know, the expectation is that they will respond almost immediately. The lines continue to blur when video chats were introduced as communication technologies. These are a form of synchronous communication that mimics face-to-face interaction and in some cases even have an option to send written messages to others. The possible back and forth between written and spoken communication has allowed many questions to arise about rules and meaning behind interactions. Maria Sindoni explains in her article, "Through the Looking Glass" that even though people are having a synchronous conversation and are sharing meaning through their words, they are ultimately in different rooms and communicating through a machine which makes the meaning of their exchanges more ambiguous.

Verbal Communication Then

Historians have come up with a number of criteria people should have in order to be considered a civilization. One of these is writing, specifically for the purposes of governing and pleasure. Written verbal communication is used for literature, poetry, religion, instruction, recording history and governing. Influential written verbal communication from history includes:

1. The *Ten Commandments* that Jews used as a guide to their faith.
2. *Law Code of Hammurabi* which was the recorded laws of the Ancient Babylonians.
3. The *Quran* which is core to the Islam faith.
4. The *Bible* which is followed by Christians.
5. The *Declaration of Independence* which declared the U.S. independent from Britain.
6. *Mao's Little Red Book* which was used to promote communist rule in China.

-Global Virtual Classroom

The third difference between spoken and written communication is that written communication is generally *archived and recorded for later retrieval*, while spoken communication is generally not recorded. When we talk with friends, we do not tend to take notes or tape record our conversations. Instead, conversations tend to be ongoing and catalogued into our personal memories rather than recorded in an easily retrievable written format. On the other hand, it is quite easy to reference written works such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and electronic sources such as web pages and emails for long periods after the sender has written them. New communication applications like Vine add to the confusion. This app allows users to record themselves and post it to their profile. This would be considered a form of spoken communication, yet it is archived and asynchronous so others can look at the videos years after the original posting. To make the matter more complicated, Snapchat's many functions come into play. On Snapchat you have the option of sending videos or photos that are traditionally not archived since the sender decides how long the receiver has to view it, then will theoretically disappear forever. Most recently with the addition of My Story, users of the app can post a picture for 24 hours and have their friends view it multiple times. The feeling of technological communication not being archived can lead to a false sense of privacy, which can lead to some negative consequences.

As with the previous rules we've discussed, new technologies are changing many of the dynamics of speech and writing. Just take a look at the "Verbal Communication Then" sidebar and see how far we have come. For example, many people use email and texting informally like spoken conversation, as an informal form of verbal communication. Because of this, they often expect that these operate and function like a spoken conversation with the belief that it is a private conversation between the sender and receiver. However, many people have gotten into trouble because of what they have "spoken" about others through email and text. The corporation Epson (a large computer electronics manufacturer) was at the center of one of the first lawsuits regarding the recording and archiving of employees' use of email correspondence. Employees at Epson assumed their email was private and therefore used it to say negative things about their bosses. What they didn't know was their bosses were saving and printing these email messages, and using the content of these messages to make personnel decisions. When employees sued Epson, the courts ruled in favor of the corporation, stating that they had every right to retain employee email for their records.

While most of us have become accustomed to using technologies such as texting and instant messaging in ways that are similar to our spoken conversations, we must also consider the repercussions of using communication technologies in this fashion because they are often archived and not private. We can see examples of negative outcomes from archived messages in recent years through many highly publicized sexting scandals. One incident that was very pertinent was former congressman and former candidate for Mayor of New York, Anthony Weiner, and a series of inappropriate exchanges with women using communication technologies. Because of his position in power and high media coverage, his privacy was very minimal. Since he had these conversations in a setting that is recorded, he was not able to keep his anonymity or confidentiality in the matter. These acts were seen as inappropriate by the public, so there were both professional and personal repercussions for Weiner. Both the Epson and Anthony Weiner incidents, even though happening in different decades, show the consequences when assumed private information becomes public.

As you can see, there are a number of differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication. Both forms are rule-governed as our definition points out, but the rules are often different for the use of these two types of verbal communication. However, it's apparent that as new technologies provide more ways for us to communicate, many of our traditional rules for using both speech and writing will continue to blur as we try to determine the "most appropriate" uses of these new communication technologies. As Chapter 2 pointed out, practical problems of the day will continue to guide the directions our field takes as we continue to study the ways technology changes our communication. As more changes continue to occur in the ways we communicate with one another, more avenues of study will continue to open for those interested in being part of the development of how communication is conducted. Now that we have looked in detail at our definition of verbal communication, and the differences between spoken and written forms of verbal communication, let's explore what our use of verbal communication accomplishes for us as humans.

FUNCTIONS OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Our existence is intimately tied to the communication we use, and verbal communication serves many functions in our daily lives. We use verbal communication to define reality, organize, think, and shape attitudes.

Case In Point

Being able to communicate effectively through verbal communication is extremely important. No matter what you plan to do as a career, effective verbal communication helps you in all aspects of your life. Former President Bush was often chided (and even chided himself) for the verbal communication mistakes he made. Here is a list of his "Top 10" according to About.com.

10) "Families is where our nation finds hope, where wings take dream." —LaCrosse, Wis., Oct. 18, 2000

9) "I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family." —Greater Nashua, N.H., Jan. 27, 2000

8) "I hear there's rumors on the Internets that we're going to have a draft." —second presidential debate, St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 8, 2004

7) "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully." —Saginaw, Mich., Sept. 29, 2000

6) "You work three jobs? … Uniquely American, isn't it? I mean, that is fantastic that you're doing that." —to a divorced mother of three, Omaha, Nebraska, Feb. 2005

5) "Too many good docs are getting out of the business. Too many OB-GYNs aren't able to practice their love with women all across this country." —Poplar Bluff, Mo., Sept. 6, 2004

4) "They misunderestimated me." —Bentonville, Ark., Nov. 6, 2000

3) "Rarely is the questioned asked: Is our children learning?" —Florence, S.C., Jan. 11, 2000

2) "Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we." —Washington, D.C., Aug. 5, 2004

1) "There's an old saying in Tennessee — I know it's in Texas, probably in Tennessee — that says, fool me once, shame on — shame on you. Fool me — you can't get fooled again." —Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 17, 2002

- ***Verbal communication helps us define reality.*** We use verbal communication to define everything from ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people (Blumer). Think about how you define yourself. You may define yourself as a student, employee, son/daughter, parent, advocate, etc. You might also define yourself as moral, ethical, a night-owl, or a procrastinator. Verbal communication is how we label and define what we experience in our lives. These definitions are not only descriptive, but evaluative. Imagine you are at the beach with a few of your friends. The day starts out sunny and beautiful, but the tides quickly turn when rain clouds appeared overhead. Because of the unexpected rain, you define the day as disappointing and ugly. Suddenly, your friend comments, "What are you talking about, man? Today is beautiful!" Instead of focusing on the weather, he might be referring to the fact that he was having a good day by spending quality time with his buddies on the beach, rain or shine. This statement reflects that we have choices for how we use verbal communication to define our realities. We make choices about what to focus on and how to define what we experience and its impact on how we understand and live in our world.

- ***Verbal communication helps us organize complex ideas and experiences into meaningful categories.*** Consider the number of things you experience with your five primary senses every day. It is impossible to comprehend everything we encounter. We use verbal communication to organize seemingly random events into understandable categories to make sense of our experiences. For example, we all organize the people in our lives into categories. We label these people with terms like, friends, acquaintances, romantic partners, family, peers, colleagues, and strangers. We highlight certain qualities, traits, or scripts to organize outwardly haphazard events into meaningful categories to establish meaning for our world.

- ***Verbal communication helps us think.*** Without verbal communication, we would not function as thinking beings. The ability most often used to distinguish humans from other animals is our ability to reason and communicate. With language, we are able to reflect on the past, consider the present, and ponder the future. We develop our memories using language. Try recalling your first conscious memories. Chances are, your first conscious memories formed around the time you started using verbal communication. The example we used at the beginning of the chapter highlights what a world would be like for humans without language. In the 2011 *Scientific American* article, "How Language Shapes Thought," the author, Lera Boroditsky, claims that people "rely on language even when doing simple things like distinguishing patches of color, counting dots on a screen or orienting in a small room: my colleagues and I have found that limiting people's ability to access their language faculties fluently–by giving them a competing demanding verbal task such as repeating a news report, for instance–impairs their ability to perform these tasks." This may be why it is difficult for some people to multitask – especially when one task involves speaking and the other involves thinking.

- ***Verbal communication helps us shape our attitudes about our world.*** The way you use language shapes your attitude about the world around you. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf developed the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to explain that language determines thought. People who speak different languages, or use language differently, think differently (Whorf; Sapir; Mandelbaum; Maxwell; Perlovsky; Lucy; Simpson; Hussein). The argument suggests that if a native English speaker had the exact same experiences in their life, but grew up speaking Chinese instead of English, their worldview would be different because of the different symbols used to make sense of the world. When you label, describe, or evaluate events in your life, you use the symbols of the language you speak. Your use of these symbols to represent your reality influences your perspective and attitude about the world. So, it makes sense then that the more sophisticated your repertoire of symbols is, the more sophisticated your world view can be for you. While the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is highly respected, there have been many scholarly and philosophical challenges to the viewpoint that language is what shapes our worldview. For example, Agustin Vicente and Fernando Martinez-Manrique did a study regarding the "argument of explicitness," which has two premises. The first premise is that "the instrument of thought must be explicit" in order for thought and language to be connected; the second is that natural languages – languages that humans can learn cognitively as they develop – are not explicit (Vicente and Martinez-Manrique, 384). The authors conclude that thoughts "demand a kind of completeness and stability of meaning that natural language sentences, being remarkably underdetermined, cannot provide" (Vicente and Martinez-Manrique, 397). It makes sense that something as arbitrary and complicated as the connection between thought and language is still being debated today.

While we have overly-simplified the complexities of verbal communication for you in this chapter, when it comes to its actual use—accounting for the infinite possibilities of symbols, rules, contexts, and meanings—studying how humans use verbal communication is daunting. When you consider the complexities of verbal communication, it is a wonder we can communicate effectively at all. But, verbal communication is not the only channel humans use to communicate. In the next chapter we will examine the other most common channel of communication we use: nonverbal communication.

CONSTRUCTING CLEAR AND VIVID MESSAGES

Use Simple Language

When asked to write a speech or a paper, many of us pull out the thesaurus (or call it up on our computer) when we want to replace a common word with one that we believe is more elevated or intellectual. There are certainly times when using a thesaurus is a good thing, but if you're pulling that big book out to turn a simple idea into one that *sounds* more complex, put it back on the shelf. Good speakers use simple language for two primary reasons.

First, audiences can sense a fake. When you turn in your term paper with words that aren't typically used by people in everyday conversation and those words are simply replacing the common words we all use, your instructor knows what you've done. Part of having strong credibility as a speaker is convincing your audience of your sincerity, both in terms of your ideas and your character. When you elevate your language simply for the sake of using big words when small words will do, audiences may perceive you as insincere, and that perception might also transfer onto your message. In addition, the audience's attention can drift to questions about your character and veracity, making it less likely that they are paying attention to your message.

Second, using a long word when a short one will do inhibits your ability to communicate clearly. Your goal as a speaker should be to be as clear as you possibly can. Using language that makes it more difficult for your audience to understand your message can negatively impact your ability to get a clear message across to your audience. If your audience can't understand your vocabulary, they can't understand your message.

A good example of a speaker whose communication was obstructed by language use is Former Secretary of State Alexander Haig. Some examples of his problematic language choice include: “careful caution,” “epistemologically wise,” “exacerbating restraint,” “saddle myself with a statistical fence,” and “definitizing an answer.” (((Note: Time.com (1981, February 23). “Haigledygook and secretaryspeak.” Retrieved from http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,949069,00.html))) Chances are good that after reading these phrases over and over you still don’t understand him. You can imagine how much harder it would be to understand Haig’s message as it was *delivered orally*—spoken in an instant and then gone! Haig’s language clouds rather than clarifies ideas, but it is easy to make sure your message gets across to the audience by avoiding big words that are not necessary.

“Al Haig speaks to press 1981” by Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Public domain.

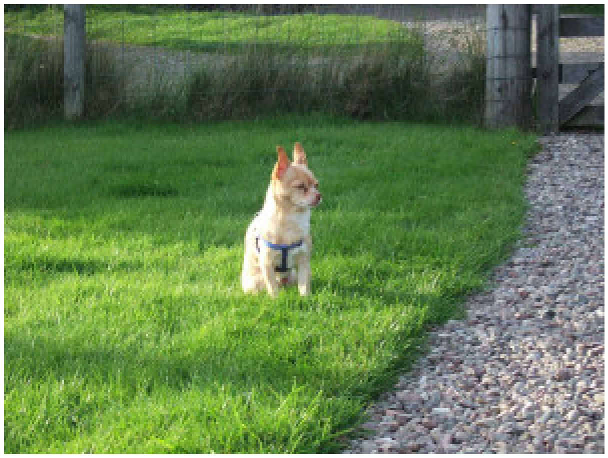
If you’re paying attention to the language strategies discussed in this chapter, you’ll find that you won’t need to pull out that thesaurus to impress your audience—your command of language will make that positive impression for you. In addition, when you use language that your audience expects to hear and is used to hearing you may find that the audience perceives you as more sincere than someone who uses elevated language and sounds pretentious. Remember: It is rarely the case that you should use a long word when a short one will do.

> Most of the fundamental ideas of science are essentially simple, and may, as a rule, be expressed in a language comprehensible to everyone. – Albert Einstein

Use Concrete and Precise Language

How many times a week do you say something to someone only to have them misunderstand? You believe that you were very clear and the person you were talking to thought that she understood you perfectly, and yet you both ended up with a problem we often deem “miscommunication.” You said you’d “call later” and your friend got angry because you didn’t. By “later” you probably meant one time frame while your friend defined that time frame very differently. Often in these cases both people are right. You *were* perfectly clear and your friend *did* understand you perfectly—so how did the miscommunication happen?

“German Shepherd” by Magnus Bråth. CC-BY.



"Chopper Bothy 04" by John Hudson. CC-BY-NC-ND.

One of the primary reasons we miscommunicate is because language is an abstract phenomenon. Meanings exist in people's understandings, not the words we use. Therefore, if you're telling a story about "a dog" you could be talking about a German Shepherd while the person you're talking with is envisioning a Chihuahua. If you do not use concrete language, you risk at least sending a weaker or different message than you intended. When speaking, you want to use the concrete term "German shepherd" over the more abstract term "dog."

When you are writing your speech, look for words that you might need to define more clearly. Instead of talking about "bad weather," tell the audience that it was raining or that hail the size of golf balls was coming down. "Bad weather" means different things to different people. In discussing the aftermath of a natural disaster, rather than saying "a lot of people were affected" say, "25,000 citizens, 1 in every 5, were affected by this disaster." "A lot" means different things to different people. *Most words* mean different things to different people, so use concrete language over abstract words to better your chances of communicating your message as intended.

You also want to make sure that you're precise. Someone might call a sweater "green" while someone else calls it "teal." Even though those are just differences in perception not purposeful or mindless communication meant to be inaccurate, not being clear about exactly which color you're talking about can lead to confusion. It is best to remember to be as precise as possible when choosing words. Don't say something was "big"—tell us its weight or height, and to be sure you're communicating clearly compare that weigh or height to something we understand. So, instead of saying "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump were really big" say "The piles of garbage I saw in the local dump weighed about 10,000 pounds, which is equivalent to the weight of the average female elephant." The more precise you are the less likely it is that your audience will misinterpret your message.

> Our business is infested with idiots who try to impress by using pretentious jargon. – David Ogilvy

Another way to avoid language that obstructs communication is to avoid the use of jargon. Jargon is the "specialized language of a group or profession." (((Note: Hamilton, G. (2008). Public speaking for college and career, 8th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.))) It is appropriate to use jargon when you know that your audience understands the terms you are using. For example, if you are a computer science major and you are presenting to a group of similarly trained computer science majors, using jargon will help establish your credibility with that audience. Using terms even as basic as "RAM" and "binary code" with a general audience, however, will likely not go over well—you risk confusing the audience rather than informing or persuading them. Even people who can use computers may not know how they work or the technical terms associated with them. So you must be careful to only use jargon when you know your audience will understand it. If you must use jargon while speaking to a general audience, be sure to define your terms and err on the side of over-clarification.

> Slang is a language that rolls up its sleeves, spits on its hands and goes to work. – Carl Sandburg

Finally, another way to avoid confusion is to avoid using slang when it is not appropriate. **Slang** is language that some people might understand but that is not considered acceptable in formal or polite conversation. Slang may be a poor choice for a speaker because some members of your audience may not be familiar with the slang term(s) you use. Slang is often based in a very specific audience, defined by age, region, subculture and the like. If you are speaking to an audience that you know will understand and respond positively, you may choose to include that language in your speech. Otherwise, do not use slang, or you may confuse and frustrate audience members and cause them to lose interest in your speech. In addition, because slang is often not considered appropriate in formal and polite conversation, using it in your speech may communicate negative ideas about you to audience members. Don't let a mindless use of slang negatively impact your audience's perception of you and your message.

"Goth" by Rama. CC-BY-SA.

USING STYLIZED LANGUAGE

Stylized language is language that communicates your meaning clearly, vividly and with flair. Stylized language doesn't just make you sound better; it also helps make your speeches more memorable. Speakers who are thoughtful about using language strategies in their speeches are more memorable as speakers and therefore so too are their messages more unforgettable as well.

Metaphors and Similes

One strategy that promotes vivid language is the use of metaphors. **Metaphors** are comparisons made by speaking of one thing in terms of another. **Similes** are similar to metaphors in how they function; however, similes make comparisons by using the word "like" or "as," whereas metaphors do not. The power of a metaphor is in its ability to create an image that is linked to emotion in the mind of the audience. It is one thing to talk about racial injustice, it is quite another for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to note that people have been "…battered by storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality." Throughout his "I Have a Dream" speech the Reverend Dr. King uses the metaphor of the checking account to make his point.

He notes that the crowd has come to the March on Washington to "cash a check" and claims that America has "defaulted on this promissory note" by giving "the Negro people a bad check, a check that has come back "insufficient funds." By using checking and bank account terms that most people are familiar with, the Reverend Dr. King is able to more clearly communicate what he believes has occurred. In addition, the use of this metaphor acts as a sort of "shortcut." He gets his point across very quickly by comparing the problems of civil rights to the problems of a checking account.

In the same speech the Reverend Dr. King also makes use of similes, which also compare two things but do so using “like” or “as.” In discussing his goals for the Civil Rights movement in his “I Have a Dream” speech, the Reverend Dr. exclaims: “No, no we are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down likewaters and righteousness like a mighty stream.” Similes also help make your message clearer by using ideas that are more concrete for your audience. For example, to give the audience an idea of what a winter day looked like you could note that the “snow looked as solid as pearls.” To communicate sweltering heat you could say that “the tar on the road looked like satin.” A simile most of us are familiar with is the notion of the United States being “like a melting pot” with regard to its diversity. We also often note that a friend or colleague that stays out of conflicts between friends is “like Switzerland.” In each of these instances similes have been used to more clearly and vividly communicate a message.

> Metaphors have a way of holding the most truth in the least space. – Orson Scott Card

Alliteration

Remember challenging yourself or a friend to repeat a tongue twister “five times fast?” Perhaps it was “Sally sold seashells by the seashore” or “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” Tongue twisters are difficult to say to say but very easy to remember. Why? Alliteration. **Alliteration** is the repetition of the initial sounds of words. Alliteration is a useful tool for helping people remember your message, and it’s as simple as taking a few minutes to see if there are ways to reword your speech so that you can add some alliteration— *this* is a great time to use that thesaurus we talked about putting away early in this chapter. Look for alternative words to use that allow for alliteration in your speech. You might consider doing this especially when it comes to the points that you would like your audience to remember most.

> The soul selects her own society. – Emily Dickinson

Antithesis

Antithesis allows you to use contrasting statements in order to make a rhetorical point. Perhaps the most famous example of antithesis comes from the Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy when he stated, “And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” Going back to Reverend Jackson’s “Rainbow Coalition” speech he notes, “I challenge them to put hope in their brains and not dope in their veins.” In each of these cases, the speakers have juxtaposed two competing ideas in one statement to make an argument in order to draw the listener’s attention.

> You’re easy on the eyes — hard on the heart. – Terri Clark

Parallel Structure and Language

Antithesis is often worded using parallel structure or language. Parallel structure is the balance of two or more similar phrases or clauses, and parallel wording is the balance of two or more similar words. The Reverend Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech exemplifies both strategies in action. Indeed, the section where he repeats “I Have a Dream” over and over again is an example of the use of both parallel structure and language. The use of parallel structure and language helps your audience remember without beating them over the head with repetition. If worded and delivered carefully, you can communicate a main point over and over again, as did the Reverend Dr. King, and it doesn’t seem as though you are simply repeating the same phrase over and over. You are often doing just that, of course, but because you are careful with your wording (it should be powerful and creative, not pedantic) and your delivery (the correct use of pause, volumes, and other elements of delivery), the audience often perceives the repetition as dramatic and memorable. The use of parallel language and structure can also help you when you are speaking persuasively. Through the use of these strategies you can create a speech that takes your audience through a series of ideas or arguments that seem to “naturally” build to your conclusion.

Personalized Language

We're all very busy people. Perhaps you've got work, studying, classes, a job, and extracurricular activities to juggle. Because we are all so busy, one problem that speakers often face is trying to get their audience interested in their topic or motivated to care about their argument. A way to help solve this problem is through the use of language that personalizes your topic. Rather than saying, "One might argue" say "You might argue." Rather than saying "This could impact the country in ways we have not yet imagined," say "This could impact your life in ways that you have not imagined." By using language that directly connects your topic or argument to the audience you better your chances of getting your audience to listen and to be persuaded that your subject matter is serious and important to them. Using words like "us," "you," and "we" can be a subtle means of getting your audience to pay attention to your speech. Most people are most interested in things that they believe impact their lives directly—make those connections clear for your audience by using personal language.

"next10, Day1, 11.05.2010" by NEXT Berlin. CC-BY.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL AND ACCURATE LANGUAGE

Language and Ethics

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, language is culturally transmitted—we learn our language from those around us. For most of us this means that we may first learn language from our parents, but as we grow older, other family members, friends, educators and even the media impact our vocabularies and our choices regarding what language we use. Think about a world without language. Quite simply, we'd have no way of participating in our world without it. People constantly produce language to categorize and organize the world.

Think back to our discussion of how language influences your social reality. In my work as a mentor, I tutored a girl in elementary school who had a very difficult time saying the word "lake." I used the word "lake" as part of a homework exercise. What I had not realized was that she had never seen a lake, either in person or in a picture, or, if she had seen a lake no one had pointed to that body of water and called it a "lake." The concept of a "lake" was simply not in *her* reality. No "lakes" existed in her world. This is a key example of how the language that we learn and that we choose to use says something about our social reality.

"Emerald Bay" by Michael. CC-BY.

Consider the above example another way. Let's say that my young friend had seen a lake and knew how to say the word and what the word referred to, but that she had only been privy to people who used the word negatively. If throughout her life "lakes" were discussed as "bad things" to be avoided, she would have a very different perspective on lakes than most people. Switching this example around a little helps illustrate the fact that language is not neutral. Language carries ideas, and while there is often more than one choice in terms of which word to use, often the words from which you are choosing are not equal in terms of the reality that they communicate.

Think about the difference between calling a specific place "the projects" versus calling that same place "public housing." Both phrases refer to a particular geographical space, but calling a neighborhood "the projects" as opposed to "public housing" communicates something very different, and more negative, about this neighborhood. Often students use the words that they hear more commonly used, so referring to "the projects" as opposed to "public housing" usually indicates that they have not thought enough about their word choices or thought about the impact of those choices.

> By and large, language is a tool for concealing the truth. – George Carlin

As this example points out, we have a variety of words from which to choose when constructing a message. Successful speakers recognize that in addition to choosing words that help with clarity and vividness, it is important to think about the connotations associated with one word or the other. When speakers are not careful in terms of word choice in this sense, it is possible to lose credibility with the audience and to create the perception that you are someone that perhaps you are not. If you use "the projects" instead of "public housing," audience members may view you as someone who has negative perceptions of people who live in public housing when you do not feel that way at all. Clearly, not being careful about language choices can be a costly mistake.

But what do these examples have to do with ethics? For our purposes here, there are two ways to think about communication and ethics. First, ethical communication is that which does not unfairly label one thing or another based on personal bias. So, in addition to choosing "public housing" over "the projects," an ethical speaker will choose terms that steer clear from intentional bias. For example, pro-life speakers would refrain from calling "pro-choice" people "pro-abortion" since the basic principle of the "pro- choice" position is that it is up to the person, not society, to choose whether or not an abortion is acceptable. That is a very different position than being "pro-abortion." Indeed, many pro- choice citizens would not choose abortion if faced with an unplanned pregnancy; therefore calling them "pro- abortion" does not reflect the reality of the situation; rather, it is the purposeful and unethical use of one term over the other for emotional impact. Similarly, if a pro-choice person is addressing a crowd where religious organizations are protesting against the legality of abortion, it would not be ethical for the pro-choice speaker to refer to the "anti- abortion" protestors as "religious fanatics." Simply because someone is protesting abortion on religious grounds does not make that person a "religious fanatic," and as in the first example, choosing the latter phrase is another purposeful and unethical use of one term over another for emotional impact.

> Language exerts hidden power, like the moon on the tides. – Rita Mae Brown

A second way to link communication and ethics is to remember that ethical speakers attempt to communicate reality to the best of their ability. Granted, as was noted above, each person's social reality is different, depending on background, influences, and cultural institutions, for example. But regardless of whether you think that a "lake" is a good or bad thing, lakes still exist in reality. Regardless of whether or not you think rocks are useful or not, rocks still exist. So ethical communication also means trying to define or explain your subject in terms that are as closely tied to an objective reality as is possible—it is your best attempt to communicate accurately about your topic. Sexist and heterosexist language are two types of language to be avoided by ethical speakers because each type of language does communicate inaccuracies to the audience.

Sexist and Heterosexist Language

One of the primary means by which speakers regularly communicate inaccurate information is through the use of sexist language. In spite of the fact that the Modern Language Association deemed sexist language as grammatically incorrect back in the 1970s, many people and institutions (including most colleges and universities) still regularly use sexist language in their communication.

An argument I regularly hear from students is that language has "always been sexist." This is, in fact, not true. As Dale Spender notes in her book, *Man Made Language*, until 1746 when John Kirkby formulated his "Eighty Eight Grammatical Rules," the words "they" and "their" were used in sentences for sex-indeterminable sentences. (((Note: Spender, D. (1990). *Man Made Language.* New York: Pandora.))) Kirkby's rule number twenty-one stated that the male sex was more comprehensive than the female and thus argued that "he" was the grammatically correct way to note men *and* women in writing where mixed sexed or sex-indeterminable situations are referred to. (((Note: Spender 1990))) Women were not given equal access to education at this time and thus the male grammarians who filled the halls of the academy and had no incentive to disagree with Mr. Kirkby, accepted his eighty-eight rules in full.

Interestingly though, the general population was not as easily convinced. Perhaps because they were not used to identifying women as men in language or perhaps because it did not make rational sense to do so, the general public ignored rule number twenty-one. Incensed by the continued misuse of "they," male grammarians were influential in the passing of the 1850 Act of Parliament which legally asserted that "he" stood for "she." (((Note: Spender 1990))) Yes, you read correctly. Parliament passed legislation in an effort to promote the use of sexist language. And it worked! Eventually the rule was adhered to by the public and thus we have the regular and rarely challenged use of sexist language. But this use of language was not "natural" or even "normal" for many millennia.

Pretending that we haven't learned about the work of Dale Spender, let's assume that language has "always been sexist." Even if language was always sexist, that does not make the use of sexist language right. We wouldn't make a similar argument about racist language, so that argument isn't any stronger with regard to language that is sexist. It simply isn't acceptable today to use sexist language; and by learning to avoid these common mistakes, you can avoid using language that is grammatically incorrect, unethical, and problematic. See Table 10.1 for examples of sexist and non-sexist language.

Table 10.1: Comparison of Sexist and Gender-Neutral Terms

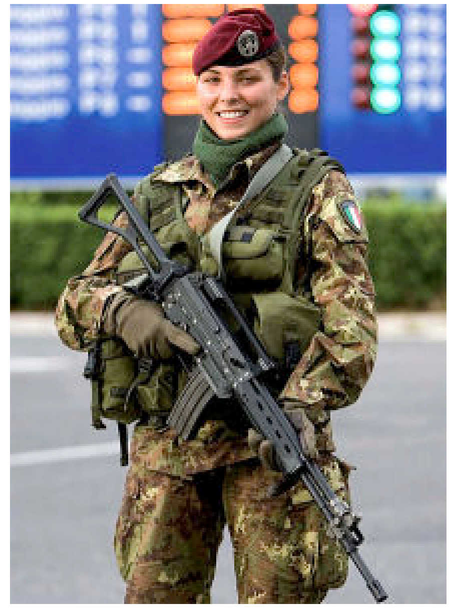
Sexist Terms	Gender-Neutral Terms
Actress	Actor

Table 10.1: Comparison of Sexist and Gender-Neutral Terms	
Sexist Terms	Gender-Neutral Terms
Ballerina	Ballet Dancer
Businessman	Business Person
Chairman	Chairperson
Fireman	Firefighter
Fisherman	Fisher
Mailman/Postman	Mail/Letter Carrier
Male Nurse	Nurse
Policeman	Police Officer
Stewardess	Flight Attendant
Waitress	Server
He (to mean men and women)	He or She, He/She, They
Example: If a student wants to do well, he must study.	Examples: If a student wants to do well, he or she must study. If students want to do well, they must study.

Is your remarkably sexist drivel intentional, or just some horrible mistake? – Yeardley Smith

First, you should avoid the use of what is called the generic “he” or “man,” which is the use of terms such as “mankind” instead of “humankind” or “humanity,” or the use of “man” or “he” to refer to all people. A common response from students with regard to the use of “generic he” is that the word is intended to represent men and women, therefore when it’s used it is not used to be sexist. If it were really the case that people truly recognized in their minds that the term “man” includes women, then we would talk about situations in which “man has difficulty giving birth” (((Note: Spender 1990 p. 156))) or the “impact of menstruation on man’s biology.” Of course, we do not say those things because they simply wouldn’t make sense to us. Perhaps you can now see why the people of the 1700s and 1800s had trouble switching from non-sexist to sexist language—it defied their own common sense just as discussing how “man gets pregnant” defies yours.

Second, you should avoid using man-linked terms, which are terms such as “fireman” or “policemen.” It is appropriate to use these terms when you know that the people you are speaking about are men only, but if you do not know for sure or if you’re talking about groups generally, you should avoid using these types of terms and replace them with “firefighters” and “police officers.” Colleges and universities should replace “freshman” with “first-year students” and so should you. Other, non job-oriented words also suffer from this same problem. People often note that tables need to be “manned” rather than “staffed” and that items are “man-made” instead of “human made” or “handmade.”



“Italian Soldier Olympic Games Turin 2006” by Italian Army. CC-BY.

A final common use of sexist language occurs when people use spotlighting when discussing the occupations of men and women. How often have you heard (or used) a phrase such as “he’s a male nurse” or “that female lawyer?” When we spotlight in these ways, we are pointing out that a person is deviating from the “norm” and implying that someone’s sex is relevant to a particular job. According to Peccei, in the English language there is a very strong tendency to “place the adjective expressing the most ‘defining’ characteristic closest to the noun.” (((Note: Peccei, J. (2003). Language and age. In L. Thomas et. al., *Language, society, and power*, 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge))) Thus, as Turner points out, a phrase like the “old intelligent woman” violates our sense of “correct,” not because there’s anything wrong with the word order grammatically, but because it contradicts our customary way of thinking that values youth over age. (((Note: Peccei 2003))) If you talk about a “male nurse” or a “female cop,” you risk communicating to the audience that you believe the most salient aspect of a particular job is the sex of the person that normally does it, and some audience members may not appreciate that assumption on your part.

The use of sexist language is not just grammatically incorrect; its use is also linked to ethics because it communicates a reality that does not exist—it is *not accurate*. Man-linked language communicates male superiority and that there are more men than women because women are regularly erased linguistically in speech and writing. Man-linked terms and spotlighting communicate that some job activities are appropriate for men but not women and vice versa by putting focus on the sex of a person as linked to their job or activity. Finally, the use of the generic “he” or “man” communicates that men are the norm and women deviate from that norm. If all humans are called “man,” what does that say about women? Sexist language can also limit what young males and females believe that they can accomplish in their lives. Ethical speakers should therefore avoid using language that communicates these sexist practices.

Speakers who choose to continue to use sexist language are not only speaking in a manner that is grammatically incorrect, they are also risking communicating negative ideas about themselves to audience members. Often the use of sexist language is because of a careless error, so be careful about language choice so that you don’t accidentally communicate something about yourself that you didn’t intend or that isn’t true. Remember that if one person in your audience is offended by some aspect of your language use, they may share their opinions with others in the room. If that one person is a leader of the larger group or is someone whose opinions people care about, offending that one audience member may cause you to “lose” many other audience members as well.

Heterosexist language is language that assumes the heterosexual orientation of a person or group of people. Be careful when speaking not to use words or phrases that assume the sexual orientation of your audience members. Do not make the mistake of pointing to someone in your audience as an example and discussing that person with the assumption that she is heterosexual by saying something like, “Let’s say this woman here is having trouble with her husband.” When thinking of examples to use, consider using names that could ring true for heterosexuals and homosexuals alike. Instead of talking about Pat and Martha, discuss an issue involving Pat and Chris. Not only will you avoid language that assumes everyone’s partner is of the opposite sex, you will also better your chances of persuading using your example. If the use of sex- specific names doesn’t ring true with members of your audience that are homosexual, it is possible that they are not as likely to continue to listen to your example with the same level of interest. They are more likely to follow your example if they aren’t confronted immediately with names that assume a heterosexual relationship. There are, of course, ethical considerations as well. Because it is likely that your entire audience is not heterosexual (and certainly they do not all hold heterosexist attitudes), using heterosexist language is another way that speakers may alienate audience members. In reality the world is not completely heterosexual and even in the unlikely case that you’re speaking in a room of consisting completely of heterosexuals, many people have friends or relatives that are homosexual, so the use of heterosexist language to construct the world as if this were not the case runs counter to ethical communication.

“Married Gay Couple John and Jamie” by John. *CC-BY-SA*.

AVOIDING LANGUAGE PITFALLS

There are other aspects of language you should consider when thinking about how language choices impact the audience’s perception of you.

Profanity

It seems obvious, but this fact bears repeating—you should **refrain from using profanity** in your speeches. One of the primary rules of all aspects of public speaking (audience analysis, delivery, topic selection, etc.) is that you should never ignore audience expectations. Audiences do not expect speakers to use profane language, and in most cases, doing so will hurt your credibility with the audience. It is true that certain audiences will not mind an occasional profane word used for effect, but unless you are speaking to a group of people with whom you are very familiar, it is difficult to know for sure whether the majority of the audience will respond positively or negatively to such language use. If you even offend one person in an audience and that person happens to be an opinion leader for other audience members, the negative impact of your language on that one person could end up having a much larger influence on the audience’s perception of you.

> I wanted to cut down on the profanity, because I think I’m funnier without sayin’ a lot of cuss words. – Chris Tucker

Exaggeration

Speakers should also be careful about exaggeration. **Hyperbole** is the use of moderate exaggeration for effect and is an acceptable and useful language strategy. What is not acceptable, however, is the use of exaggeration to an extent that you risk losing credibility. For example, while it is acceptable to note that "it snows in South Texas as often as pigs fly," it would not be acceptable to state that "It never snows in South Texas." In the first case, you are using hyperbole as a form of exaggeration meant to creatively communicate an idea. In the second case, your use of exaggeration is stating something that is not true. It is unwise to use words such as "never" and "always" when speaking. It may be the case that speakers make this mistake accidentally because they are not careful with regard to word choice. We so easily throw words like "always" and "never" around in everyday conversation that this tendency transfers onto our public speeches when we are not thinking carefully about word choice.

There are two problems with the careless use of exaggeration. First, when you use words like "always" and "never," it is not likely that the statement you are making is true—as very few things *always* or *never* happen. Therefore, audiences might mistake your careless use of language for an attempt to purposefully misrepresent the truth. Second, when you suggest that something "always" or "never" happens, you are explicitly challenging your audience members to offer up evidence that contradicts your statement. Such a challenge may serve to impact your credibility negatively with the audience, as an audience member can make you look careless and/or silly by pointing out that your "always" or "never" statement is incorrect.

> Exaggeration is a blood relation to falsehood and nearly as blamable. – Hosea Ballou

Powerless Language

"Malalai Joya speaking in Finland" by AfghanKabul. *CC-BY.*

Finally, think about using powerful language when speaking. Because women are more likely than men to be socialized to take the feelings of others into account, women tend to use less powerful language than men. (((Note: Gamble, T. K. & Gamble, M. W. (2003). *The gender communication connection.* New York: Houghton-Mifflin.))) Both men and women, however, can use language that communicates a lack of power. In some cases speakers use **powerless language that communicates uncertainty**. For example, a speaker might say "It seems to me that things are getting worse," or "In my estimation, things are getting worse." These phrases communicate a lack of certainty in your statements. It is likely that in the case of these speeches, the speaker is arguing that some problem is getting worse, therefore more powerful language would be acceptable. Simply state that "Things are getting worse" and don't weaken your statement with phrases that communicate uncertainty.

Speakers should also beware of **hedges**, **tag questions**, and **qualifiers**. Examples of hedges would include, "I thought we should," "I sort of think," or "Maybe we should." Use more powerful statements such as "We should" or "I believe." In addition, speakers should avoid the use of tag questions, which are quick questions at the end of a statement that also communicate uncertainty. People who use tag questions might end a statement with "Don't you think?" or "Don't you agree?" rather than flatly stating what they believe because it can appear to audiences that you are seeking validation for your statements. Qualifiers such as "around" or "about" make your sentences less definitive, so generally avoid using them.

Interestingly, however, there are cases when using less powerful language may be useful. While a full discussion of these instances is out of the purview of this chapter, good speakers will recognize when they should use more or less powerful language. I tell my students that there are some cases when negotiation between two or more parties is the key and that in these instances using language that communicates complete certainty might impede fruitful negotiation because other parties may incorrectly perceive you as inflexible. On the other hand, in some cases you must "win" an argument or "beat" another speaker in order to even get to the negotiation table, and in those cases, the use of more powerful language may be warranted. It bears repeating that better speakers know how to use language in response to specific contexts in order to be successful, hence thinking about what contexts require more or less powerful language is always a good idea.

> There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest. – Elie Wiesel

Incorrect Grammar

While the use of sexist or heterosexist language may imply some negative qualities about you to your audience, the use of incorrect grammar in your speech will explicitly communicate negative attributes about you quite clearly. There are four primary means by which incorrect grammar tends to make its way into speeches, including basic error, mispronunciations, regionalisms, and colloquialisms.

Basic errors occur when people make simple mistakes in grammar because of carelessness or a lack of knowledge. If you are unsure about the grammatical structure of a sentence, ask someone.

> Although spoken English doesn't obey the rules of written language, a person who doesn't know the rules thoroughly is at a great disadvantage. – Marilyn vos Savant

"Bush delivers his second Inaugural address" by Paul Morse. Public domain.

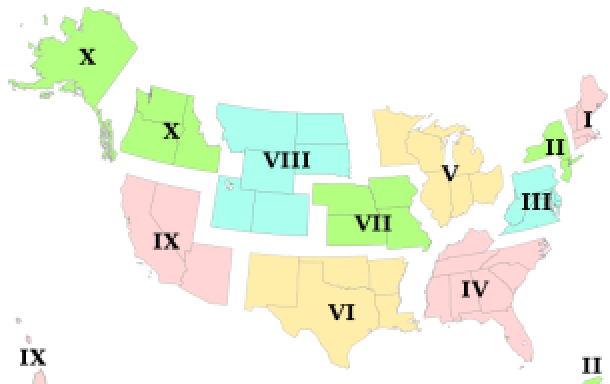
Practicing your speech in front of others can help you catch mistakes. Grammatical errors can also happen when speakers aren't familiar enough with their speech. If you do not know your topic well and have not given yourself an adequate amount of time for practice, you may fumble some during your speech and use incorrect grammar that you normally wouldn't use. One of the most regular critiques made of President George W. Bush is that he regularly makes grammatical errors in public. In one case President Bush stated, "Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?" In another instance he stated, "I have a different vision of leadership. A leadership is someone who brings people together." (((Note: About.com (2011). Bushisms—U.S. President proves how difficult English really is! Retrieved from. http://esl.about.com/library/weekly/aa032301a.htm))) When President Bush makes these mistakes, many people take note and it gives his detractors ammunition to critique his ability to lead. Unlike President Bush, you do not have a team of public relations specialists ready to explain away your grammatical error so you should take great care to make sure that you're prepared to speak.

> Apparently Arnold was inspired by President Bush, who proved you can be a successful politician in this country even if English is your second language. – Conan O'Brien

In addition, you must be sure that you are pronouncing words correctly. In one instance I had a student who began discussing the philosopher Plato, except she pronounced his name "Platt-o" instead of "Play-toe." I could see students glancing at each other and rolling their eyes in response to this mistake. Indeed, it was even difficult for me to pay attention after the mistake because it was such a blatant error. Making pronunciation mistakes, especially when you're pronouncing words that the general public deems ordinary, can seriously impede your credibility. It was likely difficult for students to take this speaker's remaining comments seriously after she'd made such a big mistake. If you're unsure about how to pronounce a word, check with someone else or with the dictionary to make sure you're pronouncing it correctly. In fact, many online dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster.com and Dictionary.com now include a function that allows you to hear how the word is pronounced. And if it's a word you're not used to saying, such as a technical or medical term, practice saying it *out loud* 10-20 times a day until you're comfortable with the word. Remember that our mouths are machines and that our tongues, teeth, cheeks, lips, etc. all work together to pronounce sounds. When faced with a word that our mouths are not yet "trained" to say, it is more likely that we'll mispronounce the word or stutter some on it during a speech. But if you practice saying the word out loud several times a day leading up to your speech, you're less likely to make a mistake and your confidence will be boosted instead of hurt in the midst of your speech.

Remember: Y'all is singular. All y'all is plural. All y'all's is plural possessive. – Kinky Friedman

Some grammar problems occur because people use regionalisms when speaking, which may pose problems for people in the audience not familiar with the terms being used. Regionalisms are customary words or phrases used in different geographic regions. For example, growing up in Texas I used "y'all," while my students in Pennsylvania might use "youins" or "yins" to mean a group of people. In the South, many people use the phrase "Coke" to mean any soft drink (probably because Coco-Cola is headquartered in Atlanta), while in the Northeast a "Coke" might be called a "tonic" and in other regions it might be called a "pop" or "soda pop." You must be careful when using regional terms because your audience may not interpret your message correctly if they are not familiar with the regionalism you're using. Try to find terms that are broader in their use, perhaps using "you all" or "soft drink" instead of the regional terms you may be used to using in everyday conversations.



"Federal Standard Regions" by Belg4mit. Public domain.

Another grammar issue often linked to region is the use of colloquialisms. Colloquialisms are words or phrases used in informal speech but not typically used in formal speech. Using the word "crick" instead of "creek" is one example of a colloquialism, and in some areas "I'm getting ready to cook dinner" would be said, "I'm fixin' to make dinner." Colloquialisms can also be phrases that stem from particular regions. In some regions nice clothes are often referred to as your "Sunday best," and in some areas, when people are preparing to vacuum, they note that they are getting ready to "red up the place" (make it ready for visitors).

Like regionalisms, an audience understanding your use of colloquialisms depends on their familiarity with the language tendencies of a certain geographic area, so steering clear of their use can help you make sure that your message is understood by your audience. Another problem that regionalisms and colloquialisms have in common is that some audience members may consider their use a sign of lesser intellect because they are not considered proper grammar, so you also risk leaving a bad impression of yourself with audience members if you make these language choices for a formal presentation.

I personally think we developed language because of our deep need to complain. – Lily Tomlin

Other Language Choices to Consider

Clichés are phrases or expressions that, because of overuse, have lost their rhetorical power. Examples include sayings such as "The early bird gets the worm" or "Making a mountain out of a molehill." Phrases such as these were once powerful ways of communicating an idea, but because of overuse these phrases just don't have the impact that they once had. Using clichés in your speeches runs the risk of having two negative attributions being placed on you by audience members. First, audience members may feel that your use of a cliché communicates that you didn't take the speech seriously and/or were lazy in constructing it. Second, your audience members may perceive you as someone who is not terribly creative. Clichés area easy ways to communicate your message, but you might pay for that ease with negative feelings about you as a speaker from your audience. Try to avoid using clichés so that audiences are more likely to perceive you positively as a speaker.

Another consideration for speakers is whether or not to use language central to the popular culture of a time period. Whether we're talking about "groovy, man" from the 1970s or "like totally awesome" from the 1980s, or "word to your mutha" from the 1990s, the language central to the popular culture of any time period is generally something to be avoided in formal public speaking. Like slang or profanity, language stemming from popular culture can be limited in its appeal. Some audiences may not understand it, some audiences may negatively evaluate you for using language that is too informal, and other audiences will have negative preconceived notions about “the kind of people” that use such language (e.g., “hippies” in the 1970s), and they will most likely transfer those negative evaluations onto you.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

In this chapter we defined verbal communication as an agreed-upon and rule-governed system of symbols used to share meaning. These symbols are arbitrary, ambiguous, and abstract. The rules that dictate our use and understanding of symbols include phonology, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics. As you recall there are distinct differences between written and spoken forms of verbal communication in terms of levels of formality, synchronicity, recording, and privacy. Yet, new technologies are beginning to blur some of these differences. Finally, verbal communication is central to our identity as humans and it allows us to define reality, organize ideas and experiences into categories, help us think, and shape out attitudes about the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you define yourself as a person? What kinds of definitions do you have for yourself? What do you think would happen if you changed some of your self-definitions?
2. How do advances in technology impact verbal communication? What are some examples?
3. How does popular culture impact our verbal communication? What are some examples?
4. When you use text messages or email, are you formal or informal?
5. In what situations/contexts would it be appropriate to speak formally rather than informally? Why?
6. To what extent do you believe that verbal communication drives thought, or vice versa?

KEY TERMS

- abstract
- ambiguous
- arbitrary
- archived
- asynchronous
- connotative meaning
- context
- denotative meaning
- formal
- informal
- phonology
- pragmatics
- reclaim
- rule-governed
- semantics

- symbols
- synchronous
- syntactics
- verbal communication

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COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE: EXPLAINING

First exercise for Challenge 2: Explaining the kind of conversation you want to have. With your practice partner, try starting each of the conversations on the list. Note which feel easy to start and which feel more challenging. Begin with: “Right now I’d like to…” or “I’d like to take about 1/5/30 minutes and…”

AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS “Right now I’d like to take about 5 minutes and…”	
1.	…tell you about my experiences/feelings… …that involve no implied requests or complaints toward you OR …so that you will understand the request, offer, complaint, etc., I want to make
2.	…hear what’s happening with you. (More specific: …hear how you are doing with [topic]…)
3.	…entertain you with a story.
4.	…explore some possibilities concerning … (requiring your empathy but not your advice or permission)
5.	…plan a course of action for myself (with your help or with you as listener/witness only)
6.	…coordinate/plan our actions together concerning…
7.	…express my affection for you (or appreciation of you concerning…)
8.	…express support for you as you cope with a difficult situation.

9.	…complain/make a request about something you have done (or said) (for better resolution of conflicts, translate complaints into requests)
10.	…confirm my understanding of the experience or position you just shared. (this usually continues with “I hear that you…,” “Sounds like you…,” “So you’re feeling kinda…,” or “Let me see if I understand you…”)
11.	…resolve a conflict that I have with you about…
12.	…negotiate or bargain with you about…
13.	…work with you to reach a decision about…
14.	…give you permission or consent to…/…get your permission or consent to…
15.	…give you some information about …/…get some information from you about…
16.	…give you some advice about …/…get some advice from you about…
17.	…give you directions, orders or work assignments… / get directions or orders from you
18.	…make a request of you (for action, time, information, object, money, promise, etc.)
19.	…consent to (or refuse) a request you have made to me.
20.	…make an offer to you (for action, information, object, promise, etc.)
21.	…accept or decline an offer you have made to me.
22.	…persuade or motivate you to adopt (a particular) point of view.
23.	…persuade or motivate you to choose (a particular) course of action.
24.	…forgive you for… / ask for your forgiveness concerning…
25.	…make an apology to you about… / request an apology from you about…
26.	…offer an interpretation of… (what … means to me) / ask for your interpretation of…
27.	…offer an evaluation of… (how good or bad I think … is) / ask for your evaluation of…
28.	…change the subject of the conversation and talk about…
29.	…have some time to think things over.
30.	…leave/end this conversation so that I can…____

Second exercise for Challenge 2: Exploring conversational intentions that create problems. (to be explored with as much privacy as you need, or with a therapist) To what degree do you find yourself relying on these kinds of conversations to influence the people in your life? What possibilities do you see for change? To what degree are you or were you an unwilling participant in such conversations? What possibilities do you see for change as you become more aware of conversational intentions?

AN EXPLORATORY LIST OF UN-FULFILLING CONVERSATIONAL INTENTIONS (These conversational intentions and related actions are unfulfilling, at the very least, because we would not like someone to do these things to us . And when we do any of these things, we teach and encourage others to do them to us and/or to avoid contact with us.)	
1.	To lie, deceive or mislead (sometimes partly redeemed by good overall intentions, but usually not)
2.	To threaten
3.	To hurt or abuse
4.	To punish (creates resentment, avoidance and desire for revenge)
5.	To blame (focuses on past instead of present and future)
6.	To control or coerce (force, influence someone against their will and consent)
7.	To manipulate (to influence someone without his or her knowledge and consent)
8.	To demean, humiliate or shame… …to try to make someone look bad in eyes of others OR …to try to make people doubt themselves or feel bad about themselves
9.	“Stonewalling:” To deny the existence of a problem in the face of strong evidence and sincere appeals from others
10.	To hide what is important to me from you (if you are an important person in my life)
11.	To suppress or invalidate someone’s emotional response to a given event or situation (as in “Don’t cry!”, or the even more coercive “You stop crying or I’ll *really* give you something to cry about!”)
12.	To withdraw from interaction in order to avoid the consequences of something I have done.____

CONCLUDING ACTIVITIES

"Dilgo Khyentse Yangsi Rinpoche answers a young person's question…" by Wonderlane.

This chapter has discussed a number of important aspects of language that good speakers should always consider. It is important for speakers to remember the power of language and to harness that power effectively, yet ethically. We've discussed the relationship between the language we use and the way we see the world, the importance of using language that is clear, vivid, stylized, ethical and that reflects well on you as the speaker.

The difference between choosing one word over another can be as significant as an audience member remembering your presentation or forgetting it and/or an audience turning against you and your ideas. Taking a few extra moments to add some alliteration or to check for language that might offend others is time very well spent. The next time you have to write or speak about an issue, remember the importance of language and its impact on our lives— carefully consider what language will you use and how will those language choices make a difference in how your audiences defines and understands your topic.

> If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart. ~ Nelson Mandela

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between communication and language.
2. Explain the relationship between language and the way that humans perceive their worlds.
3. Why should you use simple language in your speech?
4. The use of concrete and precise language in your speeches helps prevent what sorts of problems?
5. Give an example of a metaphor and explain how that metaphor functions to communicate a specific idea more clearly.
6. What is alliteration?
7. Why is personalized language important?
8. What are some examples of types of sexist language and what is the impact of those examples?
9. What are two problems associated with using exaggerated language in your speeches?
10. Explain the types of powerless language most commonly used.
11. Why shouldn't you use clichés in your speech?
12. Why is correct grammar important to good speech making?

Activities

1. Speakers should avoid the use of sexist language. Consider the sexist words and phrases listed below and think of as many replacement words as you can.
    - Bachelor's Degree
    - Bogeyman
    - Brotherhood
    - Businessman
    - Chairman
    - Forefather
    - Layman
    - Mailman
    - Manmade
    - Repairman
    - Salesman
    - Female Doctor
2. Using speeches from mlkonline.net or jfklibrary.org, choose any speech from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President John F. Kennedy, or Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and isolate one paragraph that you believe exemplifies a careful and effective use of language. Rewrite that paragraph as I did for my classes, using more common and less careful word choices. Compare the paragraphs to each other once you're done, noticing the difference your changes in language make.
3. Speakers should always remember that it's rarely helpful to use a long word when a short word will do and that clichés should be avoided in speeches. Look at these common clichés, reworded using language that obstructs rather than clarifies, and see if you can figure out which clichés have been rewritten.
    - A piece of pre-decimal currency conserved is coinage grossed.
    - The timely avian often acquires the extended soft-bodied invertebrate.
    - A utensil often used for writing is more prodigious than a certain long-edged weapon.
    - Let slumbering members of the canine variety remain in slumber
    - An animal of the avian variety resting on one's palm is more valuable than double that amount in one's appendage most often used for tactile feedback.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define verbal communication and explain its main characteristics.
- Understand the three qualities of symbols.
- Describe the rules governing verbal communication.
- Explain the differences between written and spoken communication.
- Describe the functions of verbal communication.

Your brother comes home from school and walks through the door. Without saying a word, he walks to the fridge, gets a drink, and turns to head for the couch in the family room. Once there, he plops down, stares straight ahead, and sighs. You notice that he sits there in silence for the next few minutes. In this time, he never speaks a word. Is he communicating? If your answer is yes, how would you interpret his actions? How do you think he is feeling? What types of nonverbal communication was your brother using? Like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is essential in our everyday interactions. Remember that verbal and nonverbal communication are the two primary channels we study in the field of Communication. While nonverbal and verbal communications have many similar functions, nonverbal communication has its own set of functions for helping us communicate with each other. Before we get into the types and functions of nonverbal communication, let's define nonverbal communication to better understand how it is used in this text.

DEFINING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Like verbal communication, we use nonverbal communication to share meaning with others. Just as there are many definitions for verbal communication, there are also many ways to define nonverbal communication, let's look at a few.

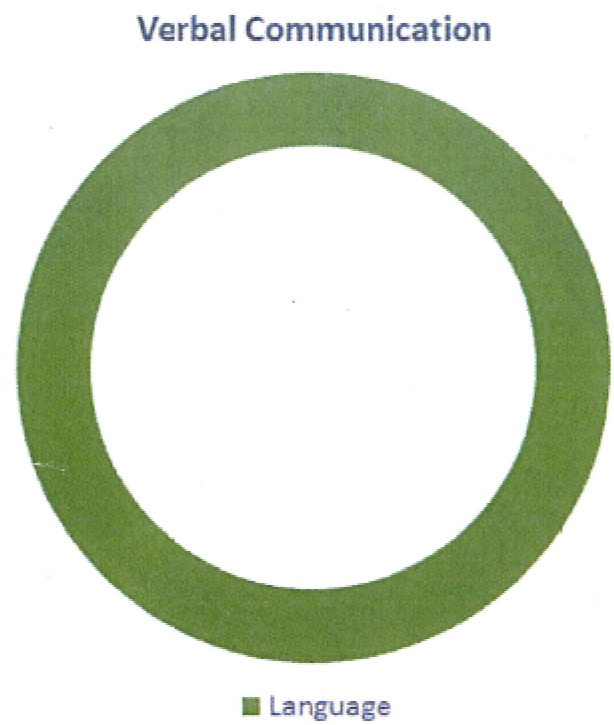
Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall define nonverbal communication similar to how we defined verbal communication in Chapter 2. They state that nonverbal behaviors are "typically sent with intent, are used with regularity among members of a social community, are typically interpreted as intentional, and have consensually recognized interpretations" (113). In our opinion, this sounds too much like verbal communication, and might best be described as symbolic and systematic nonverbal communication.

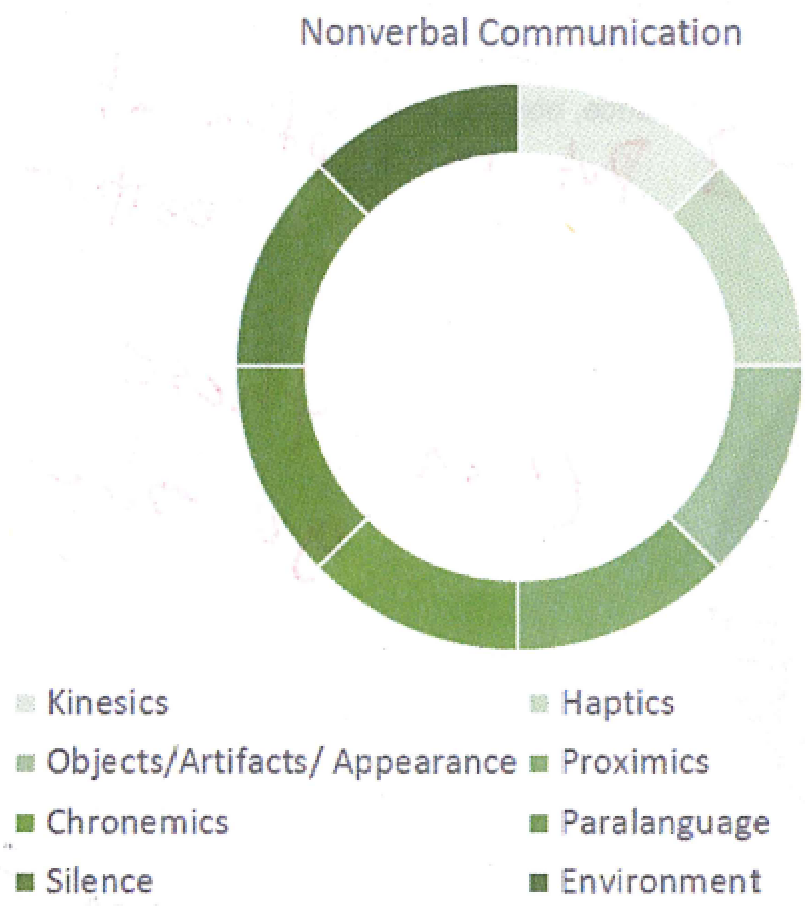
Mead differentiated between what he termed as “gesture” versus “significant symbol,” while Buck and VanLear took Mead’s idea and argued that “gestures are not symbolic in that their relationship to their referents is not arbitrary,” a fundamental distinction between verbal and nonverbal communication (524). Think of all the ways you unconsciously move your body throughout the day. For example, you probably do not sit in your classes and think constantly about your nonverbal behaviors. Instead, much of the way you present yourself nonverbally in your classes is done unconsciously. Even so, others can derive meaning from your nonverbal behaviors whether they are intentional or not. For example, professors watch their students’ nonverbal communication in class (such as slouching, leaning back in the chair, or looking at their watch) and make assumptions about them (they are bored, tired, or worrying about a test in another class). These assumptions are often based on acts that are typically done unintentionally.

While we certainly use nonverbal communication consciously at times to generate and share particular meanings, when examined closely, it should be apparent that this channel of communication is not the same as verbal communication which is “an agreed-upon rule-governed system of symbols.” Rather, nonverbal communication is most often spontaneous, unintentional, and may not follow formalized symbolic rule systems.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

There are four fundamental differences between verbal and nonverbal communication. The first difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use a single channel (words) when we communicate verbally versus multiple channels when we communicate nonverbally. Try this exercise! Say your first and last name at the same time. You quickly find that this is an impossible task. Now, pat the top of your head with your right hand, wave with your left hand, smile, shrug your shoulders, and chew gum at the same time. While goofy and awkward, our ability to do this demonstrates how we use multiple nonverbal channels simultaneously to communicate.





In Chapter 2 we learned how difficult it can be to decode a sender's single verbal message due to the arbitrary, abstract, and ambiguous nature of language. But, think how much more difficult it is to decode the even more ambiguous and multiple nonverbal signals we take in like eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, clothing, personal artifacts, and tone of voice all at the same time. Despite this difficulty, Motley found that we learn to decode nonverbal communication as babies. Hall found that women are much better than men at accurately interpreting the many nonverbal cues we send and receive (Gore). How we interpret these nonverbal signals can also be influenced by our gender as the viewer.

How do you interpret this student’s nonverbals?

How do you interpret this student’s nonverbals?

A second difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that verbal communication is **distinct** (linear) while nonverbal communication is **continuous** (in constant motion and relative to context). Distinct means that messages have a clear beginning and end, and are expressed in a linear fashion. We begin and end words and sentences in a linear way to make it easier for others to follow and understand. If you pronounce the word “cat” you begin with the letter “C” and proceed to finish with “T.” Continuous means that messages are ongoing and work in relation to other nonverbal and verbal cues. Think about the difference between analog and digital clocks. The analog clock represents nonverbal communication in that we generate meaning by considering the relationship of the different arms to each another (context). Also, the clock’s arms are in continuous motion. We notice the speed of their movement, their position in the circle and to each other, and their relationship with the environment (is it day or night?).

Nonverbal communication is similar in that we evaluate nonverbal cues in relation to one another and consider the context of the situation. Suppose you see your friend in the distance. She approaches, waves, smiles, and says “hello.” To interpret the meaning of this, you focus on the wave, smile, tone of voice, her approaching movement, and the verbal message. You might also consider the time of day, if there is a pressing need to get to class, etc.

Now contrast this to a digital clock, which functions like verbal communication. Unlike an analog clock, a digital clock is not in constant motion. Instead, it replaces one number with another to display time (its message). A digital clock uses one distinct channel (numbers) in a linear fashion. When we use verbal communication, we do so like the digital clock. We say one word at a time, in a linear fashion, to express meaning.

What might this driver be trying to convey?

A third difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that we use verbal communication **consciously** while we generally use nonverbal communication **unconsciously**. Conscious communication means that we think about our verbal communication before we communicate. Unconscious communication means that we do not think about every nonverbal message we communicate. If you ever heard the statement as a child, “Think before you speak” you were being told a fundamental principle of verbal communication. Realistically, it’s nearly impossible not to think before we speak. When we speak, we do so consciously and intentionally. In contrast, when something funny happens, you probably do not think, “Okay, I’m going to smile and laugh right now.” Instead, you react unconsciously, displaying your emotions through these nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal communication can occur as unconscious reactions to situations. We are not claiming that all nonverbal communication is unconscious. At times we certainly make conscious choices to use or withhold nonverbal communication to share meaning. Angry drivers use many conscious nonverbal expressions to communicate to other drivers! In a job interview you are making conscious decisions about your wardrobe, posture, and eye contact.

Case In Point

Body language expert and author, Vanessa Van Edwards reveals some interesting facts about body language in western culture in an interview with AM Northwest Today on September 18, 2013. She explains that men are not as good at reading body language cues as women because they use different areas of their brain when decoding. She states, “women might be better at reading body language because … [they] have 14 to 16 active brain areas while evaluating others, whereas men only have 4 to 6 active.” Edwards also explains how men and women nonverbally lie differently because they tend to lie for different reasons; “Men lie to appear more powerful, interesting, and successful, … [whereas] women lie … more to protect others feelings.” To learn more about differences in female and male body language you can read the full article and watch the video.

A fourth difference between verbal and nonverbal communication is that some nonverbal communication is universal (Hall, Chia, and Wang; Tracy & Robins). Verbal communication is exclusive to the users of a particular language dialect, whereas some nonverbal communication is recognized across cultures. Although cultures most certainly have particular meanings and uses for nonverbal communication, there are universal nonverbal behaviors that almost everyone recognizes. For instance, people around the world recognize and use expressions such as smiles, frowns, and the pointing of a finger at an object. Note: Not all nonverbal gestures are universal! For example, if you travel to different regions of the world, find out what is appropriate! For example if you go to South Korea don’t offer payment with only one hand. For more examples CLICK HERE:

Let us sum up the ways in which nonverbal communication is unique:

- Nonverbal communication uses multiple channels simultaneously.
- Nonverbal communication is continuous.
- Nonverbal communication can be both conscious and unconscious.
- Certain nonverbal communication is universally understood.

Now that you have a definition of nonverbal communication, and can identify the primary differences between verbal and nonverbal communication, let’s examine what counts as nonverbal communication. In this next section, we show you eight types of nonverbal communication we use regularly: kinesics, haptics, appearance, proxemics, environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence.

TYPES OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Kinesics is *the study of how we use body movement and facial expressions*. We interpret a great deal of meaning through body movement, facial expressions, and eye contact. Many people believe they can easily interpret the meanings of body movements and facial expressions in others. The reality is, it is almost impossible to determine an exact meaning for gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. Even so, we rely a great deal on kinesics to interpret and express meaning. We know that kinesics can communicate liking, social status, and even relational responsiveness (Mehrabian). Facial expressions are a primary method of sharing emotions and feelings (Ekman & Friesen; Scherer, Klaus, & Scherer). For example, imagine yourself at a party and you see someone across the room you are attracted to.

Tattoos, hair style, dress, and makeup are all part of personal appearance.

What sort of nonverbal behaviors do you engage in to let that person know? Likewise, what nonverbal behaviors are you looking for from them to indicate that it's safe to come over and introduce yourself? We are able to go through exchanges like this using only our nonverbal communication.

Haptics is *the study of touch*. Touch is the first type of nonverbal communication we experience as humans and is vital to our development and health (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield; Wilson, et al.). Those who don't have positive touch in their lives are less healthy both mentally and physically than those who experience positive touch. We use touch to share feelings and relational meanings. Hugs, kisses, handshakes, or even playful roughhousing demonstrate relational meanings and indicate relational closeness. In western society, touch is largely reserved for family and romantic relationships. Generally girls and women in same-sex friendships have more liberty to express touch as part of the relationship than men in same-sex friendships. However, despite these unfortunate social taboos, the need for touch is so strong that men are quite sophisticated at finding ways to incorporate this into their friendships in socially acceptable ways. One such example is wrestling among adolescent and young-adult males. Do you ever wonder why you don't see as many women doing this? Perhaps it's because wrestling is socially acceptable for men whereas women are more likely to hug, hold hands, and sit touching one another. In contrast, an exchange student from Brazil recognized the differences in touch between cultures when arriving in the United States. She was surprised when someone hesitated to remove an eyelash from her face and apologized for touching her. In her country, no one would hesitate to do this act. She realized how much more physical touch is accepted and even expected in her culture. Cultural norms around touch and gender constructs, and everyone can prevent and limit touching behaviors in ways that are comfortable to them.

Personal Appearance, Objects, and Artifacts are types of *nonverbal communication we use on our bodies and surroundings communicate meaning to others*. Consider your preferences for hair-style, clothing, jewelry, and automobiles, as well the way you maintain your body. Your choices express meanings to those around you about what you value and the image you wish to put forth. As with most communication, our choices for personal appearance, objects, and artifacts occur within cultural contexts, and are interpreted in light of these contexts.

Consider the recent trendiness and popularity of tattoos. While once associated primarily with prison and armed services, tattoos have become mainstream and are used to articulate a variety of personal, political and cultural messages.

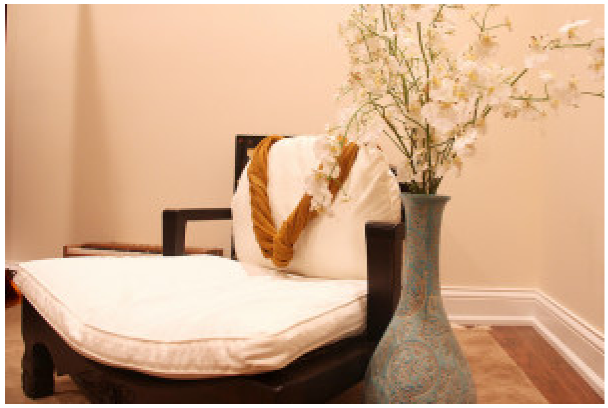
Proxemics is *the study of how our use of space influences the ways we relate with others*. It also demonstrates our relational standing with those around us (May). Edward Hall developed four categories of space we use in the U.S. to form and maintain relationships. Intimate space consists of space that ranges from touch to eighteen inches. We use intimate space with those whom we are close (family members, close friends, and intimate partners). Intimate space is also the context for physical fighting and violence. Personal space ranges from eighteen inches to four feet and is reserved for most conversations with non-intimate others (friends and acquaintances). Social space extends from four to twelve feet and is used for small group interactions such as sitting around a dinner table with others or a group meeting. Public space extends beyond twelve feet and is most often used in public speaking situations. We use space to regulate our verbal communication and communicate relational and social meanings. A fun exercise to do is to go to a public space and observe people. Based on their use of the above categories of space, try to determine what type of relationship the people are in: Romantic, Family, or Friends.

Our environment are *nonverbal acts through our use of spaces we occupy* like are homes, rooms, cars, or offices. Think of your home, room, automobile, or office space. What meanings can others perceive about you from these spaces? What meanings are you trying to send by how you keep them? Think about spaces you use frequently and the nonverbal meanings they have for you. Most educational institutions intentionally paint classrooms in dull colors. Why? Dull colors on walls have a calming effect, theoretically keeping students from being distracted by bright colors and excessive stimuli. Contrast the environment of a classroom to that of a fast food restaurant. These establishments have bright colors and hard plastic seats and tables. The bright colors generate an upbeat environment, while the hard plastic seats are just uncomfortable enough to keep patrons from staying too long–remember, it's FAST food (Restaurants See Color As Key Ingredient). People and cultures place different emphasis on the use of space as a way to communicate nonverbally.

Case In Point

Feng Shui

Feng Shui, which means wind and water, is the ancient Chinese art of living in harmony with our environment. Feng Shui can be traced as far back as the Banpo dwellings in 4000 BCE. The ideas behind Feng Shui state that how we use our environment and organize our belongings affects the energy flow (chi) of people in that space, and the person/people who created the environment. The inclusion or exclusion, and placement, of various objects in our environments are used to create a positive impact on others. The theory is to use the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth to design a space. Feng Shui is applicable to cities, villages, homes, and public spaces. The Temple of Heaven in Bejing, China is an example of Feng Shui architecture. To keep harmony with the natural world, the Temple houses the Hall of Annual Prayer which is comprised of four inner, 12 middle, and 12 outer pillars representing the four seasons, 12 months, and 12 traditional Chinese hours.



Chronemics is *the study of how people use time*. Are you someone who is always early or on-time? Or, are you someone who arrives late to most events? Levine believes our use of time communicates a variety of meanings to those around us. Think about the person you know who is most frequently late. How do you describe that person based on their use of time? Now, think about someone else who is always on time. How do you describe that person? Is there a difference? If so, these differences are probably based on their use of time. In the U.S., we place high value on being on time, and respond more positively to people who are punctual. But, in many Arab and Latin American countries, time is used more loosely, and punctuality is not necessarily a goal to achieve. You may have heard the expression, "Indian time" to refer to "the perception of time [that] is circular and flexible" (Harris, Shutiva). This is the belief that activities will commence when everyone is present and ready; not according to an arbitrary schedule based on a clock or calendar. Neither approach is better than the other, but the dissimilar uses of time can create misunderstandings among those from different cultural groups.

Paralanguage is the term we use to describe *vocal qualities such as pitch, volume, inflection, rate of speech, and rhythm*. While the types of nonverbal communication we've discussed so far are non-vocal, some nonverbal communication is actually vocal (noise is produced). How we say words often expresses greater meaning than the actual words themselves. Sarcasm and incongruence are two examples of this. The comedian Stephen Wright bases much of his comedy on his use of paralanguage. He talks in a completely monotone voice throughout his act and frequently makes statements such as, "I'm getting really excited" while using a monotone voice, accompanied by a blank facial expression. The humor lies in the in congruency—his paralanguage and facial expression contradict his verbal message. **Watch an example of his humor.**

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/eJCMjJwIGxY

Nonverbal Communication Now

Women In Black

An organization of women called Women in Black uses silence as a form of protest and hope for peace; particularly, peace from war and the unfair treatment of women. Women in Black began in Israel in 1988 by women protesting Israel's Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Women in Black continues to expand and now functions in the United States, England, Italy, Spain, Azerbaijan and Yugoslavia. Women gather in public spaces, dressed in black, and stand in silence for one hour, once a week. Their mission states, "We are silent because mere words cannot express the tragedy that wars and hatred bring. We refuse to add to the cacophony of empty statements that are spoken with the best intentions yet have failed to bring lasting change and understanding, or to the euphemistic jargon of the politicians which has perpetuated misunderstanding and fear that leads to war….our silence is visible."

Whenever you use sarcasm, your paralanguage is intended to contradict the verbal message you say. As Professors we have found that using sarcasm in the classroom can backfire when students do not pick up our paralinguistic cues and focus primarily on the verbal message. We have learned to use sarcasm sparingly so as not to hurt anyone's feelings.

Finally, silence serves as a type of nonverbal communication when we *do not use words or utterances to convey meaning*s. Have you ever experienced the "silent treatment" from someone? What meanings did you take from that person's silence? Silence is powerful because the person using silence may be refusing to engage in communication with you. Likewise, we can use silence to regulate the flow of our conversations. Silence has a variety of meanings and, as with other types of nonverbal communication; context plays an important role for interpreting the meaning of silence. For example, the Day of Silence protest which has taken place every year since 1996 is a day which students use their silence as a tool to get people to stand up for LGBT rights. Here, like in the Women in Black movement, the participants believe that silence sends a louder message than anything they could say. Do you think they are right? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of using silence as a political strategy? If you wish to participate or read further, click this link.

You should now recognize the infinite combination of verbal and nonverbal messages we can share. When you think about it, it really is astonishing that we can communicate effectively at all. We engage in a continuous dance of communication where we try to stay in step with one another. With an understanding of the definition of nonverbal communication and the types of nonverbal communication, let's consider the various functions nonverbal communication serves in helping us communicate. (Ekman; Knapp; Malandro & Barker).

FUNCTIONS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

You learned that we use verbal communication to express ideas, emotions, experiences, thoughts, objects, and people. But what functions does nonverbal communication serve as we communicate (Blumer)? Even though it's not through words, nonverbal communication serves many functions to help us communicate meanings with one another more effectively.

- ***We use nonverbal communication to duplicate verbal communication***. When we use nonverbal communication to duplicate, we use nonverbal communication that is recognizable to most people within a particular cultural group. Obvious examples include a head-nod or a head-shake to duplicate the verbal messages of "yes" or "no." If someone asks if you want to go to a movie, you might verbally answer "yes" and at the same time nod your head. This accomplishes the goal of duplicating the verbal message with a nonverbal message. Interestingly, the head nod is considered a "nearly universal indication of accord, agreement, and understanding" because the same muscle in the head nod is the same one a baby uses to lower its head to accept milk from its mother's breast (Givens). We witnessed a two year old girl who was learning the duplication function of nonverbal communication, and didn't always get it right. When asked if she wanted something, her "yes" was shaking her head side to side as if she was communicating "no." However, her "no" was the same head-shake but it was accompanied with the verbal response "no." So, when she was two, she thought that the duplication was what made her answer "no."
- ***We use nonverbal communication to replace verbal communication***. If someone asks you a question, instead of a verbal reply "yes" and a head-nod, you may choose to simply nod your head without the accompanying verbal message. When we replace verbal communication with nonverbal communication, we use nonverbal behaviors that are easily recognized by others such as a wave, head-nod, or head-shake. This is why it was so confusing for others to understand the young girl in the example above when she simply shook her head in response to a question. This was cleared up when someone asked her if she wanted something to eat and she shook her head. When she didn't get food,

she began to cry. This was the first clue that the replacing function of communication still needed to be learned. Consider how universal shaking the head side-to-side is as an indicator of disbelief, disapproval, and negation. This nonverbal act is used by human babies to refuse food or drink; rhesus monkeys, baboons, bonnet macaques and gorillas turn their faces sideways in aversion; and children born deaf/blind head shake to refuse objects or disapprove of touch (Givens).

- ***We use nonverbal cues to complement verbal communication***. If a friend tells you that she recently received a promotion and a pay raise, you can show your enthusiasm in a number of verbal and nonverbal ways. If you exclaim, "Wow, that's great! I'm so happy for you!" while at the same time smiling and hugging your friend, you are using nonverbal communication to complement what you are saying. Unlike duplicating or replacing, nonverbal communication that complements cannot be used alone without the verbal message. If you simply smiled and hugged your friend without saying anything, the interpretation of that nonverbal communication would be more ambiguous than using it to complement your verbal message.
- ***We use nonverbal communication to accent verbal communication***. While nonverbal communication complements verbal communication, we also use it to accent verbal communication by emphasizing certain parts of the verbal message. For instance, you may be upset with a family member and state, "I'm very angry with you." To accent this statement nonverbally you might say it, "I'm VERY angry with you," placing your emphasis on the word "very" to demonstrate the magnitude of your anger. In this example, it is your tone of voice (paralanguage) that serves as the nonverbal communication that accents the message. Parents might tell their children to "come here." If they point to the spot in front of them dramatically, they are accenting the "here" part of the verbal message.

Nonverbal Communication and You

Nonverbal Communication and Romance

If you don't think the things that Communication scholars study (like nonverbal communication) applies to you, think again! A quick search of nonverbal communication on Google will yield a great many sites devoted to translating nonverbal research into practical guides for your personal life. One example on Buzzfeed.com is the article "10 Things You Can Tell About Your Date Through Body Language" written by Reveal Calvin Klein(2014). In the article, Klein outlines 10 nonverbal cues to read to see if someone is interested in you romantically. While we won't vouch for the reliability of these types of pieces, they do show the relevance of studying areas like nonverbal communication has in our personal lives

- ***We use nonverbal communication to regulate verbal communication***. Generally, it is pretty easy for us to enter, maintain, and exit our interactions with others nonverbally. Rarely, if ever, would we approach a person and say, "I'm going to start a conversation with you now. Okay, let's begin." Instead, we might make eye contact, move closer to the person, or face the person directly — all nonverbal behaviors that indicate our desire to interact. Likewise, we do not generally end conversations by stating, "I'm done talking to you now" unless there is a breakdown in the communication process. We are generally proficient enacting nonverbal communication such as looking at our watch, looking in the direction we wish to go, or being silent to indicate an impending end in the conversation. When there is a breakdown in the nonverbal regulation of conversation, we may say something to the effect, "I really need to get going now." In fact, we've seen one example where someone does not seem to pick up on the nonverbal cues about ending a phone conversation. Because of this inability to pick up on the nonverbal regulation cues, others have literally had to resort to saying, "Okay, I'm hanging up the phone right now" followed by actually hanging up the phone. In these instances, there was a breakdown in the use of nonverbal communication to regulate conversation.
- ***We use nonverbal communication to contradict verbal communication***. Imagine that you visit your boss's office and she asks you how you're enjoying a new work assignment. You may feel obligated to respond positively because it is your boss asking the question, even though you may not truly feel this way. However, your nonverbal communication may contradict your verbal message, indicating to your boss that you really do not enjoy the new work assignment. In this example, your nonverbal communication contradicts your verbal message and sends a mixed message to your boss. Research suggests that when verbal and nonverbal messages contradict one another, receivers often place

greater value on the nonverbal communication as the more accurate message (Argyle, Alkema & Gilmour). One place this occurs frequently is in greeting sequences. You might say to your friend in passing, "How are you?" She might say, "Fine" but have a sad tone to her voice. In this case, her nonverbal behaviors go against her verbal response. We are more likely to interpret the nonverbal communication in this situation than the verbal response.

Nonverbal Communication and You

Nonverbal Communication and Getting a Job

You may be thinking that getting the right degree at the right college is the way to get a job. Think again! It may be a good way to get an interview, but once at the interview, what matters? College Journal reports that, "Body language comprises 55% of the force of any response, whereas the verbal content only provides 7%, and paralanguage, or the intonation — pauses and sighs given when answering — represents 38% of the emphasis." If you show up to an interview smelling of cigarette smoke, chewing gum, dressed inappropriately, and listening to music on your phone, you're probably in trouble.
About.Com states that these are some effective nonverbal practices during interviews:

- Make eye contact with the interviewer for a few seconds at a time.
- Smile and nod (at appropriate times) when the interviewer is talking, but, don't overdo it. Don't laugh unless the interviewer does first.
- Be polite and keep an even tone to your speech. Don't be too loud or too quiet.
- Don't slouch.
- Do relax and lean forward a little towards the interviewer so you appear interested and engaged.
- Don't lean back. You will look too casual and relaxed.
- Keep your feet on the floor and your back against the lower back of the chair.
- Pay attention, be attentive and interested.
- Listen.
- Don't interrupt.
- Stay calm. Even if you had a bad experience at a previous position or were fired, keep your emotions to yourself and do not show anger or frown.
- Not sure what to do with your hands? Hold a pen and your notepad or rest an arm on the chair or on your lap, so you look comfortable. Don't let your arms fly around the room when you're making a point.

- ***We use nonverbal communication to mislead others***. We can also use nonverbal communication to deceive, and often, focus on a person's nonverbal communication when trying to detect deception. Recall a time when someone asked your opinion of a new haircut. If you did not like it, you may have stated verbally that you liked the haircut and provided nonverbal communication to further mislead the person about how you really felt. Conversely, when we try to determine if someone is misleading us, we generally focus on the nonverbal communication of the other person. One study suggests that when we only use nonverbal communication to detect deception in others, 78% of lies and truths can be detected (Vrij, Edward, Roberts, & Bull). However, other studies indicate that we are really not very effective at determining deceit in other people (Levine, Feeley & McCornack), and that we are only accurate 45 to 70 percent of the time when trying to determine if someone is misleading us (Kalbfleisch; Burgoon, et al.; Horchak, Giger, Pochwatko). When trying to detect deception, it is more effective to examine both verbal and nonverbal communication to see if they are consistent (Vrij, Akehurst, Soukara, & Bull). Even further than this, Park, Levine, McCornack, Morrison, & Ferrara argue that people usually go beyond verbal and nonverbal communication and consider what outsiders say, physical evidence, and the relationship over a longer period of time. Read further in this article if you want to learn more about body language and how to detect lies.

Case In Point

Eat Like a Lady

In Japan it is considered improper for women to be shown with their mouths open in public. Not surprisingly, this makes it difficult to eat particular foods, such as hamburgers. So, in 2013, the Japenese Burge chain, Freshness Burger, developed a solution: the liberation wrapper. The wrapper, or mask, hides women's mouths as they eat thus allowing them to maintain the expected gendered nonverbal behavior for the culture. To read and see more about this, click here.

- ***We use nonverbal communication to indicate relational standing***(Mehrabian; Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & deTurck; Le Poire, Duggan, Shepard, & Burgoon; Sallinen-Kuparinen; Floyd & Erbert). Take a few moments today to observe the nonverbal communication of people you see in public areas. What can you determine about their relational standing from their nonverbal communication? For example, romantic partners tend to stand close to one another and touch one another frequently. On the other hand, acquaintances generally maintain greater distances and touch less than romantic partners. Those who hold higher social status often use more space when they interact with others. In the United States, it is generally acceptable for women in platonic relationships to embrace and be physically close while males are often discouraged from doing so. Contrast this to many other nations where it is custom for males to greet each other with a kiss or a hug and hold hands as a symbol of friendship. We make many inferences about relational standing based on the nonverbal communication of those with whom we interact and observe. Imagine seeing a couple talking to each other across a small table. They both have faces that looked upset, red eyes from crying, closed body positions, are leaning into each other, and are whispering emphatically. Upon seeing this, would you think they were having a "Breakup conversation"?
- ***We use nonverbal communication to demonstrate and maintain cultural norms***. We've already shown that some nonverbal communication is universal, but the majority of nonverbal communication is culturally specific. For example, in United States culture, people typically place high value on their personal space. In the United States people maintain far greater personal space than those in many other cultures. If you go to New York City, you might observe that any time someone accidentally touches you on the subway he/she might apologize profusely for the violation of personal space. Cultural norms of anxiety and fear surrounding issues of crime and terrorism appear to cause people to be more sensitive to others in public spaces, highlighting the importance of culture and context.

Contrast this example to norms in many Asian cultures where frequent touch in crowded public spaces goes unnoticed because space is not used in the same ways. For example, watch this short video of how space is used in China's subway system.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/nLpHvXuEE4U

If you go grocery shopping in China as a westerner, you might be shocked that shoppers would ram their shopping carts into others' carts when they wanted to move around them in the aisle. This is not an indication of rudeness, but a cultural difference in the negotiation of space. You would need to adapt to using this new approach to personal space, even though it carries a much different meaning in the U.S. Nonverbal cues such as touch, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures are culturally specific and reflect and maintain the values and norms of the cultures in which they are used.

- ***We use nonverbal communication to communicate emotions***. While we can certainly tell people how we feel, we more frequently use nonverbal communication to express our emotions. Conversely, we tend to interpret emotions by examining nonverbal communication. For example, a friend may be feeling sad one day and it is probably easy to tell this by her nonverbal communication. Not only may she be less talkative but her shoulders may be slumped and she may not smile. One study suggests that it is important to use and interpret nonverbal communication for emotional expression, and ultimately relational attachment and satisfaction (Schachner, Shaver, & Mikulincer). Research also underscores the fact that people in close relationships have an easier time reading the nonverbal communication of emotion of their relational partners than those who aren't close. Likewise, those in close relationships can more often detect concealed emotions (Sternglanz & Depaulo).

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

In this chapter, you have learned that we define nonverbal communication as any meaning shared through sounds, behaviors, and artifacts other than words. Some of the differences between verbal and nonverbal communication include the fact that verbal communication uses one channel while nonverbal communication occurs through multiple channels simultaneously. As a result, verbal communication is distinct while nonverbal communication is continuous. For the most part, nonverbal communication is enacted at an unconscious level while we are almost always conscious of our verbal communication. Finally, some nonverbal communication is considered universal and recognizable by people all over the world, while verbal communication is exclusive to particular languages.

There are many types of nonverbal communication including kinesics, haptics, appearance, objects, artifacts, proxemics, our environment, chronemics, paralanguage, and silence. These types of nonverbal communication help us share meanings in our interactions. Now that you have a basic understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication as a primary focus of study in our field, let's look at how theory helps us understand our world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever communicated with someone outside of your culture? How were their nonverbals similar to your own, or different?
2. Have you ever had your nonverbal cues misinterpreted? For example, someone thought you liked them because your proxemics suggested an intimate relationship. How did you correct the misinterpretation?
3. What kind of nonverbal communication do you use every day? What does it accomplish for you?

4. Which do you consider has greater weight when interpreting a message from someone else, verbal or nonverbal communication? Why?

KEY TERMS

- chronemics
- conscious
- context
- continuous
- distinct
- environment
- haptics
- kinesics
- nonverbal communication
- paralanguage
- personal appearance
- proxemics
- silence
- unconscious

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VIDEO: BODY LANGUAGE

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/Ks-_Mh1QhMc

VIDEO: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/eK0NzsGRceg

LISTENING

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

"Are you listening to me?" This question is often asked because the speaker thinks the listener is nodding off or daydreaming. We sometimes think that listening means we only have to sit back, stay barely awake, and let a speaker's words wash over us. While many Americans look upon being active as something to admire, to engage in, and to excel at, listening is often understood as a "passive" activity. More recently, *O, the Oprah Magazine* featured a cover article with the title, "How to Talk So People *Really* Listen: Four Ways to Make Yourself Heard." This title leads us to expect a list of ways to leave the listening to others and insist that they do so, but the article contains a surprise ending. The final piece of advice is this: "You can't go wrong by showing interest in what other people say and making them feel important. In other words, the better *you* listen, the more you'll be listened to." (((Note: Jarvis, T. (2009, November). How to talk so people *really* listen: Four ways to make yourself heard. *O, the Oprah Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.oprah.com/relationships/Communication-Skills-How-to-Make-Yourself-Heard)))

You may have heard the adage, "We have two ears but only one mouth"—an easy way to remember that listening can be twice as important as talking. As a student, you most likely spend many hours in a classroom doing a large amount of focused listening, yet sometimes it is difficult to apply those efforts to communication in other areas of your life. As a result, your listening skills may not be all they could be. In this chapter, we will examine listening versus hearing, listening styles, listening difficulties, listening stages, and listening critically.

LISTENING VERSUS HEARING

Learning Objectives

- Understand the differences between listening and hearing.
- Explain the benefits of listening.

Listening or Hearing

Hearing is an accidental and automatic brain response to sound that requires no effort. We are surrounded by sounds most of the time. For example, we are accustomed to the sounds of airplanes, lawn mowers, furnace blowers, the rattling of pots and pans, and so on. We hear those incidental sounds and, unless we have a reason to do otherwise, we train ourselves to ignore them. We learn to filter out sounds that mean little to us, just as we choose to hear our ringing cell phones and other sounds that are more important to us.

Figure 1. Hearing vs. Listening

Listening, on the other hand, is purposeful and focused rather than accidental. As a result, it requires motivation and effort. Listening, at its best, is active, focused, concentrated attention for the purpose of understanding the meanings expressed by a speaker. We do not always listen at our best, however, and later in this chapter we will examine some of the reasons why and some strategies for becoming more active critical listeners.

Benefits of Listening

Listening should not be taken for granted. Before the invention of writing, people conveyed virtually all knowledge through some combination of showing and telling. Elders recited tribal histories to attentive audiences. Listeners received religious teachings enthusiastically. Myths, legends, folktales, and stories for entertainment survived only because audiences were eager to listen. Nowadays, however, you can gain information and entertainment through reading and electronic recordings rather than through real-time listening. If you become distracted and let your attention wander, you can go back and replay a recording. Despite that fact, you can still gain at least four compelling benefits by becoming more active and competent at real-time listening.

You Become a Better Student

When you focus on the material presented in a classroom, you will be able to identify not only the words used in a lecture but their emphasis and their more complex meanings. You will take better notes, and you will more accurately remember the instructor's claims, information, and conclusions. Many times, instructors give verbal cues about what information is important, specific expectations about assignments, and even what material is likely to be on an exam, so careful listening can be beneficial.

You Become a Better Friend

When you give your best attention to people expressing thoughts and experiences that are important to them, those individuals are likely to see you as someone who cares about their well-being. This fact is especially true when you give your attention only and refrain from interjecting opinions, judgments, and advice.

People Will Perceive You As Intelligent and Perceptive

When you listen well to others, you reveal yourself as being curious and interested in people and events. In addition, your ability to understand the meanings of what you hear will make you a more knowledgeable and thoughtful person.

Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking

When you listen well to others, you start to pick up more on the stylistic components related to how people form arguments and present information. As a result, you have the ability to analyze what you think works and doesn't work in others' speeches, which can help you transform your speeches in the process. For example, really paying attention to how others cite sources orally during their speeches may give you ideas about how to more effectively cite sources in your presentation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Hearing is the physiological process of attending to sound within one's environment; listening, however, is a focused, concentrated approach to understanding the message a source is sending.
- Learning how to be an effective listener has numerous advantages. First, effective listening can help you become a better student. Second, effective listening can help you become more effective in your interpersonal relationships. Third, effective listening can lead others to perceive you as more intelligent. Lastly, effective listening can help you become a stronger public speaker.

EXERCISES

1. With a partner, discuss how you find out when you haven't been listening carefully. What are some of the consequences of poor listening?

LISTENING STYLES

Learning Objectives

- Understand the nature of listening styles.
- Explain the people listening style.
- Explain the action listening style.
- Explain the content listening style.
- Explain the time listening style.

If listening were easy, and if all people went about it in the same way, the task for a public speaker would be much easier. Even Aristotle, as long ago as 325 BC, recognized that listeners in his audience were varied in listening style. He differentiated them as follows:

Rhetoric falls into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object. The hearer must be either a judge, with a decision to make about things past or future, or an observer. A member of the assembly decides about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator's skill are observers. (((Note: Aristotle. (c. 350 BCE). *Rhetoric* (W. Rhys Roberts, Trans.). Book I, Part 3, para. 1. Retrieved from http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html)))

Thus Aristotle classified listeners into those who would be using the speech to make decisions about past events, those who would make decisions affecting the future, and those who would evaluate the speaker's skills. This is all the more remarkable when we consider that Aristotle's audiences were composed exclusively of male citizens of one city-state, all prosperous property owners.

Our audiences today are likely to be much more heterogeneous. Think about the classroom audience that will listen to your speeches in this course. Your classmates come from many religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some of them may speak English as a second language. Some might be survivors of war-torn parts of the world such as Bosnia, Darfur, or northwest China. Being mindful of such differences will help you prepare a speech in which you minimize the potential for misunderstanding.

Part of the potential for misunderstanding is the difference in listening styles. In an article in the *International Journal of Listening*, Watson, Barker, and Weaver (((Note: Watson, K. W., Barker, L. L., & Weaver, J. B., III. (1995). The listening styles profile (LSP-16): Development and validation of an instrument to assess four listening styles. *International Journal of Listening*, *9*, 1–13.))) identified four listening styles: people, action, content, and time.

People

The people-oriented listener is interested in the speaker. People-oriented listeners listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message. For instance, when people-oriented listeners listen to an interview with a famous rap artist, they are likely to be more curious about the artist as an individual than about music, even though the people-oriented listener might also appreciate the artist's work. If you are a people-oriented listener, you might have certain questions you hope will be answered, such as: Does the artist feel successful? What's it like to be famous? What kind of educational background does he or she have? In the same way, if we're listening to a doctor who responded to the earthquake crisis in Haiti, we might be more interested in the doctor as a person than in the state of affairs for Haitians. Why did he or she go to Haiti? How did he or she get away from his or her normal practice and patients? How many lives did he or she save? We might be less interested in the equally important and urgent needs for food, shelter, and sanitation following the earthquake.

The people-oriented listener is likely to be more attentive to the speaker than to the message. If you tend to be such a listener, understand that the message is about what is important to the speaker.

Action

Action-oriented listeners are primarily interested in finding out what the speaker wants. Does the speaker want votes, donations, volunteers, or something else? It's sometimes difficult for an action-oriented speaker to listen through the descriptions, evidence, and explanations with which a speaker builds his or her case.

Action-oriented listening is sometimes called task-oriented listening. In it, the listener seeks a clear message about what needs to be done, and might have less patience for listening to the reasons behind the task. This can be especially true if the reasons are complicated. For example, when you're a passenger on an airplane waiting to push back from the gate, a flight attendant delivers a brief speech called the preflight safety briefing. The flight attendant does not read the findings of a safety study or the regulations about seat belts. The flight attendant doesn't explain that the content of his or her speech is actually mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration. Instead, the attendant says only to buckle up so we can leave. An action-oriented listener finds "buckling up" a more compelling message than a message about the underlying reasons.

Content

Content-oriented listeners are interested in the message itself, whether it makes sense, what it means, and whether it's accurate. When you give a speech, many members of your classroom audience will be content-oriented listeners who will be interested in learning from you. You therefore have an obligation to represent the truth in the fullest way you can. You can emphasize an idea, but if you exaggerate, you could lose credibility in the minds of your content-oriented audience. You can advocate ideas that are important to you, but if you omit important limitations, you are withholding part of the truth and could leave your audience with an inaccurate view.

Imagine you're delivering a speech on the plight of orphans in Africa. If you just talk about the fact that there are over forty-five million orphans in Africa but don't explain why, you'll sound like an infomercial. In such an instance, your audience's response is likely to be less enthusiastic than you might want. Instead, content-oriented listeners want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.

Time

People using a time-oriented listening style prefer a message that gets to the point quickly. Time-oriented listeners can become impatient with slow delivery or lengthy explanations. This kind of listener may be receptive for only a brief amount of time and may become rude or even hostile if the speaker expects a longer focus of attention. Time-oriented listeners convey their impatience through eye rolling, shifting about in their seats, checking their cell phones, and other inappropriate behaviors. If you've been asked to speak to a group of middle-school students, you need to realize that their attention spans are simply not as long as those of college students. This is an important reason speeches to young audiences must be shorter, or broken up by more variety than speeches to adults.

In your professional future, some of your audience members will have real time constraints, not merely perceived ones. Imagine that you've been asked to deliver a speech on a new project to the board of directors of a local corporation. Chances are the people on the board of directors are all pressed for time. If your speech is long and filled with overly detailed information, time-oriented listeners will simply start to tune you out as you're speaking. Obviously, if time-oriented listeners start tuning you out, they will not be listening to your message. This is not the same thing as being a time-oriented listener who might be less interested in the message content than in its length.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A listening style is a general manner in which an individual attends to the messages of another person.
- People-oriented listeners pay attention to the personal details of a speaker and not to the speaker's actual message.
- Action-oriented listeners pay attention to the physical actions a speaker wants the listener to engage in.
- Content-oriented listeners pay attention to the meaning and credibility of a speaker's message.
- Time-oriented listeners pay attention to messages that are short and concise as a result of limited attention spans or limited time commitments.

EXERCISES

1. Go to http://www.hypknowsis.com and practice a few of the simple beginning visualization exercises presented there.
2. Make a plan for managing your anxiety before and during your speech that includes specific techniques you want to try before your next public speaking assignment.

WHY LISTENING IS DIFFICULT

Learning Objectives

- Understand the types of noise that can affect a listener's ability to attend to a message.
- Explain how a listener's attention span can limit the listener's ability to attend to a speaker's message.
- Analyze how a listener's personal biases can influence her or his ability to attend to a message.
- Define receiver apprehension and the impact it can have on a listener's ability to attend to a message.

At times, everyone has difficulty staying completely focused during a lengthy presentation. We can sometimes have difficulty listening to even relatively brief messages. Some of the factors that interfere with good listening might exist beyond our control, but others are manageable. It's helpful to be aware of these factors so that they interfere as little as possible with understanding the message.

Noise

Noise is one of the biggest factors to interfere with listening; it can be defined as anything that interferes with your ability to attend to and understand a message. There are many kinds of noise, but we will focus on only the four you are most likely to encounter in public speaking situations: physical noise, psychological noise, physiological noise, and semantic noise.

Physical Noise

Physical noise consists of various sounds in an environment that interfere with a source's ability to hear. Construction noises right outside a window, planes flying directly overhead, or loud music in the next room can make it difficult to hear the message being presented by a speaker even if a microphone is being used. It is sometimes possible to manage the context to reduce the noise. Closing a window might be helpful. Asking the people in the next room to turn their music down might be possible. Changing to a new location is more difficult, as it involves finding a new location and having everyone get there.

Psychological Noise

Psychological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a receiver's internal thoughts. For example, if you are preoccupied with personal problems, it is difficult to give your full attention to understanding the meanings of a message. The presence of another person to whom you feel attracted, or perhaps a person you dislike intensely, can also be psychosocial noise that draws your attention away from the message.

Physiological Noise

Physiological noise consists of distractions to a speaker's message caused by a listener's own body. Maybe you're listening to a speech in class around noon and you haven't eaten anything. Your stomach may be growling and your desk is starting to look tasty. Maybe the room is cold and you're thinking more about how to keep warm than about what the speaker is saying. In either case, your body can distract you from attending to the information being presented.

Semantic Noise

Semantic noise occurs when a receiver experiences confusion over the meaning of a source's word choice. While you are attempting to understand a particular word or phrase, the speaker continues to present the message. While you are struggling with a word interpretation, you are distracted from listening to the rest of the message. One of the authors was listening to a speaker who mentioned using a sweeper to clean carpeting. The author was confused, as she did not see how a broom would be effective in cleaning carpeting. Later, the author found out that the speaker was using the word "sweeper" to refer to a vacuum cleaner; however, in the meantime, her listening was hurt by her inability to understand what the speaker meant. Another example of semantic noise is euphemism. Euphemism is diplomatic language used for delivering unpleasant information. For instance, if someone is said to be "flexible with the truth," it might take us a moment to understand that the speaker means this person sometimes lies.

Figure 1. Types of Noise

Many distractions are the fault of neither the listener nor the speaker. However, when you are the speaker, being aware of these sources of noise can help you reduce some of the noise that interferes with your audience's ability to understand you.

Attention Span

A person can only maintain focused attention for a finite length of time. In his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, New York University's Steinhardt School of Education professor Neil Postman argued that modern audiences have lost the ability to sustain attention to a message. (((Note: Postman, N. (1985). *Amusing ourselves to death: Public discourse in the age of show business*. New York:

Viking Press.))) More recently, researchers have engaged in an ongoing debate over whether Internet use is detrimental to attention span. (((Note: Carr, N. (2010, May 24). The Web shatters focus, rewires brains. *Wired Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/05/ff_nicholas_carr/all/1))) Whether or not these concerns are well founded, you have probably noticed that even when your attention is "glued" to something in which you are deeply interested, every now and then you pause to do something else, such as getting a drink of water, stretching, or looking out the window.

The limits of the human attention span can interfere with listening, but listeners and speakers can use strategies to prevent this interference. As many classroom instructors know, listeners will readily renew their attention when the presentation includes frequent breaks in pacing. (((Note: Middendorf, J., & Kalish, A. (1996). The "change-up" in lectures. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*, *5*(2).))) For example, a fifty- to seventy-five-minute class session might include some lecture material alternated with questions for class discussion, video clips, handouts, and demonstrations. Instructors who are adept at holding listeners' attention also move about the front of the room, writing on the board, drawing diagrams, and intermittently using slide transparencies or PowerPoint slides.

If you have instructors who do a good job of keeping your attention, they are positive role models showing strategies you can use to accommodate the limitations of your audience's attention span.

Receiver Biases

Good listening involves keeping an open mind and withholding judgment until the speaker has completed the message. Conversely, biased listening is characterized by jumping to conclusions; the biased listener believes, "I don't need to listen because I already know what I think." Receiver biases can refer to two things: biases with reference to the speaker and preconceived ideas and opinions about the topic or message. Both can be considered noise. Everyone has biases, but good listeners have learned to hold them in check while listening.

The first type of bias listeners can have is related to the speaker. Often a speaker stands up and an audience member simply doesn't like the speaker, so the audience member may not listen to the speaker's message. Maybe you have a classmate who just gets under your skin for some reason, or maybe you question a classmate's competence on a given topic. When we have preconceived notions about a speaker, those biases can interfere with our ability to listen accurately and competently to the speaker's message.

The second type of bias listeners can have is related to the topic or content of the speech. Maybe the speech topic is one you've heard a thousand times, so you just tune out the speech. Or maybe the speaker is presenting a topic or position you fundamentally disagree with. When listeners have strong preexisting opinions about a topic, such as the death penalty, religious issues, affirmative action, abortion, or global warming, their biases may make it difficult for them to even consider new information about the topic, especially if the new information is inconsistent with what they already believe to be true. As listeners, we have difficulty identifying our biases, especially when they seem to make sense. However, it is worth recognizing that our lives would be very difficult if no one ever considered new points of view or new information. We live in a world where everyone can benefit from clear thinking and open-minded listening.

Listening or Receiver Apprehension

Listening or receiver apprehension is the fear that you might be unable to understand the message or process the information correctly or be able to adapt your thinking to include the new information coherently. (((Note: Wheeless, L. R. (1975). An investigation of receiver apprehension and social context dimensions of communication apprehension. *Speech Teacher*, *24*, 261–268.))) In some situations, you might worry that the information presented will be "over your head"—too complex, technical, or advanced for you to understand adequately.

Many students will actually avoid registering for courses in which they feel certain they will do poorly. In other cases, students will choose to take a challenging course only if it's a requirement. This avoidance might be understandable but is not a good strategy for success. To become educated people, students should take a few courses that can shed light on areas where their knowledge is limited.

As a speaker, you can reduce listener apprehension by defining terms clearly and using simple visual aids to hold the audience's attention. You don't want to underestimate or overestimate your audience's knowledge on a subject, so good audience analysis is always important. If you know your audience doesn't have special knowledge on a given topic, you should start by defining important terms. Research has shown us that when listeners do not feel they understand a speaker's message, their apprehension about receiving the message escalates. Imagine that you are listening to a speech about chemistry and the speaker begins talking about "colligative properties." You may start questioning whether you're even in the right place. When this happens, apprehension clearly interferes with a listener's ability to accurately and competently understand a speaker's message. As a speaker, you can lessen the listener's apprehension by explaining that colligative properties focus on *how much* is dissolved in a solution, not on *what* is dissolved in a solution. You could also give an example that they might readily understand, such as saying that it doesn't matter what kind of salt you use in the winter to melt ice on your driveway, what is important is how much salt you use.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Listeners are often unable to accurately attend to messages because of four types of noise. Physical noise is caused by the physical setting a listener is in. Psychological noise exists within a listener's own mind and prevents him or her from attending to a speaker's message. Physiological noise exists because a listener's body is feeling some sensation that prevents him or her from attending to a speaker's message. Semantic noise is caused by a listener's confusion over the meanings of words used by a speaker.
- All audiences have a limited attention span. As a speaker, you must realize how long you can reasonably expect an audience to listen to your message.
- Listeners must be aware of the biases they have for speakers and the topics speakers choose. Biases can often prevent a listener from accurately and competently listening to a speaker's actual message.
- Receiver apprehension is the fear that a listener might be unable to understand the message, process the information correctly, or adapt thinking to include new information coherently. Speakers need to make sure their messages are appropriate to the audience's knowledge level and clearly define and explain all terms that could lead to increased anxiety.

EXERCISES

1. In a group, discuss what distracts you most from listening attentively to a speaker. Have you found ways to filter out or manage the distraction?
2. This chapter refers to psychological noise as one of the distractions you might experience. Identify strategies you have successfully used to minimize the impact of the specific psychological noises you have experienced.
3. Make a list of biases you might have as a listener. You can think about how you'd answer such questions as, With whom would I refuse to be seen socially or in public? Who would I reject as a trustworthy person to help if I were in danger? What topics do I refuse to discuss? The answers to these questions might provide useful insights into your biases as a listener.

STAGES OF LISTENING

Learning Objectives

- Explain the receiving stage of listening.
- Explain the understanding stage of listening.
- Explain the remembering stage of listening.
- Explain the evaluating stage of listening.
- Explain the responding stage of listening.
- Understand the two types of feedback listeners give to speakers.

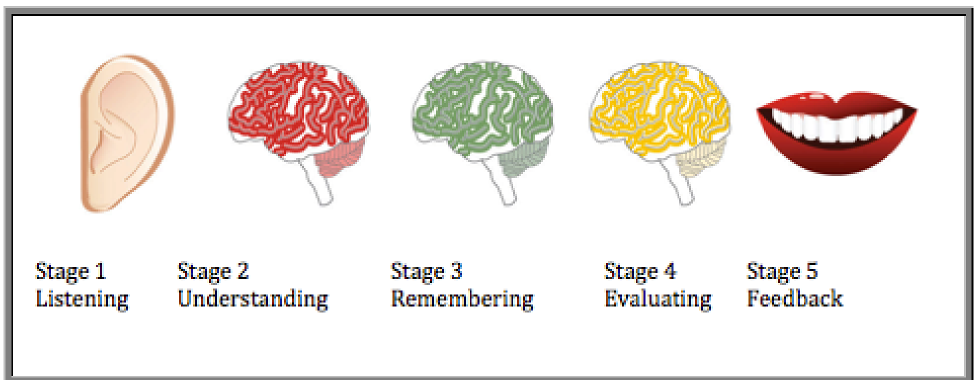


Figure 1. Stages of feedback

As you read earlier, there are many factors that can interfere with listening, so you need to be able to manage a number of mental tasks at the same time in order to be a successful listener. Author Joseph DeVito has divided the listening process into five stages: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. (((Note: DeVito, J. A. (2000). *The elements of public speaking* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Longman.)))

Receiving

Receiving is the intentional focus on hearing a speaker's message, which happens when we filter out other sources so that we can isolate the message and avoid the confusing mixture of incoming stimuli. At this stage, we are still only hearing the message. Notice in Figure 1 "Stages of Feedback" that this stage is represented by the ear because it is the primary tool involved with this stage of the listening process.

One of the authors of this book recalls attending a political rally for a presidential candidate at which about five thousand people were crowded into an outdoor amphitheater. When the candidate finally started speaking, the cheering and yelling was so loud that the candidate couldn't be heard easily despite using a speaker system. In this example, our coauthor had difficulty receiving the message because of the external noise. This is only one example of the ways that hearing alone can require sincere effort, but you must hear the message before you can continue the process of listening.

Understanding

In the understanding stage, we attempt to learn the meaning of the message, which is not always easy. For one thing, if a speaker does not enunciate clearly, it may be difficult to tell what the message was—did your friend say, "I think she'll be late for class," or "my teacher delayed the class"? Notice in Figure 1 "Stages of Feedback" that stages two, three, and four are represented by the brain because it is the primary tool involved with these stages of the listening process.

Even when we have understood the words in a message, because of the differences in our backgrounds and experience, we sometimes make the mistake of attaching our own meanings to the words of others. For example, say you have made plans with your friends to meet at a certain movie theater, but you arrive and nobody else shows up. Eventually you find out that your friends are at a different theater all the way across town where the same movie is playing. Everyone else understood that the meeting place was the "west side" location, but you wrongly understood it as the "east side" location and therefore missed out on part of the fun.

The consequences of ineffective listening in a classroom can be much worse. When your professor advises students to get an "early start" on your speech, he or she probably hopes that you will begin your research right away and move on to developing a thesis statement and outlining the speech as soon as possible. However, students in your class might misunderstand the instructor's meaning in several ways. One student might interpret the advice to mean that as long as she gets started, the rest of the assignment will have time to develop itself. Another student might instead think that to start early is to start on the Friday before the Monday due date instead of Sunday night.

So much of the way we understand others is influenced by our own perceptions and experiences. Therefore, at the understanding stage of listening we should be on the lookout for places where our perceptions might differ from those of the speaker.

Remembering

Remembering begins with listening; if you can't remember something that was said, you might not have been listening effectively. Wolvin and Coakley note that the most common reason for not remembering a message after the fact is because it wasn't really learned in the first place. (((Note: Wolvin, A., & Coakley, C. G. (1996). *Listening* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.))) However, even when you are listening attentively, some messages are more difficult than others to understand and remember. Highly complex messages that are filled with detail call for highly developed listening skills. Moreover, if something distracts your attention even for a moment, you could miss out on information that explains other new concepts you hear when you begin to listen fully again.

It's also important to know that you can improve your memory of a message by processing it meaningfully—that is, by applying it in ways that are meaningful to you. (((Note: Gluck, M. A., Mercado, E., & Myers, C. E. (2008). *Learning and memory: From brain to behavior*. New York: Worth Publishers, pp. 172–173.))) Instead of simply repeating a new acquaintance's name over and over, for example, you might remember it by associating it with something in your own life. "Emily," you might say, "reminds me of the Emily I knew in middle school," or "Mr. Impiari's name reminds me of the Impala my father drives."

Finally, if understanding has been inaccurate, recollection of the message will be inaccurate, too.

Evaluating

The fourth stage in the listening process is evaluating, or judging the value of the message. We might be thinking, "This makes sense" or, conversely, "This is very odd." Because everyone embodies biases and perspectives learned from widely diverse sets of life experiences, evaluations of the same message can vary widely from one listener to another. Even the most open-minded listeners will have opinions of a speaker, and those opinions will influence how the message is evaluated. People are more likely to evaluate a message positively if the speaker speaks clearly, presents ideas logically, and gives reasons to support the points made.

Unfortunately, personal opinions sometimes result in prejudiced evaluations. Imagine you're listening to a speech given by someone from another country and this person has an accent that is hard to understand. You may have a hard time simply making out the speaker's message. Some people find a foreign accent to be interesting or even exotic, while others find it annoying or even take it as a sign of ignorance. If a listener has a strong bias against foreign accents, the listener may not even attempt to attend to the message. If you mistrust a speaker because of an accent, you could be rejecting important or personally enriching information. Good listeners have learned to refrain from making these judgments and instead to focus on the speaker's meanings.

Responding

Responding—sometimes referred to as feedback—is the fifth and final stage of the listening process. It's the stage at which you indicate your involvement. Almost anything you do at this stage can be interpreted as feedback. For example, you are giving positive feedback to your instructor if at the end of class you stay behind to finish a sentence in your notes or approach the instructor to ask for clarification. The opposite kind of feedback is given by students who gather their belongings and rush out the door as soon as class is over. Notice in Figure 4.3 "Stages of Feedback" that this stage is represented by the lips because we often give feedback in the form of verbal feedback; however, you can just as easily respond nonverbally.

Formative Feedback

Not all response occurs at the end of the message. Formative feedback is a natural part of the ongoing transaction between a speaker and a listener. As the speaker delivers the message, a listener signals his or her involvement with focused attention, note-taking, nodding, and other behaviors that indicate understanding or failure to understand the message. These signals are important to the speaker, who is interested in whether the message is clear and accepted or whether the content of the message is meeting the resistance of preconceived ideas. Speakers can use this feedback to decide whether additional examples, support materials, or explanation is needed.

Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given at the end of the communication. When you attend a political rally, a presentation given by a speaker you admire, or even a class, there are verbal and nonverbal ways of indicating your appreciation for or your disagreement with the messages or the speakers at the end of the message. Maybe you'll stand up and applaud a speaker you agreed with or just sit staring in silence after listening to a speaker you didn't like. In other cases, a speaker may be attempting to persuade you to donate to a charity, so if the speaker passes a bucket and you make a donation, you are providing feedback on the speaker's effectiveness. At the same time, we do not always listen most carefully to the messages of speakers we admire. Sometimes we simply enjoy being in their presence, and our summative feedback is not about the message but about our attitudes about the speaker. If your feedback is limited to something like, "I just love your voice," you might be indicating that you did not listen carefully to the content of the message.

There is little doubt that by now, you are beginning to understand the complexity of listening and the great potential for errors. By becoming aware of what is involved with active listening and where difficulties might lie, you can prepare yourself both as a listener and as a speaker to minimize listening errors with your own public speeches.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The receiving stage of listening is the basic stage where an individual hears a message being sent by a speaker.
- The understanding stage of listening occurs when a receiver of a message attempts to figure out the meaning of the message.
- The remembering stage of listening is when a listener either places information into long-term memory or forgets the information presented.
- The evaluating stage of listening occurs when a listener judges the content of the message or the character of the speaker.
- The responding stage of listening occurs when a listener provides verbal or nonverbal feedback about the speaker or message.
- During the responding stage of listening, listeners can provide speakers with two types of feedback designed to help a speaker know whether a listener is understanding and what the listener thinks of a message. Formative feedback is given while the speaker is engaged in the act of speech making. Summative feedback is given at the conclusion of a speech.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of some of the abstract words you have misunderstood. What were the consequences of the misunderstanding?
2. Reflect on your listening in class or in other settings where remembering information is important. What keeps you from remembering important information accurately?
3. Give an example of a time when you felt that your message was misunderstood or treated with shallow attention. How did you know your message had been misunderstood or rejected? What does this mean you must do as a student of public speaking?

LISTENING CRITICALLY

Learning Objectives

- Define and explain critical listening and its importance in the public speaking context.
- Understand six distinct ways to improve your ability to critically listen to speeches.
- Evaluate what it means to be an ethical listener.

As a student, you are exposed to many kinds of messages. You receive messages conveying academic information, institutional rules, instructions, and warnings; you also receive messages through political discourse, advertisements, gossip, jokes, song lyrics, text messages, invitations, web links, and all other manner of communication. You know it's not all the same, but it isn't always clear how to separate the truth from the messages that are misleading or even blatantly false. Nor is it always clear which messages are intended to help the listener and which ones are merely self-serving for the speaker. Part of being a good listener is to learn when to use caution in evaluating the messages we hear.

Critical listening in this context means using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a message makes sense in light of factual evidence. Critical listening can be learned with practice but is not necessarily easy to do. Some people never learn this skill; instead, they take every message at face value even when those messages are in conflict with their knowledge. Problems occur when messages are repeated to others who have not yet developed the skills to discern the difference between a valid message and a mistaken one. Critical listening can be particularly difficult when the message is complex. Unfortunately, some speakers may make their messages intentionally complex to avoid critical scrutiny. For example, a city treasurer giving a budget presentation might use very large words and technical jargon, which make it difficult for listeners to understand the proposed budget and ask probing questions.

Six Ways to Improve Your Critical Listening

Critical listening is first and foremost a skill that can be learned and improved. In this section, we are going to explore six different techniques you can use to become a more critical listener.

Recognizing the Difference between Facts and Opinions

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan is credited with saying, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts." (((Note: Wikiquote. (n.d.). Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Retrieved from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Daniel_Patrick_Moynihan))) Part of critical listening is learning to separate opinions from facts, and this works two ways: critical listeners are aware of whether a speaker is delivering a factual message or a message based on opinion, and they are also aware of the interplay between their own opinions and facts as they listen to messages.

In American politics, the issue of health care reform is heavily laden with both opinions and facts, and it is extremely difficult to sort some of them out. A clash of fact versus opinion happened on September 9, 2010, during President Obama's nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress outlining his health care reform plan. In this speech, President Obama responded to several rumors about the plan, including the claim "that our reform effort will insure illegal immigrants. This, too, is false—the reforms I'm proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally." At this point, one congressman yelled out, "You lie!" Clearly, this congressman did not have a very high opinion of either the health care reform plan or the president. However, when the nonpartisan watch group Factcheck.org examined the language of the proposed bill, they found that it had a section titled "No Federal Payment for Undocumented Aliens." (((Note: Factcheck.org, a Project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. (2009, September 10). Obama's health care speech. Retrieved from http://www.factcheck.org/2009/09/obamas-health-care-speech)))

Often when people have a negative opinion about a topic, they are unwilling to accept facts. Instead, they question all aspects of the speech and have a negative predisposition toward both the speech and the speaker.

This is not to say that speakers should not express their opinions. Many of the greatest speeches in history include personal opinions. Consider, for example, Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech, in which he expressed his personal wish for the future of American society. Critical listeners may agree or disagree with a speaker's opinions, but the point is that they know when a message they are hearing is based on opinion and when it is factual.

Uncovering Assumptions

If something is factual, supporting evidence exists. However, we still need to be careful about what evidence does and does not mean. Assumptions are gaps in a logical sequence that listeners passively fill with their own ideas and opinions and may or may not be accurate. When listening to a public speech, you may find yourself being asked to assume something is a fact when in reality many people question that fact. For example, suppose you're listening to a speech on weight loss. The speaker talks about how people who are overweight are simply not motivated or lack the self-discipline to lose weight. The speaker has built the speech on the assumption that motivation and self-discipline are the only reasons why people can't lose weight. You may think to yourself, what about genetics? By listening critically, you will be more likely to notice unwarranted assumptions in a speech, which may prompt you to question the speaker if questions are taken or to do further research to examine the validity of the speaker's assumptions. If, however, you sit passively by and let the speaker's assumptions go unchallenged, you may find yourself persuaded by information that is not factual.

When you listen critically to a speech, you might hear information that appears unsupported by evidence. You shouldn't accept that information unconditionally. You would accept it under the condition that the speaker offers credible evidence that directly supports it.

Table 1. Facts vs. Assumptions

Facts	Assumptions
Facts are verified by clear, unambiguous evidence.	Assumptions are not supported by evidence.
Most facts can be tested.	Assumptions about the future cannot be tested in the present.

Be Open to New Ideas

Sometimes people are so fully invested in their perceptions of the world that they are unable to listen receptively to messages that make sense and would be of great benefit to them. Human progress has been possible, sometimes against great odds, because of the mental curiosity and discernment of a few people. In the late 1700s when the technique of vaccination to prevent smallpox was introduced, it was opposed by both medical professionals and everyday citizens who staged public protests. (((Note: Edward Jenner Museum. (n.d.). Vaccination. Retrieved from http://www.jennermuseum.com/Jenner/vaccination.html))) More than two centuries later, vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria, polio, and other infectious diseases have saved countless lives, yet popular opposition continues.

In the world of public speaking, we must be open to new ideas. Let's face it, people have a tendency to filter out information they disagree with and to filter in information that supports what they already believe. Nicolaus Copernicus was a sixteenth-century astronomer who dared to publish a treatise explaining that the earth revolves around the sun, which was a violation of Catholic doctrine. Copernicus's astronomical findings were labeled heretical and his treatise banned because a group of people at the time were not open to new ideas. In May of 2010, almost five hundred years after his death, the Roman Catholic Church admitted its error and reburied his remains with the full rites of Catholic burial. (((Note: Owen, R. (2010, May 23). Catholic church reburies "heretic" Nicolaus Copernicus with honour. *Times Online*. Retrieved from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article7134341.ece)))

While the Copernicus case is a fairly dramatic reversal, listeners should always be open to new ideas. We are not suggesting that you have to agree with every idea that you are faced with in life; rather, we are suggesting that you at least listen to the message and then evaluate the message.

Rely on Reason and Common Sense

If you are listening to a speech and your common sense tells you that the message is illogical, you very well might be right. You should be thinking about whether the speech seems credible and coherent. In this way, your use of common sense can act as a warning system for you.

One of our coauthors once heard a speech on the environmental hazards of fireworks. The speaker argued that fireworks (the public kind, not the personal kind people buy and set off in their backyards) were environmentally hazardous because of litter. Although there is certainly some paper that makes it to the ground before burning up, the amount of litter created by fireworks displays is relatively small compared to other sources of litter, including trash left behind by all the spectators watching fireworks at public parks and other venues. It just does not make sense to identify a few bits of charred paper as a major environmental hazard.

If the message is inconsistent with things you already know, if the argument is illogical, or if the language is exaggerated, you should investigate the issues before accepting or rejecting the message. Often, you will not be able to take this step during the presentation of the message; it may take longer to collect enough knowledge to make that decision for yourself.

However, when you are the speaker, you should not substitute common sense for evidence. That's why during a speech it's necessary to cite the authority of scholars whose research is irrefutable, or at least highly credible. It is all too easy to make a mistake in reasoning, sometimes called fallacy, in stating your case. We will discuss these fallacies in more detail in Chapter 8 "Supporting Ideas and Building Arguments". One of the most common fallacies is *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, a "common sense" form of logic that translates roughly as "after the fact, therefore because of the fact." The argument says that if A happened first, followed by B, then A caused B. We know the outcome cannot occur earlier than the cause, but we also know that the two events might be related indirectly or that causality works in a different direction. For instance, imagine a speaker arguing that because the sun rises after a rooster's crow, the rooster caused the sun to rise. This argument is clearly illogical because roosters crow many times each day, and the sun's rising and setting do not change according to crowing or lack thereof. But the two events are related in a different way. Roosters tend to wake up and begin crowing at first light, about forty-five minutes before sunrise. Thus it is the impending sunrise that causes the predawn crowing.

In Chapter 2 "Ethics Matters: Understanding the Ethics of Public Speaking," we pointed out that what is "common sense" for people of one generation or culture may be quite the opposite for people of a different generation or culture. Thus it is important not to assume that your audience shares the beliefs that are, for you, common sense.

Likewise, if the message of your speech is complex or controversial, you should consider the needs of your audience and do your best to explain its complexities factually and logically, not intuitively.

Relate New Ideas to Old Ones

As both a speaker and a listener, one of the most important things you can do to understand a message is to relate new ideas to previously held ideas. Imagine you're giving a speech about biological systems and you need to use the term "homeostasis," which refers to the ability of an organism to maintain stability by making constant adjustments. To help your audience understand homeostasis, you could show how homeostasis is similar to adjustments made by the thermostats that keep our homes at a more or less even temperature. If you set your thermostat for seventy degrees and it gets hotter, the central cooling will kick in and cool your house down. If your house gets below seventy degrees, your heater will kick in and heat your house up. Notice that in both cases your thermostat is making constant adjustments to stay at seventy degrees. Explaining that the body's homeostasis works in a similar way will make it more relevant to your listeners and will likely help them both understand and remember the idea because it links to something they have already experienced.

If you can make effective comparisons while you are listening, it can deepen your understanding of the message. If you can provide those comparisons for your listeners, you make it easier for them to give consideration to your ideas.

Take Notes

Note-taking is a skill that improves with practice. You already know that it's nearly impossible to write down everything a speaker says. In fact, in your attempt to record everything, you might fall behind and wish you had divided your attention differently between writing and listening.

Careful, selective note-taking is important because we want an accurate record that reflects the meanings of the message. However much you might concentrate on the notes, you could inadvertently leave out an important word, such as *not*, and undermine the reliability of your otherwise carefully written notes. Instead, if you give the same care and attention to listening, you are less likely to make that kind of a mistake.

It's important to find a balance between listening well and taking good notes. Many people struggle with this balance for a long time. For example, if you try to write down only key phrases instead of full sentences, you might find that you can't remember how two ideas were related. In that case, too few notes were taken. At the opposite end, extensive note-taking can result in a loss of emphasis on the most important ideas.

To increase your critical listening skills, continue developing your ability to identify the central issues in messages so that you can take accurate notes that represent the meanings intended by the speaker.

Listening Ethically

Ethical listening rests heavily on honest intentions. We should extend to speakers the same respect we want to receive when it's our turn to speak. We should be facing the speaker with our eyes open. We should not be checking our cell phones. We should avoid any behavior that belittles the speaker or the message.

Scholars Stephanie Coopman and James Lull emphasize the creation of a climate of caring and mutual understanding, observing that "respecting others' perspectives is one hallmark of the effective listener." (((Note: Coopman, S. J., & Lull, J. (2008). *Public speaking: The evolving art*. Cengage Learning, p. 60.))) Respect, or unconditional positive regard for others, means that you treat others with consideration and decency whether you agree with them or not. Professors Sprague, Stuart, and Bodary (((Note: Sprague, J., Stuart, D., & Bodary, D. (2010). *The speaker's handbook* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage.))) also urge us to treat the speaker with respect even when we disagree, don't understand the message, or find the speech boring.

Doug Lipman (1998), (((Note: Lippman, D. (1998). *The storytelling coach: How to listen, praise, and bring out people's best*. Little Rock, AR: August House.))) a storytelling coach, wrote powerfully and sensitively about listening in his book:

> Like so many of us, I used to take listening for granted, glossing over this step as I rushed into the more active, visible ways of being helpful. Now, I am convinced that listening is the single most important element of any helping relationship.
>
> Listening has great power. It draws thoughts and feelings out of people as nothing else can. When someone listens to you well, you become aware of feelings you may not have realized that you felt. You have ideas you may have never thought before. You become more eloquent, more insightful.…
>
> As a helpful listener, I do not interrupt you. I do not give advice. I do not do something else while listening to you. I do not convey distraction through nervous mannerisms. I do not finish your sentences for you. In spite of all my attempts to understand you, I do not assume I know what you mean.
>
> I do not convey disapproval, impatience, or condescension. If I am confused, I show a desire for clarification, not dislike for your obtuseness. I do not act vindicated when you misspeak or correct yourself.
>
> I do not sit impassively, withholding participation.
>
> Instead, I project affection, approval, interest, and enthusiasm. I am your partner in communication. I am eager for your imminent success, fascinated by your struggles, forgiving of your mistakes, always expecting the best. I am your delighted listener. (((Note: Lippman, D. (1998). *The storytelling coach: How to listen, praise, and bring out people's best*. Little Rock, AR: August House, pp. 110–111.)))

This excerpt expresses the decency with which people should treat each other. It doesn't mean we must accept everything we hear, but ethically, we should refrain from trivializing each other's concerns. We have all had the painful experience of being ignored or misunderstood. This is how we know that one of the greatest gifts one human can give to another is listening.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Critical listening is the process a listener goes through using careful, systematic thinking and reasoning to see whether a speaker's message makes sense in light of factual evidence. When listeners are not critical of the messages they are attending to, they are more likely to be persuaded by illogical arguments based on opinions and not facts.
- Critical listening can be improved by employing one or more strategies to help the listener analyze the message: recognize the difference between facts and opinions, uncover assumptions given by the speaker, be open to new ideas, use both reason and common sense when analyzing messages, relate new ideas to old ones, and take useful notes.
- Being an ethical listener means giving respectful attention to the ideas of a speaker, even though you may not agree with or accept those ideas.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a time when you were too tired or distracted to give your full attention to the ideas in a speech. What did you do? What should you have done?
2. Give an example of a mistake in reasoning that involved the speaker mistaking an assumption for fact.

RADIO PROGRAMS

Suspense: The Whistler

Listen to Episode #4, "Strange Sisters"

Western: Gunsmoke

Listen to Episode #41, "Another Man's Poison"

Science Fiction: X-Minus One

Listen to Episode #31, "A Logic Named Joe"

Crime: Dragnet

Listen to Episode #80, "Mother-in-Law Murder"

Comedy: My Friend Irma

Listen to Episode #15, "The Lonely Hearts Club"

LISTENING STUDY GUIDE

Differences Between listening and hearing

Listening	Hearing
focused	accidental
voluntary	involuntary

intentional	effortless
requires motivation and effort	automatic brain result

Benefits of Listening

- Become a Better Student
- Become a Better Friend
- People Will Perceive You as Intelligent and Perceptive
- Good Listening Can Help Your Public Speaking

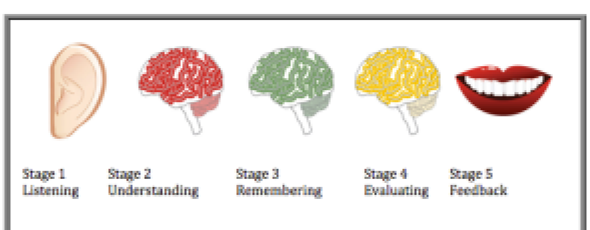
Listening Styles

People	Action	Content	Time
Interested in the speaker	interested in finding out what the speaker wants	interested in the message itself	prefer a message that gets to the point quickly.
listen to the message in order to learn how the speaker thinks and how they feel about their message.	sometimes called task-oriented listening	interested in learning	impatient with slow delivery or lengthy explanations
more attentive to the speaker than to the message.	listener seeks a clear message about what needs to be done	want to listen to well-developed information with solid explanations.	receptive for only a brief amount of time

Why Listening Is Difficult

- Noise (physical, psychological, physiological, semantic
- Attention Span
- Receiver Biases
- Listening or Receiver Apprehension

Stages of Listening



Six Ways to Improve Your Critical Listening

1. Recognizing the Difference between Facts and Opinions
2. Uncovering Assumptions
3. Be Open to New Ideas
4. Rely on Reason and Common Sense
5. Relate New Ideas to Old Ones
6. Take Notes

Key Terms

- Listening
- Hearing
- people listening style
- action listening style
- content listening style
- time listening style
- Physical Noise
- Psychological Noise
- Physiological Noise
- Semantic Noise
- Attention Span
- Receiver Biases
- Listening or Receiver Apprehension
- Receiving
- Understanding
- Remembering
- Evaluating
- Responding
- Formative Feedback
- Summative Feedback
- Facts
- Assumptions

A PDF of this Listening Study Guide can be downloaded here.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE: LISTENING

Because Verbal Communication is the starting point and foundation of our survey of communication, we will begin with the fundamental counterpoint to verbal communication; the practice of listening.

SUMMARY

Listen first and acknowledge what you hear, even if you don't agree with it, before expressing your experience or point of view . In order to get more of your conversation partner's attention in tense situations, pay attention first: listen and give a brief restatement of what you have heard (especially feelings) before you express your own needs or position. The kind of listening recommended here separates acknowledging from approving or agreeing. Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings does not have to mean that you approve of or agree with that person's actions or way of experiencing, or that you will do whatever someone asks.

By listening and then repeating back in your own words the essence and feeling of what you have just heard, from the speaker's point of view, you allow the speaker to feel the satisfaction of being understood, (a major human need). Listening responsively is always worthwhile as a way of letting people know that you care about them. Our conversation partners do not automatically know how well we have understood them, and they may not be very good at asking for confirmation. When a conversation is tense or difficult it is even more important to listen first and acknowledge what you hear . Otherwise, your chances of being heard by the other person may be very poor.

Listening to others helps others to listen. In learning to better coordinate our life activities with the life activities of others, we would do well to resist two very popular (but terrible) models of communication: arguing a case in court and debating. In courts and debates, each side tries to make its own points and listens to the other side only to tear down the other side's points. Since the debaters and attorneys rarely have to reach agreement or get anything done together, it doesn't seem to matter how much ill will their conversational style generates. But most of us are in a very different situation. We probably spend most of our lives trying to arrange agreement and cooperative action, so we need to be concerned about engaging people, not defeating them. *In business (and in family life, too) the person we defeat today will probably be the person whose cooperation we need tomorrow!*

As Marshall Rosenberg reported in his book, *Nonviolent Communication*, "studies in labor-management negotiations demonstrate that the time required to reach conflict resolution is cut in half when each negotiator agrees, before responding, to repeat what the previous speaker had said" (emphasis added).

When people are upset about something and want to talk about it their capacity to listen is greatly diminished. Trying to get your point across to a person who is trying to express a strong feeling will usually cause the other person to try even harder to get that emotion recognized. On the other hand, once people feel that their messages and feelings have been heard, they start to relax and they have more attention available for listening. For example, in a hospital a nurse might say, after listening to a patient: ***"I hear that you are very uncomfortable right now, Susan, and you would really like to get out of that bed and move around. But your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."*** The patient in this example is much more likely to listen to the nurse than if the nurse simply said: ***"I'm really sorry, Susan, but you have to stay in bed. Your doctor says your bones won't heal unless you stay put for another week."*** What is missing in this second version is any acknowledgment of the patient'spresent experience.

The power of simple acknowledging. The practice of responsive listening described here separates ***acknowledging*** the thoughts and feelings that a person expresses from ***approving, agreeing, advising, or persuading.***Acknowledging another person's thoughts and feelings…

…still leaves you the option of agreeing or disagreeing with that person's point of view, actions or way of experiencing.

…still leaves you with the option of saying yes or no to a request.

…still leaves you with the option of saying more about the matter being discussed.

One recurring problem in conflict situations is that many people don'tseparate acknowledging from agreeing. They are joined together in people's minds, somewhat like a two-boxes-of-soap "package deal" in a supermarket. The effect of this is, let us say, that John feels that any acknowledgment of Fred's experience implies agreement and approval, therefore John will not acknowledge any of Fred's experience. Fred tries harder to be heard and John tries harder not to hear. Of course, this is a recipe for stalemate (if not disaster).

People want both: to be understood and acknowledged on the one hand, and to be approved and agreed with, on the other. With practice, you can learn to respond first with a simple acknowledgment. As you do this, you may find that, figuratively speaking, you can give your conversation partners half of what they want, even if you can't give them all of what they want. In many conflict situations that will be a giant step forward. Your conversation partners will also be more likely to acknowledge your position and experience, even if they don't sympathize with you. This mutual acknowledgment can create an emotional atmosphere in which it is easier to work toward agreement or more gracefully accommodate disagreements. Here are three examples of acknowledgments that do not imply agreement:

- Counselor to a drug abuse client:
  "I hear that you are feeling terrible right now and that you really want some drugs. And I want you to know that I'm still concerned this stuff you're taking is going to kill you."
- Mother to seven-year-old:
  "I know that you want some more cake and ice cream, Jimmy, because it tastes so good, but you've already had three pieces and I'm really worried that you'll get an upset tummy. That's why I don't want you to have any more."
- Union representative to company owner's representative:
  "I understand from your presentation that you see XYZ Company as short of cash, threatened by foreign competition, and not in a position to agree to any wage increases. Now I would like us to explore contract arrangements that would allow my union members to get a wage increase and XYZ Company to advance its organizational goals."

In each case a person's listening to and acknowledgment of his or her conversation partner's experience or position increases the chance that the conversation partner will be willing to listen in turn. The examples given above are all a bit long and include a declaration of the listener's position or decision. In many conversations you may simply want to reassure your conversation partner with a word or two that you have heard and understood whatever they are experiencing. For example, saying, "You sound really happy [or sad] about that," etc.

As you listen to the important people in your life, give very brief summaries of the experiences they are talking about and name the want or feeling that appears to be at the heart of the experience. For example:

"So you were really happy about that…"

"So you drove all the way over there and they didn't have the part they promised you on the phone. What a let-down…

"Sounds like you wanted a big change in that situation…"

"Wow. Your dog got run over. You must be feeling really terrible…"

The point here is to empathize, not to advise. If you added to that last statement, "That total SLOB!!! You should sue that person who ran over your dog. People need to pay for their mistakes, etc.", you would be taking over the conversation and also leading the person away from her or his feelings and toward your own.

Other suggestions about listening more responsively:

As a general rule, do not just repeat another person's exact words.Summarize their experience in your own words . But in cases where people actually scream or shout something, sometimes you may want to repeat a few of their exact words in a quiet tone of voice to let them know that you have heard it just as they said it.

If the emotion is unclear, make a tentative guess, as in "So it sounds like maybe you were a little unhappy about all that…" The speaker will usually correct your guess if it needs correcting.

Listening is an art and there are very few fixed rules. Pay attention to whether the person speaking accepts your summary by saying things such as "yeah!", "you got it," "that's right," and similar responses.

If you can identify with what the other person is experiencing, then in your tone of voice (as you summarize what another person is going through), express a little of the feeling that your conversation partner is expressing. (Emotionally flat summaries feel strange and distant.)

Such compassionate listening is a powerful resource for navigating through life, and it also makes significant demands on us as listeners. We may need to learn how to hold our own ground while we restate someone else's position. That takes practice. We also have to be able to listen to people's criticisms or complaints without becoming disoriented or totally losing our sense of self worth. That requires cultivating a deeper sense of self worth, which is no small project. In spite of these difficulties, the results of compassion-ate, responsive listening have been so rewarding in my life that I have found it to be worth all the effort required.

Real life examples. Here are two brief, true stories about listening. The first is about listening going well and the second is about the heavy price people sometimes pay for not listening in an empathic way.

John Gottman describes his discovery that listening really works: "I remember the day I first discovered how Emotion Coaching [the author's approach to empathic listening] might work with my own daughter, Moriah. She was two at the time and we were on a cross-country flight home after visiting with relatives. Bored, tired, and cranky, Moriah asked me for Zebra, her favorite stuffed animal and comfort object. Unfortunately, we had absentmindedly packed the well-worn critter in a suitcase that was checked at the baggage counter.

"I'm sorry, honey, but we can't get Zebra right now. He's in the big suitcase in another part of the airplane," I explained."I want Zebra," she whined pitifully.

"I know, sweetheart. But Zebra isn't here. He's in the baggage compartment under-neath the plane and Daddy can't get him until we get off the plane. I'm sorry."

"I want Zebra! I want Zebra!" she moaned again. Then she started to cry, twisting in her safety seat and reaching futilely toward a bag on the floor where she'd seen me go for snacks.

"I know you want Zebra," I said, feeling my blood pressure rise. "But he's not in that bag. He's not here and I can't do anything about it. Look, why don't we read about Ernie," I said, fumbling for one of her favorite picture books.

"Not Ernie!" she wailed, angry now. "I want Zebra. I want him NOW!"

By now, I was getting "do something" looks from the passengers, from the airline attendants, from my wife, seated across the aisle. I looked at Moriah's face, red with anger, and imagined how frustrated she must feel. After all, wasn't I the guy who could whip up a peanut butter sandwich on demand? Make huge purple dinosaurs appear with the flip of a TV switch? Why was I withholding her favorite toy from her? Didn't I understand how much she wanted it?

I felt bad. Then it dawned on me: I couldn't get Zebra, but I could offer her the next best thing — a father's comfort. "You wish you had Zebra now," I said to her. "Yeah," she said sadly.

"And you're angry because we can't get him for you."

"Yeah."

"You wish you could have Zebra right now," I repeated, as she stared at me, looking rather curious, almost surprised. "Yeah," she muttered. "I want him now."

"You're tired now, and smelling Zebra and cuddling with him would feel real good. I wish we had Zebra here so you could hold him. Even better, I wish we could get out of these seats and find a big, soft bed full of all your animals and pillows where we could just lie down." "Yeah," she agreed.

"We can't get Zebra because he's in another part of the airplane," I said. "That makes you feel frustrated." "Yeah," she said with a sigh.

"I'm so sorry," I said, watching the tension leave her face. She rested her head against the back of her safety seat. She continued to complain softly a few more times, but she was growing calmer. Within a few minutes, she was asleep.

Although Moriah was just two years old, she clearly knew what she wanted — her Zebra. Once she began to realize that getting it wasn't possible, she wasn't interested in my excuses, my arguments, or my diversions. My validation, however, was another matter. Finding out that I understood how she felt seemed to make her feel better. For me, it was a memorable testament to the power of empathy."

Sam Keen describes a friend's lament about the consequences of not listening deeply: "Long ago and far away, I expected love to be light and easy and without failure.

"Before we moved in together, we negotiated a prenuptial agreement. Neither of us had been married before, and we were both involved in our separate careers. So our agreement not to have children suited us both. Until… on the night she announced that her period was late and she was probably pregnant, we both treated the matter as an embarrassing accident with which we would have to deal. Why us? Why now? Without much discussion, we assumed we would do the rational thing — get an abortion. As the time approached, she began to play with hypothetical alternatives, to ask in a plaintive voice with half misty eyes: `Maybe we should keep the baby. Maybe we could get a live-in helper, and it wouldn't interrupt our lives too much. Maybe I could even quit my job and be a full-time mother for a few years.` ”

“Maybe . . .“ To each maybe I answered: “Be realistic. Neither of us is willing to make the sacrifices to raise a child.“ She allowed herself to be convinced, silenced the voice of her irrational hopes and dreams, and terminated the pregnancy.

“It has been many years now since our `decision,` and we are still together and busy with our careers and our relationship. Still no children, even though we have recently been trying to get pregnant. I can't help noticing that she suffers from spells of regret and guilt, and a certain mood of sadness settles over her. At times I know she longs for her missing child and imagines what he or she would be doing now. I reassure her that we did the right thing. But when I see her lingering guilt and pain and her worry that she missed her one chance to become a mother, I feel that I failed an important test of love. Because my mind had been closed to anything that would interrupt my plans for the future, I had listened to her without deep empathy or compassion. I'm no longer sure we made the right decision. I am sure that in refusing to enter into her agony, to share the pain of her ambivalence, I betrayed her.”

“I have asked for and, I think, received forgiveness, but there remains a scar that was caused by my insensitivity and self-absorption.”

[*Workbook editor's note: I have not included this real life excerpt to make a point for or against abortion. The lesson I draw from this story is thatwhatever decision this couple made, they would have been able to live with that decision better if the husband had listened in a way that acknowledged all his wife's feelings rather than listening only to argue her out of her feelings. What lesson do you draw from this story?*]

THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING: EXERCISES

Speaking Ethically

Imagine that you're in the audience when the main speaker proposes an action that is so offensive to you that you earnestly want to stand up and walk right out of the room. You are sitting near the end of a row, so it would be possible to do so. You notice that other people are listening intently. You hope others will not assume that by your presence, you show that you agree. What is the most ethical choice?

1. Continue listening to be sure your understanding is accurate and to see whether the speaker explains the point of view in a way that makes it more acceptable.
2. Interrupt the speaker so other listeners won't be “taken in” by the message.
3. Walk out as a symbolic gesture of disagreement.

End-of-Chapter Assessment

1. The difference between hearing and listening is
    1. very small; the two processes amount to about the same thing
    2. hearing is mindful and intentional, but listening is effortless
    3. hearing is effortless, but listening is mindful and intentional

4. hearing requires strong motivation and attention, but listening is an automatic human response to speech
5. hearing depends on listening, but listening does not depend on hearing

2. Although you are a strong advocate of First Amendment rights, especially the protection of religious freedom, you find an exception to your beliefs when a speaker defends the rights of separatist religious sects to practice polygamy. Which of these responses is most ethical?
   1. Wait until the end of the presentation, then stand up and insist that the speaker listen to your rebuttal, just as you have listened to him or her.
   2. Seek a way to infiltrate the sect in order to investigate the truth of what's really going on.
   3. Go home to look up passages in the Bible that either support or refute the speakers claims, then write an anonymous letter to a newspaper opinion page.
   4. Sit quietly and listen to the speech to decide whether the message contains elements of value or whether to leave your original opinion unmodified.
   5. Have a sense of humor; lighten the mood with a little laughter.
3. Which of the following statements is best?
   1. A fact is carefully reasoned.
   2. A fact is verifiable by authoritative evidence.
   3. A carefully considered opinion is as good as factual evidence.
   4. Assumptions are always wrong.
   5. Opinions, even expert opinions, never belong in human discourse.
4. What is critical listening?
   1. negative judgments listeners develop during a speech
   2. the practice of detecting flaws in a speech
   3. a listener's use of his or her opinions in order to mentally refute factual details in the speech
   4. the rejection of a message
   5. careful scrutiny of the ideas and logical elements of a speech
5. Listening to a speech with an open mind means
   1. accepting the claims and conclusions of the speech
   2. listening in order to learn
   3. listening in order to quote the speaker later
   4. replacing your outdated knowledge with the newer information in the speech
   5. you must allow the speaker his or her First Amendment rights

Answer Key

1. c
2. d
3. b
4. e
5. b

LISTENING SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click "Check Your Understanding" to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three "Maybe"/"Probably"/"Definitely" options to see if you were correct.
- Click "Next" to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

DISCUSSION: LISTENING ACTIVITY

Choose one of the radio programs available on this page to listen to.

Answer the following questions based on the radio program that you have chosen in a new thread in the Listening Activity discussion board.

1. Which radio program did you choose?
2. Describe the experience of listening to this program. Did you find it difficult to pay attention or get into the story? What noise/distractions made listening to the story more difficult?
3. Were you multitasking while you listened to the story? Did completing an activity while you listened (as opposed to just sitting still and listening) make it more or less difficult to pay attention?
4. Do the participants in this program use slang or ambiguous language? Did its use make it more/less difficult to pay attention to or understand the program? Was the language use vivid enough to capture your interest? Could you picture what you were being told? Was it more or less difficult to understand what you were hearing because you did not have an accompanying visual? Is it possible to "listen" for nonverbal communication?
5. Did you enjoy this program? Would you recommend it to others?

Leave meaningful replies on two of your fellow classmates' posts.

Grading

- Original Post (15 points)
- Replies (2.5 points each)

VIDEO: THE POWER OF LISTENING

Leon Berg is a founding member of the Ojai Foundation, an educational sanctuary in the Upper Ojai Valley of Southern California. He is a Senior Trainer of the Ojai Foundation's Center for Council Practice, and has been facilitating Council groups in the U.S. and abroad for over 20 years. In 2001, he went to Israel to seed the practice of Council among Israeli Jews and Arabs, co-founding the Israeli non-profit organization Ma'agal Hakshava (Listening Circles). Leon has returned to Israel many times since then to conduct Council trainings and lead a variety of coexistence programs. In 2008 Leon and his partner, Glori Zeltzer, a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, began to teach their relationship workshops, Tools For Togetherness, to couples seeking to enrich and/or heal their relationships. They now teach the practices to couples in the US and abroad. For more information visit http://tools-for-togetherness.com

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/6iDMuB6NjNA

CHALLENGE: LISTENING

Challenge 1:

First exercise for Challenge 1: Active Listening. Find a practice partner. Take turns telling events from your lives. As you listen to your practice partner, sum up your practice partner's overall experience and feelings inbrief responses during the telling:

Student notes on this exercise:

Second exercise for Challenge 1: Learning from the past with the tools of the present. Think of one or more conversations in your life that went badly. Imagine how the conversations might have gone better with more responsive listening. Write down your alternative version of the conversation.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
After reading this chapter you should be able to: • Define interpersonal communication. • Explain self-disclosure. • Understand the role of communication climate on interpersonal communication. • Be aware of the role of dialectical tensions in interpersonal communication. • Understand the unique dynamics of friendship. • Understand the unique dynamics of romantic relationships. • Understand the unique dynamics of family. • Understand the various ways of interpreting and responding to conflict in interpersonal communication.

Think about your relationships in the last few years. You may have just transitioned from high school to a community college or university. Perhaps you and your friends from high school went to different colleges and are now living far apart from each other. If you have recently been separated by distance from friends or family, you have noticed that it is more difficult to stay connected and share all of the little things that go on in your day. As you continue to grow and change in college, it is likely that you will create relationships along the way. Being away from your family, you will probably notice changes to your relationships with them. All of these dynamics, and many more, fall under the scope of interpersonal communication.

Before going any further, let us define interpersonal communication. "Inter" means between, among, mutually, or together. The second part of the word, "personal" refers to a specific individual or particular role that an individual may occupy. Thus, **interpersonal communication** is *communication between individual people*. We often engage in interpersonal communication in **dyads**, which means *between two people*. It may also occur in small groups such as you and your housemates trying to figure out a system for household chores.

Important to know, is that the definition of interpersonal communication is not simply a quantitative one. What this means is that you cannot define it by merely counting the number of people involved. Instead, Communication scholars view interpersonal communication qualitatively; meaning that it occurs when people communicate with each other as unique individuals. Thus, **interpersonal communication** is *a process of exchange where there is desire and motivation on the part of those involved to get to know each other as individuals.* We will use this definition of interpersonal communication to explore the three primary types of relationships in our lives—friendships, romantic, and family. Given that conflict is a natural part of interpersonal communication, we will also discuss multiple ways of understanding and managing conflict. But before we go into detail about specific interpersonal relationships, let's examine two important aspects of interpersonal communication: self-disclosure and climate.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

Interpersonal Communication Now

Melanie Booth and Self-disclosure in the Classroom

One emerging area of interest in the arena of interpersonal communication is self-disclosure in a classroom setting and the challenges that teachers face dealing with personal boundaries. Melanie Booth wrote an article discussing this issue, incorporating her personal experiences. Even though self-disclosure challenges boundaries between teacher-student or student-student, she states that it can offer "transformative" learning opportunities that allow students to apply what they have learned to their life in a deeper more meaningful way. She concludes that the "potential boundary challenges associated with student self-disclosure can be proactively managed and retroactively addressed with careful thought and action and with empathy, respect, and ethical responses toward our students" (Booth).

Because interpersonal communication is the primary means by which we get to know others as unique individuals, it is important to understand the role of self-disclosure. **Self-disclosure** is the *process of revealing information about yourself to others that is not readily known by them*—you have to disclose it. In face-to-face interactions, telling someone "I am a white woman" would not be self-disclosure because that person can perceive that about you without being told. However, revealing, "I am an avid surfer" or "My favorite kind of music is "electronic trance" would be examples of self-disclosure because these are pieces of personal information others do not know unless you tell them. Given that our definition of interpersonal communication requires people to "build knowledge of one another" to get to know them as unique individuals, the necessity for self-disclosure should be obvious.

There are degrees of self-disclosure, ranging from relatively safe (revealing your hobbies or musical preferences), to more personal topics (illuminating fears, dreams for the future, or fantasies). Typically, as relationships deepen and trust is established, self-disclosure increases in both breadth and depth. We tend to disclose facts about ourselves first (I am a Biology major), then move towards opinions (I feel the war is wrong), and finally disclose feelings (I'm sad that you said that). An important aspect of self-disclosure is the rule of reciprocity. This rule states that self-disclosure between two people works best in a back and forth fashion. When you tell someone something personal, you probably expect them to do the same. When one person reveals more than another, there can be an imbalance in the relationship because the one who self discloses more may feel vulnerable as a result of sharing more personal information.

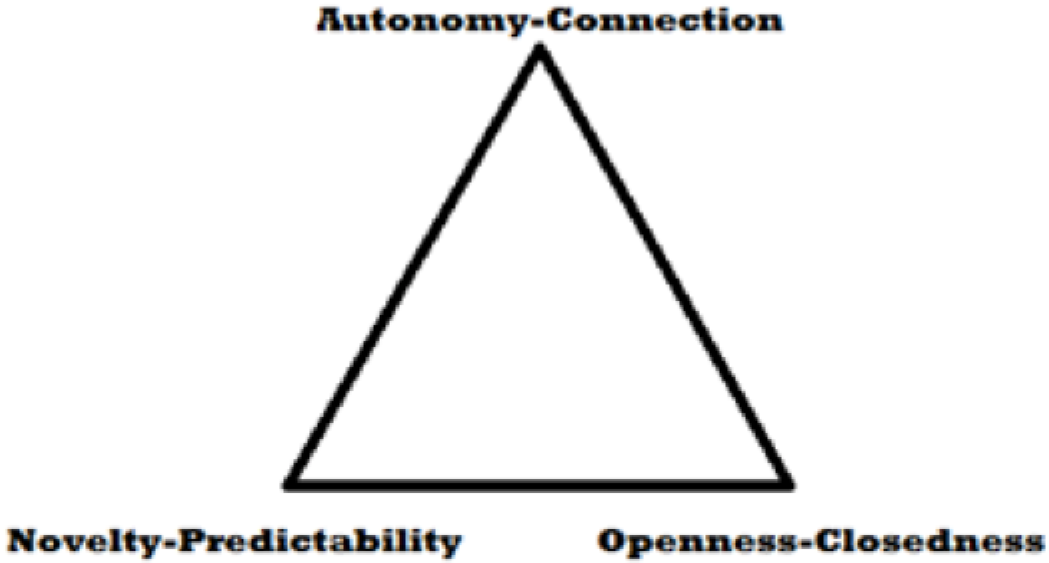
One way to visualize self-disclosure is the Johari Window which comes from combining the first names of the window's creators, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. The window is divided into four quadrants: the arena, the blind spot, the facade, and the unknown (Luft).

The arena area contains information that is known to us and to others, such as our height, hair color, occupation, or major. In general, we are comfortable discussing or revealing these topics with most people. Information in the blind spot includes those things that may be apparent to others, yet we are unaware of it in ourselves. The habit of playing with your hair when nervous may be a habit that others have observed but you have not. The third area, the façade, contains information that is hidden from others but is known to you. Previous mistakes or failures, embarrassing moments, or family history are topics we typically hold close and reveal only in the context of safe, long-term relationships. Finally, the unknown area contains information that neither others, nor we, know about. We cannot know how we will react when a parent dies or just what we will do after graduation until the experience occurs. Knowing about ourselves, especially our blind and unknown areas, enables us to have a healthy, well-rounded self-concept. As we make choices to self-disclose to others, we are engaging in negotiating relational dialectics.

	Known to Self	**Not Known to Self**
Known to Others	Arena "Open Self"	Blindspot "Blind Self"
Not Known to Others	Facade "Hidden Self"	Unknown Self

Relational Dialectics

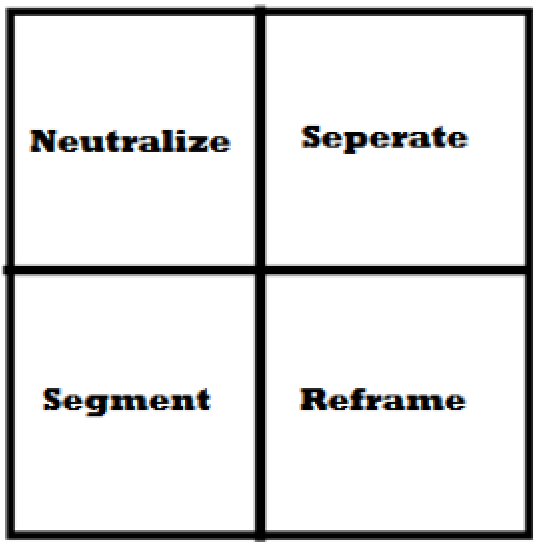
One way we can better understand our personal relationships is by understanding the notion of relational dialectics. Baxter describes three relational dialectics that are constantly at play in interpersonal relationships. Essentially, they are a continuum of needs for each participant in a relationship that must be negotiated by those involved. Let's take a closer look at the three primary relational dialectics that are at work in all interpersonal relationships.



- Autonomy-Connection refers to our *need to have close connection with others as well as our need to have our own space and identity*. We may miss our romantic partner when they are away but simultaneously enjoy and cherish that alone time. When you first enter a romantic relationship, you probably want to be around the other person as much as possible. As the relationship grows, you likely begin to desire fulfilling your need for autonomy, or alone time. In every relationship, each person must balance how much time to spend with the other, versus how much time to spend alone.
- Novelty-Predictability is the idea that *we desire predictability as well as spontaneity in our relationships*. In every relationship, we take comfort in a certain level of routine as a way of knowing what we can count on the other person in the relationship. Such predictability provides a sense of comfort and security. However, it requires balance with novelty to avoid boredom. An example of balance balance might be friends who get together every Saturday for brunch, but make a commitment to always try new restaurants each week.
- Openness-Closedness refers to *the desire to be open and honest with others while at the same time not wanting to reveal every thing about yourself to someone else*. One’s desire for privacy does not mean they are shutting out others. It is a normal human need. We tend to disclose the most personal information to those with whom we have the closest relationships. However, even these people do not know everything about us. As the old saying goes, “We all have skeletons in our closet,” and that’s okay.

How We Handle Relational Dialectics

Understanding that these three dialectical tensions are at play in all relationships is a first step in understanding how our relationships work. However, awareness alone is not enough. Couples, friends, or family members have strategies for managing these tensions in an attempt to meet the needs of each person. Baxter identifies four ways we can handle dialectical tensions.



4 Ways to Handle Dialectical Tension

The first option is to **neutralize** the extremes of the dialectical tensions. Here, *individuals compromise, creating a solution where neither person's need (such as novelty or predictability) is fully satisfied*. Individual needs may be different, and never fully realized. For example, if one person seeks a great deal of autonomy, and the other person in the relationship seeks a great deal of connection, neutralization would not make it possible for either person to have their desires met. Instead, each person might feel like they are not getting quite enough of their particular need met.

The second option is **separation**. This is when someone *favors one end of the dialectical continuum and ignores the other, or alternates between the extremes.* For example, a couple in a commuter relationship in which each person works in a different city may decide to live apart during the week (autonomy) and be together on the weekends (connection). In this sense, they are alternating between the extremes by being completely alone during the week, yet completely together on the weekends.

When people decide to *divide their lives into spheres* they are practicing **segmentation**. For example, your extended family may be very close and choose to spend religious holidays together. However, members of your extended family might reserve other special days such as birthdays for celebrating with friends. This approach divides needs according to the different segments of your life.

The final option for dealing with these tensions is **reframing**. This strategy requires creativity not only in managing the tensions, but understanding how they work in the relationship. For example, *the two ends of the dialectic are not viewed as opposing or contradictory* at all. Instead, they are understood as supporting the other need, as well as the relationship itself. A couple who does not live together, for example, may agree to spend two nights of the week alone or with friends as a sign of their autonomy. The time spent alone or with others gives each person the opportunity to develop themselves and their own interests so that they are better able to share themselves with their partner and enhance their connection.

In general, there is no one right way to understand and manage dialectical tensions since every relationship is unique. However, to always satisfy one need and ignore the other may be a sign of trouble in the relationship (Baxter). It is important to remember that relational dialectics are a natural part of our relationships and that we have a lot of choice, freedom, and creativity in how we work them out with our relational partners. It is also important to remember that dialectical tensions are negotiated differently in each relationship. The ways we self disclose and manage dialectical tensions contributes greatly to what we call the communication climate in relationships.

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE

Interpersonal Communication Now

"Sticks and Stones Can Beak my Bones But Words Can Hurt Me Too"

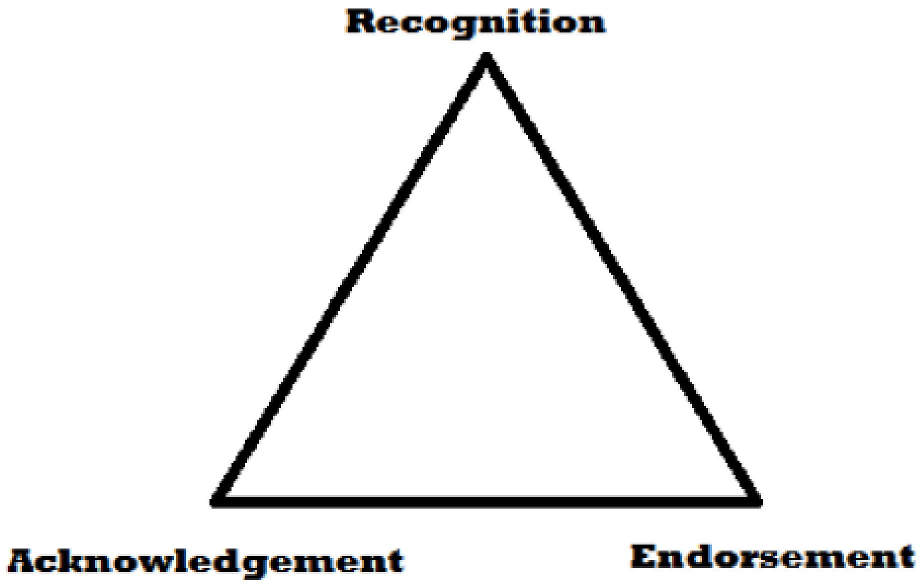
In a study published in the journal *Science*, researchers reported that the sickening feeling we get when we are socially rejected (being ignored at a party or passed over when picking teams) is real. When researchers measured brain responses to social stress they found a pattern similar to what occurs in the brain when our body experiences physical pain. Specifically, "the area affected is the anterior cingulated cortex, a part of the brain known to be involved in the emotional response to pain" (Fox). The doctor who conducted the study, Matt Lieberman, a social psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, said, "It makes sense for humans to be programmed this way. . .Social interaction is important to survival."

Do you feel organized, or confined, in a clean workspace? Are you more productive when the sun is shining than when it's gray and cloudy outside? Just as factors like weather and physical space impact us, communication climate influences our interpersonal interactions. **Communication climate** is the *"overall feeling or emotional mood between people"* (Wood 245). If you dread going to visit your family during the holidays because of tension between you and your sister, or you look forward to dinner with a particular set of friends because they make you laugh, you are responding to the communication climate—the overall mood that is created because of the people involved and the type of communication they bring to the interaction. Let's look at two different types of communication climates: Confirming and Disconfirming climates.

Confirming and Disconfirming Climates

Positive and negative climates can be understood along three dimensions—recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement. We experience **Confirming Climates** when we receive *messages that demonstrate our value and worth from those with whom we have a relationship*. Conversely, we experience **Disconfirming Climates** when we receive *messages that suggest we are devalued and unimportant*. Obviously, most of us like to be in confirming climates because they foster emotional safety as well as personal and relational growth. However, it is likely that your relationships fall somewhere between the two extremes. Let's look at three types of messages that create confirming and disconfirming climates.

- **Recognition Messages**: Recognition *messages either confirm or deny another person's existence*. For example, if a friend enters your home and you smile, hug him, and say, "I'm so glad to see you" you are confirming his existence. If you say "good morning" to a colleague and she ignores you by walking out of the room without saying anything, she is creating a disconfirming climate by not recognizing you as a unique individual.
- **Acknowledgement Messages**: Acknowledgement messages go beyond recognizing another's existence by *confirming what they say or how they feel*. Nodding our head while listening, or laughing appropriately at a funny story, are nonverbal acknowledgement messages. When a friend tells you she had a really bad day at work and you respond with, "Yeah, that does sound hard, do you want to go somewhere quiet and talk?", you are acknowledging and responding to her feelings. In contrast, if you were to respond to your friend's frustrations with a comment like, "That's nothing. Listen to what happened to me today," you would be ignoring her experience and presenting yours as more important.



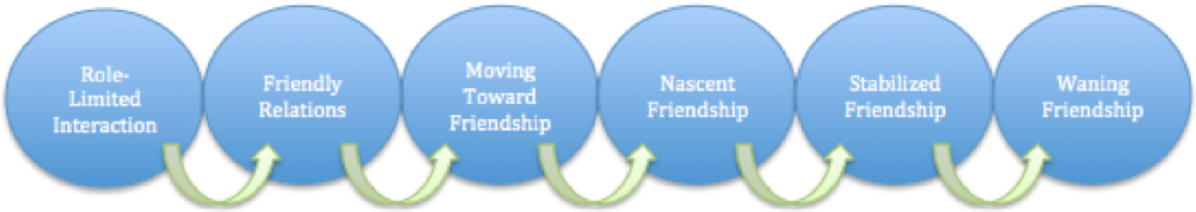
3 Types of Messages Shaping Communication Climates

- Endorsement Messages: Endorsement messages go one step further by *recognizing a person's feelings as valid*. Suppose a friend comes to you upset after a fight with his girlfriend. If you respond with, "Yeah, I can see why you would be upset" you are endorsing his right to feel upset. However, if you said, "Get over it. At least you have a girlfriend" you would be sending messages that deny his right to feel frustrated in that moment. While it is difficult to see people we care about in emotional pain, people are responsible for their own emotions. When we let people own their emotions and do not tell them how to feel, we are creating supportive climates that provide a safe environment for them to work though their problems.

Now that you understand that we must self-disclose to form interpersonal relationships, and that self-disclosure takes place in communication climates, we want to spend the rest of the chapter briefly highlighting some of the characteristics of the three primary interpersonal relationships in which we engage: Friendships, Romantic Relationships, and Family Relationships.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS

A common need we have as people is the need to feel connected with others. We experience great joy, adventure, and learning through our connection and interactions with others. The feeling of wanting to be part of a group and liked by others is natural. One way we meet our need for connection is through our friendships. Friendship means different things to different people depending on age, gender, and cultural background. Common among all friendships is the fact that they are interpersonal relationships of choice. Throughout your life, you will engage in an ongoing process of developing friendships. Rawlins suggests that we develop our friendships through a series of six steps. While we may not follow these six steps in exact order in all of our relationships, these steps help us understand how we develop friendships.



The first step in building friendships occurs through Role-Limited Interaction. In this step, we *interact with others based on our social roles*. For example, when you meet a new person in class, your interaction centers around your role as "student." The communication is characterized by a focus on superficial, rather than personal topics. In this step we engage in limited self-disclosure, and rely on scripts and stereotypes. When two first-time freshmen met in an introductory course, they struck up a conversation and interacted according to the roles they played in the context of their initial communication. They began a conversation because they sit near each other in class and discussed how much they liked or disliked aspects of the course.

The second step in developing friendships is called Friendly Relations. This stage is characterized by *communication that moves beyond initial roles as the participants begin to interact with one another to see of there are common interests, as well as an interest to continue getting to know one another*. As the students spend more time together and have casual conversations, they may realize a wealth of shared interests. They realize that both were traveling from far distances to go to school and understood each other's struggle with missing their families. Each of them also love athletics, especially playing basketball. The development of this friendship occurred as they identified with each other as more than classmates. They saw each other as women of the same age, with similar goals, ambitions, and interests. Moreover, as one of them studied Communication and the other Psychology, they appreciated the differences as well as similarities in their collegiate pursuits.

The third step in developing friendships is called Moving Toward Friendship. In this stage, participants *make moves to foster a more personalized friendship*. They may begin meeting outside of the setting in which the relationship started, and begin increasing the levels of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure enables the new friends to form bonds of trust. When the students entered this stage it was right before one joined the basketball club on their college campus. As she started practices and meetings, she realized this would be something fun for her and her classmate to do together so she invited her classmate along.

The fourth step in developing friendships is called Nascent Friendship. In this stage individuals *commit to spending more time together*. They also may start using the term "friend" to refer to each other as opposed to "a person in my history class" or "this guy I work with." The interactions extend beyond the initial roles as participants work out their own private communication rules and norms. For example, they may start calling or texting on a regular basis or reserving certain times and activities for each other such as going on evening runs together. As time went on, the students started texting each other more frequently just to tell each other a funny story that happened during the day, to make plans for going out to eat, or to plan for meeting at the gym to work out.

The fifth step in developing friendships is Stabilized Friendship. In this stage, friends *take each other for granted as friends, but not in a negative way*. Because the friendship is solid, they assume each other will be in their lives. There is an assumption of continuity. The communication in this stage is also characterized by a sense of trust as levels of self-disclosure increase and each person feels more comfortable revealing parts of him or herself to the other. This stage can continue indefinitely throughout a lifetime. When the women became friends, they were freshmen in college. After finishing school some years later, they moved to separate regions for graduate school. While they were sad to move away from one another, they knew the friendship would continue. To this day they continue to be best friends.

The final step in friendship development is Waning Friendship. As you know, friendships do not always have a happy ending. *Many friendships come to an end*. Friendships may not simply come to an abrupt end. Many times there are stages that show a decline of a friendship, but in Rawlin's model, the ending of a friendship is summed up by this step. Perhaps the relationship is too difficult to sustain over large geographic distances. Or, sometimes people change and grow in different directions and have little in common with old friends. Sometimes friendship rules are violated to a degree beyond repair. We spoke earlier of trust as a component of friendships. One common rule of trust is that if we tell friends a secret, they are expected to keep it a secret. If that rule is broken, and a friend continually breaks your trust by telling your secrets to others, you are likely to stop thinking of them as your friend.

Challenges for Friendships

While the above steps are a general pathway toward friendship, they are not always smooth. As with any relationship, challenges exist in friendships that can strain their development. Three of the more common challenges to friendships are gender, cultural diversity, and sexual attraction. Important to remember, is that each of these constructs comes with its own conflicts of power and privilege because of the the cultural norms and the values we give to certain characteristics. These are challenges to relationships since studies show that people tend to associate with others that are similar to themselves (Echols & Graham). Take a look at the pair on the side of the page, they identify as different genders, ethnicities, cultures, and are even attracted to different sexes. Their friendship not only offers an opportunity to learn about differences through each other, but also offers challenges because of these differences. As we emphasize throughout the book, factors such as our gender identities and cultural backgrounds always play a role in our interactions with others.

- Gender: Research suggests that both women and men value trust and intimacy in their friendships and value their time spent with friends (Mathews, Derlega & Morrow; Bell & Coleman; Monsour & Rawlins). However, there are some differences in the interactions that take place within women's and men's friendships (Burleson, Jones & Holmstrom; Coates; Harriman). Quite common among female friends, is to get together simply to talk and catch up with one another. When calling her close friend, Antoinette might say, "Why don't you come over to my place so we can talk?" The need to connect through verbal communication is explicitly stated and forms the basis for the relationship. In contrast, among male friends a more common approach to interaction is an invitation to engage in an activity as a means of facilitating conversation. For example, John might say to his friend, "Hey, Mike, let's get out surfing this weekend." The explicit request is to engage in an activity (surfing), but John and Mike understand that as they engage in the activity, they will talk, joke around, and reinforce their friendship ties.

While we have often looked at gender as male and female, culture is changing in which gender is viewed as a spectrum rather than the male/female binary. Monsour & Rawlins explain the new waves of research into different types of gender communities. More recent research is more inclusive to gender definitions that extend beyond the male/female binary. This research may be cutting edge in its field, but as society becomes more accepting of difference, new ideas of relationship rules will emerge.

- Culture: Cultural values shape how we understand our friendships. In most Western societies that emphasize individualism (as opposed to collectivism), friendships are seen as voluntary in that we get to choose who we want in our friendship circle. If we do not like someone we do not have to be friends with him/her. Contrast this to the workplace, or school, where we may be forced to get along with colleagues or classmates even though we may not like them. In many collectivist cultures, such as Japan and China, friendships carry certain obligations that are understood by all parties (Carrier; Kim & Markman). These may include gift giving, employment and economic opportunities, and cutting through so-called 'bureaucratic red tape.' Although these sorts of connections, particularly in business and politics, may be frowned upon in the United States because they contradict our valuing of individualism, they are a natural, normal, and logical result of friendships in collectivist cultures.
- Sexual Attraction: The classic film, *When Harry Met Sally*, highlights how sexual attraction can complicate friendships. In the movie, Harry quotes the line, "Men and women can't be friends because the sex always gets in the way." Levels of sexual attraction or sexual tension may challenge friendships between heterosexual men and women, gay men, and lesbian women. This may arise from an internal desire of one of the friends to explore a sexual relationship, or if someone in the relationship indicates that he/she wants to be "more than friends." These situations might place strain on the friendship and

require the individuals to address the situation if they want the friendship to continue. One approach has been the recent definition of friendships called, “Friends with Benefits.” This term implies an understanding that two people will identify their relationship as a friendship, but will be open to engaging in sexual activity without committing to the other characteristics common in romantic relationships.

Friendships Now

Take a moment to reflect on how many friends you have in your everyday life. Is that number equivalent or more than the number you have on social media accounts like Facebook? Chances are, those numbers are very different. To those of us who have access to social media, it is changing the ways we develop and maintain friendships. When you make a friend in physical life, the other person has to be in close enough proximity to communicate with on a regular basis to have a face-to-face interaction. That concept is almost nonexistent in the world of social media. Rawlin’s first step in developing friendships, Role-Limited Interaction, can be bypassed and moved right into Friendly Relations with the click of a button.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Like other relationships in our lives, romantic relationships play an important role in fulfilling our needs for intimacy, social connection, and sexual relations. Like friendships, romantic relationships also follow general stages of creation and deterioration. Before we explore these stages, let’s look at our definition of romantic relationships.

In many Western cultures, romantic relationships are voluntary. We are free to decide whom to date and form life-long romantic relationships. In some Eastern cultures these decisions may be made by parents, or elders in the community, based on what is good for the family or social group. Even in Western societies, not everyone holds the same amount of freedom and power to determine their relational partners. Parents or society may discourage interracial, interfaith, or interclass relationships. While it is now legale for same-sex couples to marry, many same-sex couples still suffer political and social restrictions when making choices about marrying and having children. Much of the research on how romantic relationships develop is based on relationships in the West. In this context, romantic relationships can be viewed as voluntary relationships between individuals who have intentions that each person will be a significant part of their ongoing lives.

Think about your own romantic relationships for a moment. To whom are you attracted? Chances are they are people with whom you share common interests and encounter in your everyday routines such as going to school, work, or participation in hobbies or sports. In other words, self-identity, similarity, and proximity are three powerful influences when it comes to whom we select as romantic partners. We often select others that we deem appropriate for us as they fit our self-identity; heterosexuals pair up with other heterosexuals, lesbian women with other lesbian women, and so forth. Social class, religious preference, and ethnic or racial identity are also great influences as people are more likely to pair up with others of similar backgrounds. Logically speaking, it is difficult (although not impossible with the prevalence of social media and online dating services) to meet people outside of our immediate geographic area. In other words, if we do not have the opportunity to meet and interact with someone at least a little, how do we know if they are a person with whom we would like to explore a relationship? We cannot meet, or maintain a long-term relationship, without sharing some sense of proximity.

Interpersonal Communication and You

How Do You Love?

Love can come in many different forms. There is a love between a mother and her child. The love between two brothers. The love between a dog and its human companions. These different types of love have many similarities yet have phenomenal differences. Love can be sexual, but it is definitely contextual. The Greeks had six distinct words for love depending on the context, whereas we often use the single term "love" to describe many things. I love pizza. I love my mother. I love my dog. Look at the table below to see what Greek word for love you would use in these sentences.

Type of Love	Definition
Eros	Passion and Commitment
Ludus	Game Playing
Storge	Love and Friendship
Pragma	Pragmatic Love
Mania	Emotional Intensity
Agape	Selfless Caring

We are certainly not suggesting that we only have romantic relationships with carbon copies of ourselves. Over the last few decades, there have been some dramatic shifts when it comes to numbers and perceptions of interracial marriage. It is more and more common to see a wide variety of people that make up married couples.

Just like the steps we examined for developing friendships, there are general stages we follow in the development and maintenance of romantic relationships. Let's look at these six stages of growth in romantic relationships.

The first stage in the development of romantic relationships is **No Interaction**. As the name suggests, the initial stage of a romantic relationship *occurs when two people have not interacted*. For example, you may see someone you are attracted to on the first day of class and think to yourself, "I really want to meet her." Our attraction for someone may motivate us to move beyond the no interaction stage to see if there is a possibility of developing a romantic relationship.

The second stage for developing romantic relationships is **Invitational Communication**. When we are attracted to someone, we may *signal or invite them to interact with us*. For example, you can do this by asking them to dinner, to dance at a club, or even, "I really liked that movie. What did you think?" The significance here is in the relational level (how the people feel about each other) rather than the content level (the topic) of the message. As the poet, Maya Angelou, explains, "Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning." The 'shades of deeper meaning' are the relational level messages that invite others to continue exploring a possible romantic relationship. Quite often, we strategize how we might go about inviting people into communication with us so we can explore potential romantic development.

Interpersonal Communication and You

Take a Chance

Chances are that there is someone who has caught your eye somewhere on campus. Quite possibly, there is a person in your class right now that you find attractive (maybe someone is even attracted to you at this very moment) and you would like to get to know them better. How would you go about moving from the "No Interaction" stage to the "Invitational Communication" stage? Take a chance and go introduce yourself. Hopefully things will turn out magical between the two of you. If nothing else, maybe you'll meet a new friend.

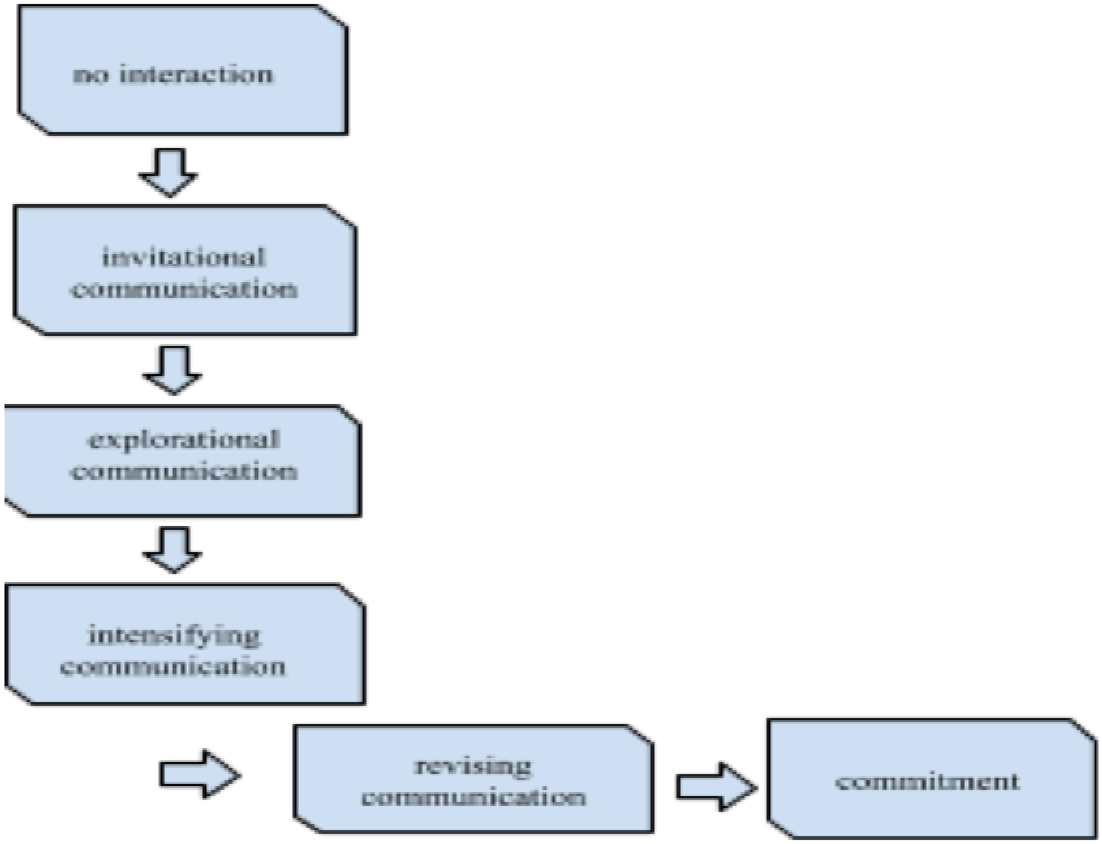
The third stage of developing romantic relationships is **Explorational Communication**. When *individuals respond favorably to our invitational communication* we then engage in explorational communication. In this stage, we share information about ourselves while looking for mutual interests, shared political or religious views, and similarities in family background. Self-disclosure increases so we can give and receive personal information in a way that fosters trust and intimacy. Common dating activities in this stage include going to parties or other publicly structured events, such as movies or a concert, that foster interaction and self-disclosure.

The fourth stage of romantic relationships is **Intensifying Communication**. If we continue to be attracted (mentally, emotionally, and physically) to one another, we begin engaging in intensifying communication. *This is the happy stage (the "relationship high") where we cannot bear to be away from the other person*. It is here that you might plan all of your free time together, and begin to create a private relational culture. Going out to parties and socializing with friends takes a back seat to more private activities such as cooking dinner together at home or taking long walks on the beach. Self-disclosure continues to increase as each person has a strong desire to know and understand the other. In this stage, we tend to idealize one another in that we downplay faults (or don't see them at all), seeing only the positive qualities of the other person.

Interpersonal Communication and You

Often relationships end, and do so for a variety of reasons. People may call it quits for serious issues such as unfaithfulness or long distance struggles. While sometimes people slowly grow apart and mutually decide to move on without each other. There are a plethora of reasons why people end their relationships. Sometimes it is not a pleasant experience: the initial realization that the relationship is going to cease to exist, the process of breaking up, and then the aftermath of the situation can be difficult to navigate. In an attempt to save you some potential heartache and arm you with advice/knowledge to pass along, here are some video links that propose some insight on dealing with such issues.
Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/Isw4qF_xU8s
Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/oBYs_taeiyM

The fifth stage of romantic relationship development is **Revising Communication**. When the "relational high" begins to wear off, couples begin to have *a more realistic perspective of one another, and the relationship as a whole*. Here, people may recognize the faults of the other person that they so idealized in the previous stage. Also, couples must again make decisions about where to go with the relationship—do they stay together and work toward long-term goals, or define it as a short-term relationship? A couple may be deeply in love and also make the decision to break off the relationship for a multitude of reasons. Perhaps one person wants to join the Peace Corps after graduation and plans to travel the world, while the other wants to settle down in their hometown. Their individual needs and goals may not be compatible to sustain a long-term commitment.



Commitment is the sixth stage in developing romantic relationships. This occurs when a couple makes the *decision to make the relationship a permanent part of their lives*. In this stage, the participants assume they will be in each other's lives forever and make joint decisions about the future. While marriage is an obvious sign of commitment it is not the only signifier of this stage. Some may mark their intention of staying together in a commitment ceremony, or by registering as domestic partners. Likewise, not all couples planning a future together legally marry. Some may lose economic benefits if they marry, such as the loss of Social Security for seniors or others may oppose the institution (and its inequality) of marriage.

Obviously, simply committing is not enough to maintain a relationship through tough times that occur as couples grow and change. Like a ship set on a destination, a couple must learn to steer though rough waves as well as calm waters. A couple can accomplish this by learning to communicate through the good and the bad.**Navigating** is when a couple continues to *revise their communication and ways of interacting to reflect the changing needs of each person*. Done well, life's changes are more easily enjoyed when viewed as a natural part of the life cycle. The original patterns for managing dialectical tensions when a couple began dating, may not work when they are managing two careers, children, and a mortgage payment. Outside pressures such as children, professional duties, and financial responsibilities put added pressure on relationships that require attention and negotiation. If a couple neglects to practice effective communication with one another, coping with change becomes increasingly stressful and puts the relationship in jeopardy.

Not only do romantic couples progress through a series of stages of growth, they also experience stages of deterioration. Deterioration does not necessarily mean that a couple's relationship will end. Instead, couples may move back and forth from deterioration stages to growth stages throughout the course of their relationship.

Case In Point

Legal Marriage for Same-Sex Couples

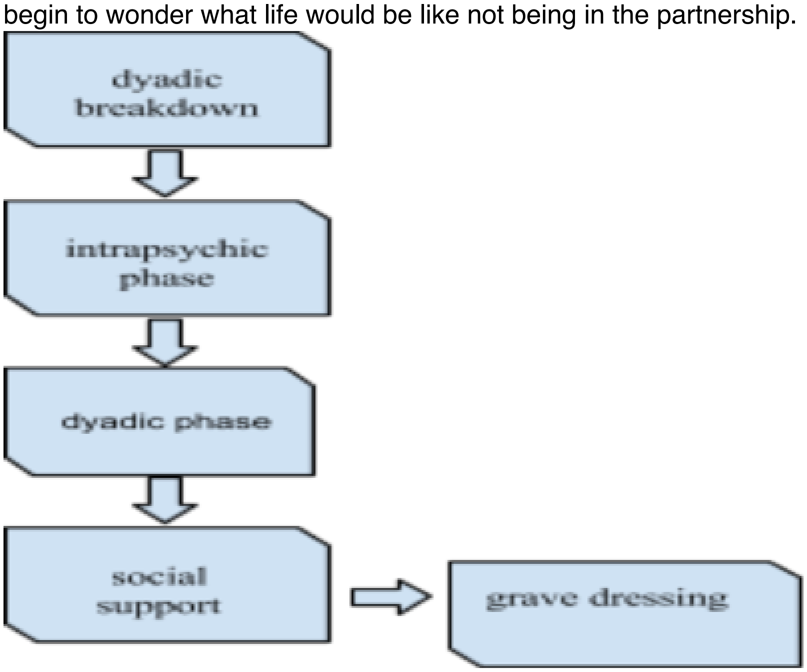
The Netherlands became the first country (4/1/01), and Belgium the second (1/30/03), to offer legal marriage to same sex couples. Since then Canada (6/28/05) and Spain (6/29/05) have also removed their country's ban against same-sex marriage. The state of Massachusetts (5/17/04) was the first U.S. state to do so and since then, many more states have followed. As of 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the right marriage for both heterosexual and gay couples.

Domestic Partnerships

The status of domestic partner along with benefits for same-sex couples is recognized in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greenland, Iceland, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and in parts of the United States. For more on Marriage Traditions in Various Times and Cultures, see
www.buddybuddy.com/mar-trad.html

The first stage of deterioration, **Dyadic Breakdown**, occurs when *romantic partners begin to neglect the small details that have always bound them together*. For example, they may stop cuddling on the couch when they rent a movie and sit in opposite chairs. Taken in isolation this example does not mean a relationship is in trouble. However, when intimacy continues to decrease, and the partners feel dissatisfied, this dissatisfaction can lead to worrying about the relationship.

The second stage of deterioration, the **Intrapsychic Phase**, occurs when *partners worry that they do not connect with one another in ways they used to, or that they no longer do fun things together*. When this happens they may begin to imagine their life without the relationship. Rather than seeing the relationship as a given, the couple may begin to wonder what life would be like not being in the partnership.



The third stage of deterioration, the **Dyadic Phase**, occurs when ***partners make the choice to talk about their problems***. In this stage, they discuss how to resolve the issues and may seek outside help such as a therapist to help them work through the reasons they are growing apart. This could also be the stage where couples begin initial discussions about how to divide up shared resources such as property, money, or children.

The fourth stage of deterioration, **Social Support**, occurs when *termination is inevitable and the partners begin to look outside the relationship for social support*. In this stage couples will make the news public by telling friends, family, or children that the relationship is ending. As family members listen to problems, or friends offer invitations to go out and keep busy, they provide social support. The couple needs social support from outside individuals in the process of letting go of the relationship and coming to terms with its termination.

The fifth stage of deterioration, **Grave Dressing**, occurs when *couples reach closure in a relationship and move on with life*. Like a literal death, a relationship that has ended should be mourned. People need time to go through this process in order to fully understand the meaning of the relationship, why it ended, and what they can learn from the experience. Going through this stage in a healthy way helps us learn to navigate future relationships more successfully.

You can probably recognize many of these stages from your own relationships or from relationships you've observed. Experience will tell you that we do not always follow these stages in a linear way. A couple, for example, may enter counseling during the dyadic phase, work out their problems, and enter a second term of intensifying communication, revising, and so forth. Other couples may skip some stages all together. Whatever the case, these models are valuable because they provide us with a way to recognize general communicative patterns and options we have at each stage of our relationships. Knowing what our choices are, and their potential consequences, gives us greater tools to build the kind of relationships we desire in our personal lives.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

The third primary type of interpersonal relationship we engage in is that of family. What is family? Is family created by legal ties, or the bond of sharing common blood? Or, can a family be considered people who share commitment to one another? In an effort to recognize the diversity of families we define **family** as an *arranged group, usually related by blood or some binding factor of commonality, where individual roles and relationships modify over time.* Family relations are typically long term and generally have a period in which common space is shared.

Pearson suggests that families share similar characteristics as they tend to be, organized, a relational transactional group, sharing a living space for prolonged periods of time and a mixture of interpersonal images that evolve through the exchange of meaning over time. Let's take a few moments to unpack this definition.

- **Families Are Organized.** All of us occupy and play fairly predictable roles (parent, child, older sibling) in our family relationships. Similarly, communication in these relationships can be fairly predictable. For example, your younger brother may act as the family peacemaker, while your older sister always initiates fights with her siblings.

- **Families Are a Relational Transactional Group**. Not only is a family made up of the individual members, it is largely defined by the relationships between the members. Think back to our discussion of Systems Theory in Chapter Five. A family that consists of two opposite-sex parents, an older sister, her husband and three kids, a younger brother, his new wife, and two kids from a first marriage is largely defined by the relationships among the family members. All of these people have a role in the family and interact with others in fairly consistent ways according to their roles.
- **Families Usually Occupy a Common Living Space Over an Extended Period of Time**. One consistent theme when defining family is recognizing that family members typically live under the same roof for an extended period of time. We certainly include extended family within our definition, but for the most part, our notions of family include those people with whom we share, or have shared, common space over a period of time. Even though you may have moved away to college, a large part of your definition of your family is the fact that you spent a great deal of your life sharing a home with those you call your family.
- **Families Possess a Mixture of Interpersonal Images that Evolve Through the Exchange of Meaning Over Time**. From our families, we learn important values concerning intimacy, spirituality, communication, and respect. Parents and other family members model behaviors that shape how we interact with others. As a result, we continually form images of what it means to be a family, and try to maintain that image of family in our lives. You may define family as your immediate family, consisting of your parents and a sibling. However, your romantic partner may see family as consisting of parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Each of you perform different communication behaviors to maintain your image of family.

Many families have children as part of their makeup. Olson and McCubbin discuss seven stages that families with children go through as they progress through life. Families without children will not follow all of these stages, and blended families, where one parent does not have primary custody of children, may experience less extreme shifts between stages.

The first stage of family development is **Establishing a Family**. In this stage *couples settle into committed or married life and make necessary changes in acknowledgement of their new legal, relational, and social status*. If they did not live together prior to marriage they may need to work out details of sharing space, money, and time. Often, this stage involved establishing a first home together as a couple.

The second stage of family development is **Enlarging a Family**. In this stage a couple decides to *expand their family with the addition of children*. While a time of joy and celebration, this is also a period of great stress and change for parents as they figure out new roles as parents. Time for friends, work, and one another is often decreased as the demands of a new child become the primary concern and focus of the couple’s attention and resources. In this stage, the relationship is no longer defined in terms of two people, but includes the children that are now part of the family.

The third stage of family development is **Developing a Family**. As children grow, their needs change from primarily physical (feeding, changing diapers, and sleep) to more cognitive and emotional ones. *Parents become the primary source of instilling cultural and spiritual values, as well as fostering a child’s individual personality*. This period takes a tremendous amount of time and commitment from parents as the children remain the focus of daily interactions. Think of the family that runs around taking children to soccer, baseball, piano lessons, church, and guiding their educational development. In this stage, the personal development of children is of high importance to the family.

The fourth stage of family development is **Encouraging Independence**. Around the teen years *children begin the process of naturally pulling away from their parents as a means of establishing and securing an independent identity*. You might recall that this period contained periods of stress and frustration for your parents, as well as you. Children may feel their parents are being overly protective or nosy about their friends and activities, while parents may feel abandoned and concerned for their child’s safety as they spend more time away from home. These are often referred to as the rebellious years in which children engage in behaviors for the purpose of establishing independence from their parents.

The fifth stage of family development is **Launching Children**. Over the course of raising children couples experience a relationship with one another where children are often the central focus rather than each other. In the Launching Children stage, *each member of the couple must now relearn his/her roles as the grown children eventually leave home for college, a career, or their own marriage and family*. If one of the parents gave up a career to raise children he/she may wonder what to do with the free time. While the empty nest syndrome can be stressful it is also a chance for new possibilities as parents have more time, money, freedom, and energy to spend on each other, hobbies, travel, and friends. Many experience excitement about being able to focus on each other as a couple after years of raising children in the home.

The sixth stage of family development is Post-Launching of Children. Depending on how a couple handles stage five, the post-launching of children can be *filled with renewed love, or can produce great strain on the marriage as a couple learns that they do not know how to relate with one another outside the context of raising children*. Some couples fall in love all over again and may renew their wedding vows as a signal of this new phase in their relationship. Some parents who may have decided to stay in a marriage for the sake of the children may decide to terminate the relationship after the children have left the family home. For some couples, with no "birds left in the nest" the family dog becomes the new center of attention and inadvertently takes on the role as one of the offspring and continues to regulate and restrict the couple's actions as the dog demands rearing. Some parents pick up new hobbies, travel around the world, and maintain multiple "date days" each week.

The seventh stage of family development is Retirement. Similar to the launching of children, *freedom from work can be an opportunity for growth and exploration of new relationships and activities. Simply having more time in the day can facilitate travel, volunteer work, or continuing education*. Conversely, people in this stage might experience a reduction in income and the loss of identity that came with membership in a profession. The family may also experience new growth during this stage as grown children bring their own relational partners and grandchildren in as new members of the family.

Communication patterns within the family, and between a couple, are continually changed and revised as a family progresses through the above stages. The fact that a couple generally spends less time together during stages two and three, and more time together in stages five through eight, requires that they continually manage dialectical tensions such as autonomy/connection. Management of these tensions may manifest itself as conflict. All relationships have conflict. Conflict is natural. How we think about and manage conflict is what is important.

THINKING ABOUT CONFLICT

When you hear the word "conflict," do you have a positive or negative reaction? Are you someone who thinks conflict should be avoided at all costs? While conflict may be uncomfortable and challenging it doesn't have to be negative. Think about the social and political changes that came about from the conflict of the civil rights movement during the 1960's. There is no doubt that this conflict was painful and even deadly for some civil rights activists, but the conflict resulted in the elimination of many discriminatory practices and helped create a more egalitarian social system in the United States. Let's look at two distinct orientations to conflict, as well as options for how to respond to conflict in our interpersonal relationships.

Conflict as Destructive

When we shy away from conflict in our interpersonal relationships we may do so because we conceptualize it as destructive to our relationships. As with many of our beliefs and attitudes, they are not always well-grounded and lead to destructive behaviors. Augsburger outlined four assumptions of viewing conflict as destructive.

1. Conflict is a destructive disturbance of the peace.
2. The social system should not be adjusted to meet the needs of members; rather, members should adapt to the established values.
3. Confrontations are destructive and ineffective.
4. Disputants should be punished.

When we view conflict this way, we believe that it is a threat to the established order of the relationship. Think about sports as an analogy of how we view conflict as destructive. In the U.S. we like sports that have winners and losers. Sports and games where a tie is an option often seem confusing to us. How can neither team win or lose? When we apply this to our relationships, it's understandable why we would be resistant to engaging in conflict. I don't want to lose, and I don't want to see my relational partner lose. So, an option is to avoid conflict so that neither person has to face that result.

Conflict as Productive

In contrast to seeing conflict as destructive, also possible, even healthy, is to view conflict as a productive natural outgrowth and component of human relationships. Augsburger described four assumptions of viewing conflict as productive.

1. Conflict is a normal, useful process.
2. All issues are subject to change through negotiation.
3. Direct confrontation and conciliation are valued.
4. Conflict is a necessary renegotiation of an implied contract—a redistribution of opportunity, release of tensions, and renewal of relationships.

From this perspective, conflict provides an opportunity for strengthening relationships, not harming them. Conflict is a chance for relational partners to find ways to meet the needs of one another, even when these needs conflict. Think back to our discussion of dialectical tensions. While you may not explicitly argue with your relational partners about these tensions, the fact that you are negotiating them points to your ability to use conflict in productive ways for the relationship as a whole, and the needs of the individuals in the relationship.

Types of Conflict

Understanding the different ways of valuing conflict is a first step toward engaging in productive conflict interactions. Likewise, knowing the various types of conflict that occur in interpersonal relationships also helps us to identify appropriate strategies for managing certain types of conflict. Cole states that there are five types of conflict in interpersonal relationships: Affective, Conflict of Interest, Value, Cognitive, and Goal.

- **Affective conflict.** Affective conflict arises when we have *incompatible feelings with another person*. For example, if a couple has been dating for a while, one of the partners may want to marry as a sign of love while the other decides they want to see other people. What do they do? The differences in feelings for one another are the source of affective conflict.

- **Conflict of Interest.** This type of conflict arises when people *disagree about a plan of action or what to do in a given circumstance*. For example, Julie, a Christian Scientist, does not believe in seeking medical intervention, but believes that prayer can cure illness. Jeff, a Catholic, does believe in seeking conventional medical attention as treatment for illness. What happens when Julie and Jeff decide to have children? Do they honor Jeff's beliefs and take the kids to the doctor when they are ill, or respect and practice Julie's religion? This is a conflict of interest.

- **Value Conflict.** A *difference in ideologies or values between relational partners* is called value conflict. In the example of Julie and Jeff, a conflict of interest about what to do concerning their children's medical needs results from differing religious values. Many people engage in conflict about religion and politics. Remember the old saying, "Never talk about religion and politics with your family."

- **Cognitive Conflict**. Cognitive conflict is *the difference in thought process, interpretation of events, and perceptions*. Marsha and Victoria, a long-term couple, are both invited to a party. Victoria declines because she has a big presentation at work the next morning and wants to be well rested. At the party, their mutual friends Michael and Lisa notice Marsha spending the entire evening with Karen. Lisa suspects Marsha may be flirting and cheating on Victoria, but Michael disagrees and says Marsha and Karen are just close friends catching up. Michael and Lisa are observing the same interaction but have a disagreement about what it means. This is an example of cognitive conflict.
- **Goal Conflict**. Goal conflict occurs when people *disagree about a final outcome*. Jesse and Maria are getting ready to buy their first house. Maria wants something that has long-term investment potential while Jesse wants a house to suit their needs for a few years and then plans to move into a larger house. Maria has long-term goals for the house purchase and Jesse is thinking in more immediate terms. These two have two different goals in regards to purchasing a home.

Strategies for Managing Conflict

When we ask our students what they want to do when they experience conflict, most of the time they say "resolve it." While this is understandable, also important to understand is that conflict is ongoing in all relationships, and our approach to conflict should be to "manage it" instead of always trying to "resolve it."

One way to understand options for managing conflict is by knowing five major strategies for managing conflict in relationships. While most of us probably favor one strategy over another, we all have multiple options for managing conflict in our relationships. Having a variety of options available gives us flexibility in our interactions with others. Five strategies for managing interpersonal conflict include dominating, integrating, compromising, obliging, and avoiding (Rahim; Rahim & Magner; Thomas & Kilmann). One way to think about these strategies, and your decision to select one over another, is to think about whose needs will be met in the conflict situation. You can conceptualize this idea according to the degree of concern for the self and the degree of concern for others.

When people select the **dominating strategy**, or win-lose approach, they exhibit *high concern for the self and low concern for the other person*. The goal here is to win the conflict. This approach is often characterized by loud, forceful, and interrupting communication. Again, this is analogous to sports. Too often, we avoid conflict because we believe the only other alternative is to try to dominate the other person. In relationships where we care about others, it's no wonder this strategy can seem unappealing.

The **obliging style** shows a *moderate degree of concern for self and others, and a high degree of concern for the relationship itself*. In this approach, the individuals are less important than the relationship as a whole. Here, a person may minimize the differences or a specific issue in order to emphasize the commonalities. The comment, "The fact that we disagree about politics isn't a big deal since we share the same ethical and moral beliefs," exemplifies an obliging style.

The **compromising style** is evident when *both parties are willing to give up something in order to gain something else*. When environmental activist, Julia Butterfly Hill agreed to end her two-year long tree sit in Luna as a protest against the logging practices of Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO), and pay them $50,000 in exchange for their promise to protect Luna and not cut within a 20-foot buffer zone, she and PALCO reached a compromise. If one of the parties feels the compromise is unequal they may be less likely to stick to it long term. When conflict is unavoidable, many times people will opt for compromise. One of the problems with compromise is that neither party fully gets their needs met. If you want Mexican food and your friend wants pizza, you might agree to compromise and go someplace that serves Mexican pizza. While this may seem like a good idea, you may have really been craving a burrito and your friend may have really been craving a pepperoni pizza. In this case, while the compromise brought together two food genres, neither person got their desire met.

When one **avoids** a conflict they may suppress feelings of frustration or walk away from a situation. While this is often regarded as expressing a *low concern for self and others* because problems are not dealt with, the opposite may be true in some contexts. Take, for example, a heated argument between Ginny and Pat. Pat is about to make a hurtful remark out of frustration. Instead, she decides that she needs to avoid this argument right now until she and Ginny can come back and discuss things in a more calm fashion. In this case, temporarily avoiding the conflict can be beneficial. However, conflict avoidance over the long term generally has negative consequences for a relationship because neither person is willing to participate in the conflict management process.

Finally, **integrating** demonstrates a *high level of concern for both self and others*. Using this strategy, individuals agree to share information, feelings, and creativity to try to reach a mutually acceptable solution that meets both of their needs. In our food example above, one strategy would be for both people to get the food they want, then take it on a picnic in the park. This way, both people are getting their needs met fully, and in a way that extends beyond original notions of win-lose approaches for managing the conflict. The downside to this strategy is that it is very time consuming and requires high levels of trust.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

Interpersonal communication is communication between individuals that view one another as unique. Quite often, interpersonal communication occurs in dyads. In order for interpersonal communication to occur, participants must engage in self-disclosure, which is the revealing of information about oneself to others that is not known by them. As we self-disclose, we manage our relationships by negotiating dialectical tensions, which are opposing needs in interpersonal relationships. We use a variety of strategies for navigating these tensions, including neutralization, separation, segmentation, and reframing.

As we navigate our interpersonal relationships, we create communication climates, which are the overall feelings and moods people have for one another and the relationship. When we engage in disconfirming messages, we produce a negative relational climate, while confirming messages can help build a positive relational climate by recognizing the uniqueness and importance of another person.

The three primary types of interpersonal relationships we engage in are friendships, romantic relationships, and family relationships. Each of these relationships develop through a series of stages of growth and deterioration. Friendships and romantic relationships differ from family relationships in that they are relationships of choice. Each of these relationships requires commitment from participants to continuously navigate relational dynamics in order to maintain and grow the relationship.

Finally, all relationships experience conflict. Conflict is often perceived as an indicator that there is a problem in a relationship. However, conflict is a natural and ongoing part of all relationships. The goal for conflict is not to eliminate it, but to manage it. There are five primary approaches to managing conflict which include dominating, obliging, compromising, avoiding, and integrating.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Select an important person in your life and pay attention to your communication climate. How do you and this other person demonstrate recognition, acknowledgement, and endorsement?
2. Reflect on one of your important friendships and trace its development through Rawlins' six stages. How was it affected by important transitions in your life, sexual attraction, and diversity?

3. Reflect on a current or past romantic relationship. How did you communicate attraction, or needs for connection and separateness?
4. Does Pearson's definition of family fit your own? Why? Why not?
5. Interview one or both of your parents about how their communication has changed as they have moved along the family life cycle. How did their relational culture change? How did they manage relational dialectics?
6. How was conflict managed in your family while growing up? Was it viewed as positive or negative? How did those early messages and lessons about conflict shape your current attitudes?

KEY TERMS

- committed romantic relationships
- conflict
- content level of message
- domestic partners
- dyad
- dyadic breakdown
- dyadic phase
- family
- family life cycle
- grave dressing
- intrapsychic phase
- interracial marriage
- proximity
- relational culture
- relational level of message
- self-disclosure
- self-identity
- similarity
- social support

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SELF CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click “Check Your Understanding” to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three “Maybe”/”Probably”/”Definitely” options to see if you were correct.
- Click “Next” to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

GROUP COMMUNICATION

GROUP COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
After reading this chapter you should be able to: • Define what constitutes a group and team. • Understand cultural influences on groups. • Explain how groups and teams form. • Identify group roles and norms. • Understand different styles of leadership in groups. • Recognize style and options for decision making in groups. • Explain the impact of technology on group communication.

Have you ever had this happen to you in a college class? At the beginning of the semester your professor hands out the syllabus and explains that a group project is part of the course requirements. You, and others in the class, groan at the idea of this project because you have experienced the difficulties and frustrations of working in a group, especially when your grade depends on the work of others. Does this sound familiar? Why do you think so many students react negatively to these types of assignments? Group work can be fraught with complications. But, the reality is, many companies are promoting groups as the model working environment (Forbes).

"When I die, I would like the people I did group projects with to lower me in to my grave so they can let me down one last time." – Jessica Clydesdale, frustrated student

Chances are that a class assignment is not your first and only experience with groups. Most likely, you have already spent, and will continue to spend, a great deal of your time working in groups. You may be involved with school athletics in which you are part of a specialized group called a team. You may be part of a work or professional group. Many of you participate in social, religious, and/or political groups. The family in which you were raised, regardless of the configuration, is also a group. No matter what the specific focus—sports, profession, politics, or family—all groups share some common features.

While group communication is growing in popularity and emphasis, both at the academic and corporate levels, it is not a new area of study. The emergence of group communication study came about in the mid 1950s, following World War II, and has been a focus of study ever since. Group communication is often closely aligned with interpersonal communication and organizational communication which is why we have placed it as a chapter in between these two areas of specialization. In your personal, civic, professional lives, you will engage in group communication. Let's take a look at what constitutes a group or team.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Consider the following:

- A text message
- A voicemail
- A passing comment
- A Facebook post
- An unreturned phone call

Have you ever had one of these communications be misinterpreted? You meant one thing, but your friend thought you meant something else? Sometimes the miscommunication can result in confusion about a meeting time or place. Or worse, it can be entirely misunderstood and have a negative impact on your relationship.

Communication, the exchange of information or ideas between sender and receiver, can be challenging in one's personal life, at school, and especially in business. Today, it's even more complex because business is conducted on a global basis 24/7, often using different languages and different communication methods. In this constant, high-speed business environment, communication blunders can cost more than you might think. Did you ever hear the saying "You only have one chance to make a good first impression"? It couldn't be truer when it comes to communication: The first two seconds of communication are so important that it takes another four minutes to add 50 percent more information to an impression—positive or negative—within that communication. (((Note: Dave Rothfield, "Communicating Simply, Directly Will Improve You, Your Business," *Orlando Business Journal*, May 15, 2009, (accessed July 12, 2009).))) Communication has often been referred to as a soft skill, which includes other competencies such as social graces, personality traits, language abilities, and the ability to work with other people. Soft skills also encompass emotional intelligence, which Adele B. Lynn, in her book *The EQ Interview: Finding Employees with High Emotional Intelligence*, defines as "a person's ability to manage herself as well as her relationship with others so she can live her intentions." (((Note: "Interviewing for Emotional Intelligence," Selling Power Hiring & Recruiting eNewsletter, October 15, 2008, (accessed March 16, 2010).))) But in today's business world, communication has become part of the new "hard skills" category, a technical job requirement, because of the critical role that it plays in business. (((Note: Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication," *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.))) According to Peter Post, great-grandson of the late Emily Post, "Your skills can get you in the door; your people skills are what can seal the deal." (((Note: The Emily Post Institute, (accessed July 13, 2009).)))

Misunderstood = Miscommunicated

It is almost impossible to be in business without developing relationships inside your organization and with your customers. Your relationship skills build trust, allow you to be a true partner, and help solve your customers' problems; both internal trust and external communication are keys to your ability to deliver on your promises. How are these qualities intrinsically related? The way in which you communicate can determine the level of trust that your colleagues or customers have in you. (((Note: Gail Fann Thomas, Roxanne Zoliln, and Jackie L. Harman, "The Central Role of Communication in Developing Trust and Its Effect on Employee Involvement,"*Journal of Business Communication* 46, no. 3 (July 2009): 287.)))

In the same way that relationships are the cornerstone of trust, communication is the foundation of relationships. But it's difficult to establish and develop relationships; it takes work and a lot of clear communication. You might think that sounds simple, but consider this: Nearly 75 percent of communications that are received are interpreted incorrectly. At the same time, interestingly, many people consider themselves good communicators. The telling disconnect occurs because people tend to assume that they know what other people mean, or people assume that others know what they mean. This is compounded by the fact that people tend to hear what they want to hear—that is, a person may interpret elements of a conversation in such a way that the taken meanings contribute to his already established beliefs. When you put these assumptions together, communication can easily become "miscommunication." (((Note: Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,"*Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.)))

The Communication Model

The standard model of communication has evolved based on two parties—the sender and the receiver—exchanging information or ideas. The model includes major processes and functions categorized as encoding, decoding, response, and feedback. In addition, the model accounts for noise, which symbolizes anything that might disrupt the sending or receiving of a message. (((Note: George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2009), 146.))) The communication model is shown below in Figure 1, "Traditional Communication Process":

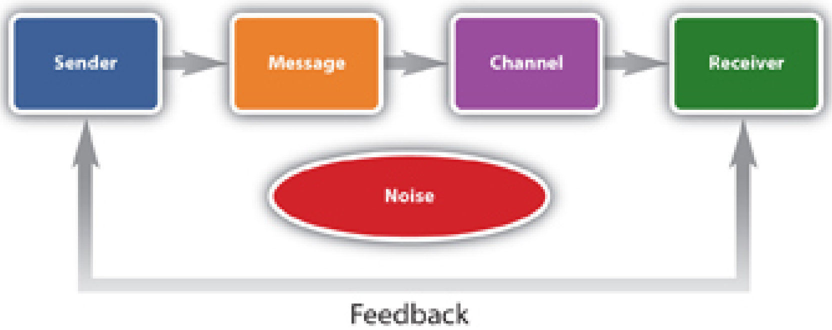


Figure 1. Traditional Communication Process. Adapted from Michael R. Solomon, Greg W. Marshall, and Elnora W. Stewart, Marketing: Real People, Real Choices, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 378.

The model helps describe exactly how communication takes place. For example, if you send a text message to your friend to ask him if he wants to go a movie, you are the source, or sender, of the message. You translated or encoded your message into text characters. A personal digital assistant (PDA) such as a BlackBerry, iPhone, or cell phone is the channel, or the method by which you communicated your message. Chances are, if your friend does not have his PDA or cell phone with him, your message will not reach him, and you might miss the movie. So in this example, the PDA or cell phone is the channel. When your friend, the receiver, reads the message, he decodes it or determines what you meant to communicate, and then he responds. If he was talking to another friend while he was reading your text message and didn't see the time the movie started, that conversation would be considered noise because it would be interfering with the communication of your message. Noise interferes with communication or causes distraction, whether it is heard or seen. When your friend responds to you by saying that he wants to go see the movie, he is providing feedback (or a response to your message). Figure 2 below shows this example applied to the communication model.

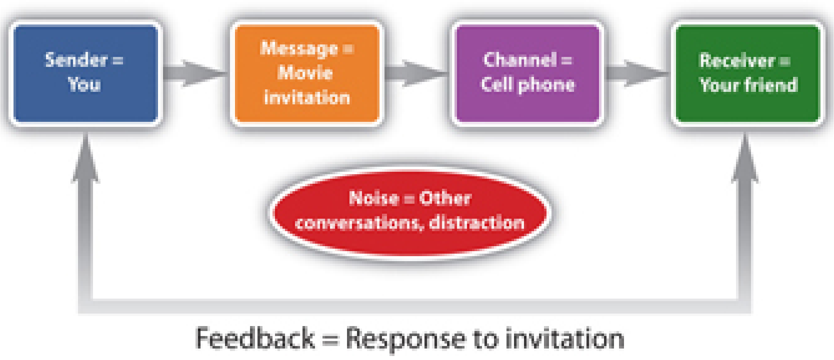


Figure 2. Communication Process Example

The same thing can happen in business situations. For example, if you call a prospect to set up a meeting, you are the sender. The message is the meeting information (e.g., date, time, and place) that you encode into words. The channel is the telephone, and the receiver is the prospect. It sounds easy enough. Assume, however, that the prospect responds to you and agrees to the meeting. But because he was checking his e-mails while he was talking to you (which is noise), he puts the wrong time on his calendar. When you come for the appointment, he's out of the office, and your sales call doesn't take place. Now you have to start the communication process all over again. This is an example of simply setting up a meeting. Now imagine the challenges if you started explaining the features and benefits of a complex product or negotiating a contract. You can see why understanding the communication process is so important in selling.

Did You Know . . . ?

- Positive e-mail messages are likely to be interpreted as neutral.
- Neutral e-mail messages are likely to be perceived as negative.
- People who send e-mails overrate their ability to communicate feelings.
- There is a gap between how a sender *feels* when he writes the e-mail and the way the emotional content is communicated, which can cause an error in decoding on the part of the receiver.
- One simple e-mail can lead to a communication debacle if the e-mail is not clearly written and well thought out from the recipient's point of view. (((Note: Jeremy Dean, "Avoid Email Miscommunication," PsyBlog, (accessed July 15, 2009).)))

Effective Communication

How do you avoid the pitfalls of poor communication and build productive business relationships? It's best to always communicate in a timely manner and in the method that your customer prefers. That may be easier said than done. Here are six tips that can help you increase your chances of making your communications effective.

Tip 1: Empathy Is Essential

One of the key elements of being a good communicator is having empathy. That means thinking about your communication from the receiver's point of view. It's focusing on what *she* wants to learn as a result of your communication, not what you want to tell her. Empathy is about demonstrating that you care about the other person's situation. Think about when you received your acceptance letter from your college; the letter probably mentioned what an exciting time it is in your life. The author of the letter demonstrated empathy because she focused on the situation from your perspective. A purely factual letter, without empathy, might have said that you were accepted and that now the school can make their budget since they met their enrollment goal. That would be quite a different letter and would make you feel very different (and probably not very welcome). Although it's always best to be candid, you should deliver information from the receiver's point of view and address her concerns. (((Note: Steve Adubato, "Empathy Is Essential to Effective Communication," NJBiz, (accessed July 14, 2009).)))

Empathy is an integral part of emotional connections. It is especially important to have an emotional connection and empathy when apologizing to customers. Chances are the customer is already angry, or at least disappointed, when you are not able to deliver as expected. You can express empathy in your communications by saying or writing, "You have every right to be upset. I understand how you must feel. I apologize for the late delivery. Let's work on a new process that will help prevent it from happening again." (((Note: Mary Ellen Guffey, *Business Communication*, 6th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Publishing, 2008), 280.))) Some of the best brands have disappointed their customers but showed empathy when they apologized.

Tip 2: Think Before You Communicate

Quick responses, whether verbal or via electronic methods, can be less effective than those that are considered. Although a timely response is critical, it's worth a few minutes to think about exactly what you want to say before you say it (or type it).

Tip 3: Be Clear

It seems obvious, but not everyone is clear in his communications. Sometimes, people are trying to avoid "bad news" or trying to avoid taking a stand on a topic. It's always best to avoid confusion and clearly say what you mean by framing your message in a way that is easily understood by all receivers. It's also a good idea to avoid buzz words (or jargon)—those words, phrases, or acronyms that are used only in your company. If they can't be avoided, explain them in the same communication terms. You should also avoid jargon on your résumé and cover letter—help your reader see your brand story at a glance without needing a decoder ring.

Tip 4: Be Brief

Business communication should be short and to the point. Your customers are busy and need information—whether it's a proposal, report, or follow-up to a question—in a clear, concise way. It's best to avoid being verbose, especially in any business plans, proposals, or other significant documents. (((Note: Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication," *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.)))

Tip 5: Be Specific

If you go to dinner at Cheesecake Factory and there is a wait to get a table, the hostess will hand you a portable pager and tell you that the wait will be twenty to twenty-five minutes. Perfect. You have just enough time to run a quick errand at a nearby store at the mall and be back in time to get your table. If, on the other hand, she told you that you will be seated shortly, you might have an expectation of being seated in five to ten minutes. Meanwhile, "shortly" might mean twenty to twenty-five minutes for her. You would probably forgo running your errand because you think you are going to be seated soon but end up waiting for twenty-five minutes and being frustrated. Being specific in your communication not only gives clarity to your message but also helps set your customer's expectations. In other words, your customer won't expect something you can't deliver if you are clear about what exactly you *can* deliver and when. The same is true for prices. For example, if you order from the menu at the Cheesecake Factory, you know precisely what you will get to eat and how much it will cost. However, if there is a menu special that you heard about tableside, but you weren't told how much the dish was, you might be surprised (and disappointed) when you receive the check. Specificity avoids surprises and sets expectations. Below, in Table 1, "General vs. Specific Statements," are some examples of general statements that can be communicated more effectively when turned into specific statements:

Table 1. General vs. Specific Statements

General Statement	Specific Statement
I'll get back to you shortly.	I'll get back to you by Tuesday.
It will only take a few minutes.	It will take less than 5 minutes.
It will cost about $5,000 plus installation.	The cost is $4,800 plus $200 for installation.
Everything is included.	It includes your choice of entrée, vegetable, dessert, and coffee.

Tip 6: Be Timely

Timing is everything in life and most certainly in selling. It's best to be proactive with communication, and if you owe someone a response, do it sooner rather than later. If you are slow to respond to questions and communication, it will be difficult to develop trust, as prolonged responses may seem to imply that you are taking action without informing the customer what it is you are doing. Timing is especially important when you are communicating a negative response or bad news. Don't put it off; do it as soon as possible and give your customer the benefit of complete information.

Rules of Engagement

At the beginning of each business relationship, ask your customer how she prefers to communicate. Getting the answers to the following simple questions will save time and confusion throughout your relationship and help ensure good communication:

- How do you prefer to receive regular communication (e-mail, text, phone, in person, hard copy)?
- What can I expect as a standard turnaround time for response to questions and issues?
- How do you prefer to receive urgent communication (e-mail, text, phone)?
- Who else (if anyone) in the organization would you like to also receive communication from me?
- When is the best time to touch base with you (early morning, midday, or later in the afternoon)?
- How frequently would you like a status update and in what format (e-mail, phone, in person)?

Listen Up

While you may think you are ready to communicate, it's a good idea to stop and listen first. Creating your message is only half of communication; listening is the other half. But it's difficult to listen because we listen faster than we speak—that is, based on what the other person is saying, we are already constructing responses in our minds before they have even finished. As a result, many people are guilty of "listening too fast." (((Note: Jeffrey J. Denning, "How to Improve Your Listening Skills, Avoid Mix-ups,"*Ophthalmology Times* 26, no. 10 (May 15, 2001): 28.))) Cicero once said that it is good thing that humans were given one mouth and two ears, in light of the way we use them. (((Note: Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication," *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.)))

Listening, in fact, is so important that companies like Starbucks believe that it may directly improve profits. According to Alan Gulick, a Starbucks Corporation spokesperson, if every Starbucks employee misheard one $10 order each day, it would cost the company one billion dollars in a year. That's why Starbucks has a process to teach their employees how to listen. Although listening may seem passive, it is actively linked to success: One study conducted in the insurance industry found that better listeners held higher positions and got promoted more than those who did not have developed listening skills. (((Note: Beverly Davenport Sypher, Robert N. Bostrom, and Joy Hart Seibert, "Listening, Communication Abilities and Success at Work," *Journal of Business Communication* 26, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 293.))) So it's worth it to hone your listening skills *now* so that when you get into the business world you can be successful. The following are a few tips:

- **Use active listening.** Confirm that you heard the sender correctly by saying something like, "Just to be sure I understand, we are going to move forward with twelve cases for your initial order, then revisit your inventory in five days." Review the communication model above and take notice of the importance of decoding. If you decode a message from your customer incorrectly, the communication is ineffective and could even be costly. In the example above, the customer might have said in response, "I meant that the initial order should be five cases, and we'll revisit the inventory in twelve days." That's a big difference.
- **Ask questions.** Questions are a way to gather more information and learn about your customer and their business. They are also an excellent way to demonstrate that you are communicating by listening. Asking the *right* questions is critical to being successful. Focus on listening and asking the right questions, and you'll be rewarded with great information.
- **Focus.** Although multitasking has seemingly become a modern virtue, focus actually helps create more effective communication. Stop and focus on your customer when he is speaking. This is a sign of respect, and this concentration allows you to absorb more information. Take notes to remember exactly what you discussed. There's nothing more important than what your customer has to say. (((Note: Jeffrey J. Denning, "How to Improve Your Listening Skills, Avoid Mix-ups," *Ophthalmology Times* 26, no. 10 (May 15, 2001): 28.)))
- **Take notes.** While it may seem like you will remember everything that is said at a meeting or during a conversation, taking notes signals that you are listening, and it provides you with an accurate record of what was said. "The palest ink is better than the best memory." (((Note: "A Lesson on Listening,"Selling Power Pharmaceuticals eNewsletter, April 9, 2008, (accessed March 16, 2010).)))

There's More to Communication Than Meets the Eye . . . or Ear

It's important to remember that you will be communicating with many different people about many different topics in selling. Sometimes, you will be communicating one-on-one and sometimes you will be communicating with a group. Just as people have varying social styles, it's important to know that people also absorb information differently. Research conducted in the 1970s indicates that people comprehend information in the following four distinct ways:

- **Why.** They want to know the reasons for doing something.
- **What.** They want to know the facts about it.
- **How.** They want to know only the information they need to get it done.
- **What if.** They want to know the consequences of doing it.

This can be a helpful road map of the elements you will want to include in your communications, especially if you are communicating with a group, since you may not know everyone's best method of absorbing information. It's been proven that if people don't receive the type of communication they prefer, they tend to tune out or reject the information.

You've probably noticed that both people and brands communicate the same message multiple times and usually in multiple ways. Creative repetition is key to successful communication. Think about the advertising Pepsi ran when it launched its new logo in early 2009; you most likely saw the television commercial during the Super Bowl, noticed a billboard in a high-traffic area of a major city, received an e-mail, saw banner ads on the Internet, reviewed the commercial on YouTube, and saw the new logo on the packaging. Pepsi's ad campaign illustrates the "three-times convincer" concept, which claims that 80 percent of people need to be exposed a message three times to buy into it, 15 percent need to be exposed to it five times, and 5 percent need to be exposed to it up to twenty-five times. (((Note: Natalie Zmuda, "Pepsi, Coke Try to Outdo Each Other with Rays of Sunshine," *Advertising Age*, January 19, 2009, (accessed July 14, 2009).))) You may have seen the message so many times that it's hard to remember what the old logo even looked like.

Types of Communication

It is important to use multiple types of communication so that repetition does not become boring like a broken record. There are three types of communication: verbal, which involves speaking to one or many people to convey a message; nonverbal, which includes body language and other observations about people; and written, which includes a message that is read in hard copy, e-mail, text message, instant message, Facebook, Twitter, blog, or other Internet-based written communication. Varying the usage of these mediums can help ensure your customer's attention, but you must carefully develop each skill separately to communicate effectively.

Verbal Communication

An introduction, a presentation, a telephone conversation, a videoconference call: these are all examples of verbal communication because information is transmitted orally. Despite the ubiquitous use of technology in the business world, verbal communication is the most common method of exchanging information and ideas. Verbal communication is powerful, fast, and natural and includes voice inflections that help senders and receivers understand the message more clearly. The downside to verbal communication is that once it is spoken, the words are essentially gone; they are preserved only in the memory of those present, and sometimes the memories of the specific words spoken vary dramatically. The he-said-she-said argument is an example of this. No one really knows who said what unless the words are recorded. Recall is rarely exactly the same between two or more people.

Voice inflection, the verbal emphasis you put on certain words, can have a significant impact on the meaning of what you say. In fact, the same words can take on completely different meaning based on the inflection you use. For example, if you say the sentence "I borrowed your book" with an inflection on a different word each time, the sentence communicates something completely different each time.

Verbal communication may take place face-to-face, such as an in-person conversation or group meeting, speech, or presentation. It could also take place by phone in an individual conversation, a conference call, or even a voice mail. Other forms of verbal communication include video conferences, podcasts, and Webinars, which are increasingly common in business. All these methods allow you to use inflection to communicate effectively. Face-to-face meetings also provide the opportunity to use and interpret other visual cues to increase the effectiveness of your communication.

Verbal communication is especially important throughout the steps of the selling process. Your choice of words can make the difference in someone's decision to first hear your sales presentation, and your presentation can determine whether that person will purchase your product or service.

Nonverbal Communication

Imagine that you are in a retail store buying a suit for an interview. When the salesperson approaches you, she smiles, makes eye contact, and shakes your hand. You respond positively. You notice that she is dressed professionally, so she makes you feel as if you will receive good fashion advice from her. When you make your choice, the tailor comes over wearing a tape measure around his neck. You know he is a professional and you can trust him to alter your new suit properly. On the other hand, if the salesperson waits on you only after you interrupt her personal phone call, doesn't make eye contact or shake your hand, acts as if she is bored being at work, and is dressed in worn jeans and flip-flops, it's unlikely that you trust her to help you choose your suit.

You have, no doubt, used and noticed nonverbal communication in virtually every personal encounter you have had. Think about it: A gesture, a smile, a nod, eye contact, what you are wearing, the fact that you are frequently checking your cell phone for text messages, and how close you stand to someone are all examples of nonverbal communication.

Nonverbal communication is extremely powerful. In fact, some studies indicate that the influence from nonverbal communication such as tone and visuals can have a greater impact than the spoken words. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, a famed psychologist and professor emeritus of psychology at University of California, Los Angeles, is considered a pioneer in the area of body language and nonverbal communication. His research includes an equation, called the Mehrabian formula, (((Note: Albert Mehrabian, "Silent Messages," http://www.kaaj.com/psych/smorder.html (accessed July 15, 2009).))) that is frequently used to define the relative impact of verbal and nonverbal messages based on experiments of communication of feelings and attitudes. Dr. Mehrabian developed the formula shown below, in Figure 3, to define how communication takes place:

Total liking = 7% verbal liking + 38% vocal liking + 55% facial liking

Figure 3. The Mehrabian Formula

The Mehrabian formula is used to explain situations in which verbal communication and nonverbal communication do not match. In other words, when facial expressions contradict words, people tend to believe the facial expressions. (((Note: "Mehrabian's Communication Research," Businessballs.com, (accessed July 15, 2009).)))

Types of Nonverbal Communication

- Handshake
- Body language
- Gestures
- Nodding or shaking your head
- Eye contact (or lack of eye contact)
- Eye roll
- Facial expressions
- Touch
- Space or proximity

- Dress
- Multitasking (e.g., texting while listening to someone, earphones in ears while working)

Your Handshake Says It All

In some countries, you might bow when you meet someone; in others you might kiss; but when you meet someone for a business meeting in the United States, it's best to shake hands. (((Note: Terri Morrison, "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands," (accessed July 23, 2009).))) Although fist bumps and high fives may be trendy as friendly greetings, neither is appropriate in a business setting.

The exact history of the handshake is unknown; however, at one time it was used as method to prove that you had no weapons in your hands. (((Note: Rachel Zupek, "The Worst Way to Shake hands," *CNN.com*, (accessed July 13, 2009).))) A good handshake is essential in business; it is the first nonverbal cue that you give to the person with whom you are meeting. It's so important to have a good handshake that a recent study conducted at the University of Iowa showed that during mock interviews, those students who scored as having a better handshake were also considered more hirable by interviewers. According to Greg Stewart, a business professor who conducted the study said, "We found that the first impression begins with a handshake and sets the tone for the rest of the interview." (((Note: "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, (accessed July 12, 2009).)))

Do you think you have a good handshake? Believe it or not, it's worth practicing your handshake. Here are five tips for a good handshake:

1. Extend your right hand when you are approximately three feet away from the person with whom you want to shake hands. (((Note: Rachel Zupek, "The Worst Way to Shake Hands," *CNN.com*, (accessed July 13, 2009).)))
2. Keep your wrist straight and lock hands connecting your hand with the same part of the other person's hand. (((Note: John Gates, "A Handshake Lesson from Goldilocks," Free-Resume-Help.com, (accessed July 12, 2009).))) Apply appropriate pressure; don't crush the person's hand.
3. Shake up and down three or four times. (((Note: "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, (accessed July 12, 2009).)))
4. Avoid the "wet fish" handshake. (((Note: "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, (accessed July 12, 2009).))) This is where practice is really important. The more you shake hands, the less nervous you will be.
5. Smile and make eye contact. (((Note: "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, (accessed July 12, 2009).))) This is your opportunity to use multiple types of nonverbal communication to get your meeting or interview off to a good start.

Body Language

Do you use your hands when you talk? If so, you are using body language to help make your point. But body language includes more than talking with your hands. Body language is what we say without words; nonverbal communication using your body includes elements such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, a head tilt, a nod, and even where and how you sit. Body language can indicate an unspoken emotion or sentiment that a person might be feeling either consciously or subconsciously. Body language can indicate if you are listening to someone and are engaged in what he is saying, disagreeing with him, or getting bored. (You might want to think twice about the body language you are using in class.) It's important that you are aware of what you communicate with *your* body language and to understand and respond to the cues you are getting from *someone else's* body language.

- Crossed arms: discomfort
- Spreading fingers: territorial display
- Mirroring (i.e., mimicking your body position to another's): comfort
- Drumming or tapping fingers: frustration
- Hands on hips: there is an issue
- Hands behind the back: "leave me alone"
- Hands clasped, thumbs up: positive
- Thumbs down: don't like
- Hands clasped with fingers forming a steeple: confidence
- Touch neck: insecurity
- Crossed legs: comfort
- Glancing at watch: concerned about time or bored

Body language is not just an interesting topic to consider; it's a proven science that can help you improve your communication. If you would like to see how body language is used in everyday life, watch the following video featuring Tonya Reiman, national television commentator and author of *The Power of Body Language:*

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/z-YhBzS-_Ps

Here are some tips to remember about your body language to be sure you are sending the right nonverbal message to your customer or interviewer.

- **Make eye contact** with the person to whom you are speaking. Eye contact avoidance can be distracting and can prevent you from establishing a relationship as shown in this video.
- **Smile** when you meet someone and throughout the conversation. A smile is a positive response to another person and has a significant impact on how people perceive you. A smile can break the ice and help you start a conversation.
- **Dress for success** at all times, which means always dressing appropriately for the situation. But it's best to keep in mind that even after you get the job you want, it's a good idea to dress a little better than the position. Even in very casual work environments, what you wear is a nonverbal communication about who you are. If you don't dress for the next promotion, chances are you won't be considered for it. Be aware of the company policy and dress code, and if in doubt, dress more conservatively.

Written Communication

Although verbal and nonverbal communications usually take place in real time, written communication has a longer consideration period. The sender must encode the message in words to be communicated on paper or a screen. Business reports, proposals, memos, e-mails, text messages, Web sites, blogs, wikis, and more are all examples of written communication. Each of them is created over a period of time and can include collaboration from multiple people. Collaboration is especially important for communicating, planning, and creating documents so many people use tools such as wikis to share documents.

Written communication is preferred to verbal communication when careful consideration is important or the information needs to be permanent, such as a company policy, sales presentation, or proposal. Written communication can also take place when verbal communication isn't an option, like when you need to respond to an e-mail or text message at 1:00 a.m.

Although verbal communication is faster and more natural than written communication, each has its pros and cons. Generally, written communication is better at conveying facts, while verbal communication is better at conveying feelings. Verbal communication has another significant drawback: consider the fact that humans listen much faster than they speak. For example, the average public speaker speaks at about 125 words per minute. Although this sounds natural, the average person can listen at 400 to 500 words per minute. That means that listeners' minds have time and space to wander, which can impact the effectiveness of verbal communication. (You may have noticed your mind wandering during a class lecture—even if you found the topic interesting.)

Written communication requires a good command of the English language, including the rules of grammar and spelling. If you think that business exists solely on quick instant messages and text messages, you might be surprised to learn that they are only a portion of the communication within a company and between the company's vendors and other partners. Because the nature of written communication is such that it allows time for consideration and composition, the standards for writing are much higher than for a casual conversation. Customers and colleagues alike expect clear, concise written communications with proper grammar and spelling. And because written communication is long lasting—whether on paper or on the Internet—errors or misstatements exist for an irritatingly long time. So whether you are writing a proposal, a presentation, a report, a meeting recap, or a follow-up e-mail, it's best to take the time to think about your communication and craft it so that it is effective. Consider using the following tips:

- **Be short and sweet**. Shorter is always better when it comes to business correspondence. It's best to include all pertinent facts with concise information. If you write your communication with the receiver in mind, it will be easier to make it shorter and more effective.
- **Grammar, please**. Sentences should be structured correctly and use proper grammar, including a subject and a verb in each sentence. Business correspondence should always include uppercase and lowercase letters and correct punctuation. (((Note: Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New

Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication," *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.))) If writing is not your strong suit, visit your campus student services office or learning center to provide information about upcoming writing clinics and access to other tools that can help improve your writing skills.
- **Check spelling**. Use the spell-check tool on your computer. There is no excuse for a misspelled word. Text abbreviations are not acceptable in business correspondence.
- **Read before you send.** Reread your document or electronic communication before it goes out. Is everything complete? Is it clear? Is it something you will be proud of days or weeks later? Take the extra time to review before you send. It's difficult to revise a communication as revisions cause confusion.
- **Just the facts.** Stick to the facts to maximize the impact of your written communications; leave the emotional topics for verbal dialogue. For example, send an e-mail to confirm meeting time, date, and location; use a verbal communication for the content of the meeting to be discussed, such as a negotiation.

Which Is Best?

Although verbal, nonverbal, and written communication all play a role in your communication with your customers, you might be wondering which one is best. It depends on your customer and on the situation. Some customers want to work day to day using all the latest technology tools, including text messaging, social networking, Web conferences, wikis, and more. Other customers prefer more traditional face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and some e-mail correspondence. Adapt to the method of communication that your customer prefers and not the other way around. In some situations, a face-to-face meeting is best—for instance, if you wish to discuss a complex issue, negotiate, or meet some additional members of the team. Sometimes, a face-to-face meeting isn't feasible, so other verbal communication methods such as a videoconference, phone call, or conference call can be efficient and effective if used properly.

Chances are you will use a combination of communication types with each customer tailored to his particular preferences and situation. Be guided by the fact that you want to keep your communication personal in meaning and professional in content. Think about it from the receiver's point of view, and deliver bad news verbally whenever possible.

Check Your Understanding

Answer the question(s) below to see how well you understand the topics covered in this section. This short quiz does **not** count toward your grade in the class, and you can retake it an unlimited number of times.

Use this quiz to check your understanding and decide whether to (1) study the previous section further or (2) move on to the next section.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Barriers to Effective Communication

Communicating can be more of a challenge than you think, when you realize the many things that can stand in the way of effective communication. These include filtering, selective perception, information overload, emotional disconnects, lack of source familiarity or credibility, workplace gossip, semantics, gender differences, differences in meaning between sender and receiver, and biased language. Let's examine each of these barriers.

Filtering

Filtering is the distortion or withholding of information to manage a person's reactions. Some examples of filtering include a manager who keeps her division's poor sales figures from her boss, the vice president, fearing that the bad news will make him angry. The old saying, "Don't shoot the messenger!" illustrates the tendency of receivers (in this case, the vice president) to vent their negative response to unwanted messages on the sender. A gatekeeper (the vice president's assistant, perhaps) who doesn't pass along a complete message is also filtering. The vice president may delete the e-mail announcing the quarter's sales figures before reading it, blocking the message before it arrives.

As you can see, filtering prevents members of an organization from getting a complete picture of the way things are. To maximize your chances of sending and receiving effective communications, it's helpful to deliver a message in multiple ways and to seek information from multiple sources. In this way, the effect of any one person's filtering the message will be diminished.

Since people tend to filter bad news more during upward communication, it is also helpful to remember that those below you in an organization may be wary of sharing bad news. One way to defuse the tendency to filter is to reward employees who clearly convey information upward, regardless of whether the news is good and bad.

The following lists some of the criteria that individuals may use when deciding whether to filter a message or pass it on as is:

- Past experience: Was the sender rewarded for passing along news of this kind in the past, or was she criticized?
- Knowledge, perception of the speaker: Has the receiver's direct superior made it clear that "no news is good news?"
- Emotional state, involvement with the topic, level of attention: Does the sender's fear of failure or criticism prevent him from conveying the message? Is the topic within his realm of expertise, increasing his confidence in his ability to decode it, or is he out of his comfort zone when it comes to evaluating the message's significance? Are personal concerns impacting his ability to judge the message's value?

Once again, filtering can lead to miscommunications in business. Each sender translates the message into his or her own words, creating his or her own version of what was said.

Selective Perception

Selective perception refers to filtering what we see and hear to suit our own needs. This process is often unconscious. Small things can command our attention when we're visiting a new place—a new city or a new company. Over time, however, we begin to make assumptions about the way things are on the basis of our past experience. Often, much of this process is unconscious. "We simply are bombarded with too much stimuli every day to pay equal attention to everything so we pick and choose according to our own needs." Selective perception is a time-saver, a necessary tool in a complex culture. But it can also lead to mistakes.

Think back to the earlier example conversation between Bill, who was asked to order more toner cartridges, and his boss. Since Bill found his boss's to-do list to be unreasonably demanding, he assumed the request could wait. (How else could he do everything else on the list?) The boss, assuming that Bill had heard the urgency in her request, assumed that Bill would place the order before returning to the other tasks on her list.

Both members of this organization were using selective perception to evaluate the communication. Bill's perception was that the task of ordering could wait. The boss's perception was that her time frame was clear, though unstated. When two selective perceptions collide, a misunderstanding occurs.

Information Overload

Information overload can be defined as "occurring when the information processing demands on an individual's time to perform interactions and internal calculations exceed the supply or capacity of time available for such processing." Messages reach us in countless ways every day. Some are societal—advertisements that we may hear or see in the course of our day. Others are professional—e-mails, and memos, voice mails, and conversations from our colleagues. Others are personal—messages and conversations from our loved ones and friends.

Add these together and it's easy to see how we may be receiving more information than we can take in. This state of imbalance is known as information overload. Experts note that information overload is "A symptom of the high-tech age, which is too much information for one human being to absorb in an expanding world of people and technology. It comes from all sources including TV, newspapers, and magazines as well as wanted and unwanted regular mail, e-mail and faxes. It has been exacerbated enormously because of the formidable number of results obtained from Web search engines." Other research shows that working in such fragmented fashion has a significant negative effect on efficiency, creativity, and mental acuity.

Going back to our example of Bill. Let's say he's in his cubicle on the phone with a supplier. While he's talking, he hears the chime of e-mail alerting him to an important message from his boss. He's scanning through it quickly, while still on the phone, when a coworker pokes his head around the cubicle corner to remind Bill that he's late for a staff meeting. The supplier on the other end of the phone line has just given Bill a choice among the products and delivery dates he requested. Bill realizes he missed hearing the first two options, but he doesn't have time to ask the supplier to repeat them all or to try reconnecting to place the order at a later time. He chooses the third option—at least he heard that one, he reasons, and it seemed fair. How good was Bill's decision amid all the information he was processing at the same time?

Emotional disconnects

Emotional disconnects happen when the sender or the receiver is upset, whether about the subject at hand or about some unrelated incident that may have happened earlier. An effective communication requires a sender and a receiver who are open to speaking and listening to one another, despite possible differences in opinion or personality. One or both parties may have to put their emotions aside to achieve the goal of communicating clearly. A receiver who is emotionally upset tends to ignore or distort what the sender is saying. A sender who is emotionally upset may be unable to present ideas or feelings effectively.

Lack of Source Credibility

Lack of source familiarity or credibility can derail communications, especially when humor is involved. Have you ever told a joke that fell flat? You and the receiver lacked the common context that could have made it funny. (Or yes, it could have just been a lousy joke.) Sarcasm and irony are subtle, and potentially hurtful, commodities in business. It's best to keep these types of communications out of the workplace as their benefits are limited, and their potential dangers are great. Lack of familiarity with the sender can lead to misinterpreting humor, especially in less-rich information channels like e-mail. For example, an e-mail from Jill that ends with, "Men, like hens, should boil in vats of oil," could be interpreted as anti-male if the receiver didn't know that Jill has a penchant for rhyme and likes to entertain coworkers by making up amusing sayings.

Similarly, if the sender lacks credibility or is untrustworthy, the message will not get through. Receivers may be suspicious of the sender's motivations ("Why am I being told this?"). Likewise, if the sender has communicated erroneous information in the past, or has created false emergencies, his current message may be filtered.

Workplace gossip

Workplace gossip, also known as the grapevine, is a lifeline for many employees seeking information about their company.

Employees trust their peers as a source of messages, but the grapevine's informal structure can be a barrier to effective communication from the managerial point of view. Its grassroots structure gives it greater credibility in the minds of employees than information delivered through official channels, even when that information is false.

Some downsides of the office grapevine are that gossip offers politically minded insiders a powerful tool for disseminating communication (and self-promoting miscommunications) within an organization. In addition, the grapevine lacks a specific sender, which can create a sense of distrust among employees—who is at the root of the gossip network? When the news is volatile, suspicions may arise as to the person or persons behind the message. Managers who understand the grapevine's power can use it to send and receive messages of their own. They also decrease the grapevine's power by sending official messages quickly and accurately, should big news arise.

Semantics

Semantics is the study of meaning in communication. Words can mean different things to different people, or they might not mean anything to another person. For example, companies often have their own acronyms and buzzwords (called business jargon) that are clear to them but impenetrable to outsiders. For example, at IBM, GBS is focusing on BPTS, using expertise acquired from the PwC purchase (which had to be sold to avoid conflicts of interest in light of SOX) to fend other BPO providers and inroads by the Bangalore tiger. Does this make sense to you? If not, here's the translation: IBM's Global Business Services (GBS) division is focusing on offering companies Business Process Transformation Services (BPTS), using the expertise it acquired from purchasing the management consulting and technology services arm of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), which had to sell the division because of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX, enacted in response to the major accounting scandals like the Enron). The added management expertise puts it above business process outsourcing (BPO) vendors who focus more on automating processes rather than transforming and improving them. Chief among these BPO competitors is Wipro, often called the "Bangalore tiger" because of its geographic origin and aggressive growth.

Given the amount of messages we send and receive every day, it makes sense that humans try to find shortcuts—a way to communicate things in code. In business, this code is known as jargon. Jargon is the language of specialized terms used by a group or profession. It is common shorthand among experts and if used sensibly can be a quick and efficient way of communicating. Most jargon consists of unfamiliar terms, abstract words, nonexistent words, acronyms, and abbreviations, with an occasional euphemism thrown in for good measure. Every profession, trade, and organization has its own specialized terms. At first glance, jargon seems like a good thing—a quicker way to send an effective communication, the way text message abbreviations can send common messages in a shorter, yet understandable way. But that's not always how things happen. Jargon can be an obstacle to effective communication, causing listeners to tune out or fostering ill-feeling between partners in a conversation. When jargon rules the day, the message can get obscured.

A key question to ask before using jargon is, "Who is the receiver of my message?" If you are a specialist speaking to another specialist in your area, jargon may be the best way to send a message while forging a professional bond—similar to the way best friends can communicate in code. For example, an information technology (IT) systems analyst communicating with another IT employee may use jargon as a way of sharing information in a way that reinforces the pair's shared knowledge. But that same conversation should be held in standard English, free of jargon, when communicating with staff members outside the IT group.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/zE3S3xOsaOg

LINK IT UP

Here is a website containing eighty buzz words in business and a discussion of why slang is a problem.

Gender Differences

Gender differences in communication have been documented by a number of experts, including linguistics professor Deborah Tannen in her best-selling book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Men and women work together every day. But their different styles of communication can sometimes work against them. Generally speaking, women like to ask questions before starting a project, while men tend to "jump right in." A male manager who's unaware of how many women communicate their readiness to work may misperceive a ready employee as not ready.

Another difference that has been noticed is that men often speak in sports metaphors, while many women use their home as a starting place for analogies. Women who believe men are "only talking about the game" may be missing out on a chance to participate in a division's strategy and opportunities for teamwork and "rallying the troops" for success.

"It is important to promote the best possible communication between men and women in the workplace," notes gender policy adviser Dee Norton, who provided the above example. "As we move between the male and female cultures, we sometimes have to change how we behave (speak the language of the other gender) to gain the best results from the situation. Clearly, successful organizations of the future are going to have leaders and team members who understand, respect and apply the rules of gender culture appropriately.

Being aware of these gender differences can be the first step in learning to work with them, as opposed to around them. For example, keep in mind that men tend to focus more on competition, data, and orders in their communications, while women tend to focus more on cooperation, intuition, and requests. Both styles can be effective in the right situations, but understanding the differences is a first step in avoiding misunderstandings based on them.

Differences in meaning between sender and receiver

Differences in meaning often exist between the sender and receiver. *"Mean what you say, and say what you mean.*" It's an easy thing to say. But in business, what do those words mean? Different words mean different things to different people. Age, education, and cultural background are all factors that influence how a person interprets words. The less we consider our audience, the greater our chances of miscommunication will be. When communication occurs in the cross-cultural context, extra caution is needed given that different words will be interpreted differently across cultures and different cultures have different norms regarding nonverbal communication. Eliminating jargon is one way of ensuring that our words will convey real-world concepts to others. Speaking to our audience, as opposed to about ourselves, is another. Nonverbal messages can also have different meanings.

Table 1. Gestures Around the Globe	
Figure 1 	1. *"V" for victory*. Use this gesture with caution! While in North America it signs victory or peace, in England and Australia it means something closer to "take this!"
Figure 2	2. *The "OK" gesture*. While in North America it means things are going well, in France it means a person is

Table 1. Gestures Around the Globe	
	thought to be worthless, in Japan it refers to money, and in Brazil, Russia, and Germany it means something really not appropriate for the workplace.
Figure 3 	3. The *“thumbs up*” means one in Germany, five in Japan, but a good job in North America. This can lead to confusion.
Figure 4 	4. *“Hook ’em horns*.” This University of Texas rallying call looks like the horns of a bull. However, in Italy it means you are being tricked, while in Brazil and Venezuela it means you are warding off evil.
Figure 5	5. *Waving your hand*. In much of Europe waving your hand indicates a disagreement. However, in North America it is routinely used as a way to signal greetings or to get someone’s attention.

Table 1. Gestures Around the Globe	
	
Adapted from information in Axtell, R. E. (1998). *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language around the World*. New York: John Wiley.	

Managers who speak about "long-term goals and profits" to a staff that has received scant raises may find their core message ("You're doing a great job—and that benefits the folks in charge!") has infuriated the group they hoped to inspire. Instead, managers who recognize the "contributions" of their staff and confirm that this work is contributing to company goals in ways "that will benefit the source of our success—our employees as well as executives," will find their core message ("You're doing a great job—we really value your work") is received as opposed to being misinterpreted.

Biased Language

Biased language can offend or stereotype others on the basis of their personal or group affiliation. The figure below provides a list of words that have the potential to be offensive in the left-hand column. The right-hand column provides more neutral words that you can use instead.

Table 2. Avoiding Biased Language

Avoid	Consider Using
Black attorney	attorney
businessman	business person
chairman	chair or chairperson
cleaning lady	cleaner or maintenance worker
male nurse	nurse
manpower	staff or personnel
secretary	assistant or associate

Effective communication is clear, factual, and goal-oriented. It is also respectful. Referring to a person by one adjective (a *brain*, a *diabetic*, an *invalid*) reduces that person to that one characteristic. Language that belittles or stereotypes a person poisons the communication process. Language that insults an individual or group based on age, ethnicity, sexual preference, or political beliefs violates public and private standards of decency, ranging from civil rights to corporate regulations.

The effort to create a neutral set of terms to refer to heritage and preferences has resulted in a debate over the nature of "political correctness." Proponents of political correctness see it as a way to defuse the volatile nature of words that stereotyped groups and individuals in the past. Critics of political correctness see its vocabulary as stilted and needlessly cautious.

Many companies offer new employees written guides on standards of speech and conduct. These guides, augmented by common sense and courtesy, are solid starting points for effective, respectful workplace communication. Tips for appropriate workplace speech include but are not limited to the following:

- Alternating the use of "he" and "she" when referring to people in general.
- Relying on human resources–generated guidelines.
- Remembering that terms that feel respectful or comfortable to us may not be comfortable or respectful to others.

Poor Listening and Active Listening

Former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca lamented, "I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen. After all, a good manager needs to listen at least as much as he needs to talk." A sender may strive to deliver a message clearly. But the receiver's ability to listen effectively is equally vital to effective communication. The average worker spends 55% of her workdays listening. Managers listen up to 70% each day. But listening doesn't lead to understanding in every case. Listening takes practice, skill, and concentration.

According to University of San Diego professor Phillip Hunsaker, "The consequences of poor listening are lower employee productivity, missed sales, unhappy customers, and billions of dollars of increased cost and lost profits. Poor listening is a factor in low employee morale and increased turnover because employees do not feel their managers listen to their needs, suggestions, or complaints." Clearly, if you hope to have a successful career in management, it behooves you to learn to be a good listener.

Alan Gulick, a Starbucks spokesperson, puts better listening to work in pursuit of better profits. If every Starbucks employee misheard one $10 order each day, he calculates, their errors would cost the company a billion dollars annually. To teach its employees to listen, Starbucks created a code that helps employees taking orders hear the size, flavor, and use of milk or decaf coffee. The person making the drink echoes the order aloud.

How can you improve your listening skills? The Roman philosopher Cicero said, "Silence is one of the great arts of conversation." How often have we been in conversation with someone else where we are not really listening but itching to convey our portion? This behavior is known as "rehearsing." It suggests the receiver has no intention of considering the sender's message and intends to respond to an earlier point instead. Clearly, rehearsing is an impediment to the communication process. Effective communication relies on another kind of listening: active listening.

Active listening can be defined as giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times. (((Note: O*NET Resource Center, the nation's primary source of occupational information.))) Active listening creates a real-time relationship between the sender and the receiver by acknowledging the content and receipt of a message. As we've seen in the Starbucks example, repeating and confirming a message's content offers a way to confirm that the correct content is flowing between colleagues. The process creates a bond between coworkers while increasing the flow and accuracy of messaging.

Carl Rogers, founder of the "person-centered" approach to psychology, formulated the following five rules for active listening:

1. Listen for message content
2. Listen for feelings
3. Respond to feelings
4. Note all cues
5. Paraphrase and restate

The good news is that listening is a skill that can be learned. The first step is to decide that we want to listen. Casting aside distractions, such as by reducing background or internal noise, is critical. The receiver takes in the sender's message silently, without speaking. Second, throughout the conversation, show the speaker that you're listening. You can do this nonverbally by nodding your head and keeping your attention focused on the speaker. You can also do it verbally, by saying things like, “Yes,” “That’s interesting,” or other such verbal cues. As you’re listening, pay attention to the sender’s body language for additional cues about how they’re feeling. Interestingly, silence plays a major role in active listening. During active listening, we are trying to understand what has been said, and in silence, we can consider the implications. We can’t consider information and reply to it at the same time. That’s where the power of silence comes into play. Finally, if anything is not clear to you, ask questions. Confirm that you’ve heard the message accurately, by repeating back a crucial piece like, “Great, I’ll see you at 2 p.m. in my office.” At the end of the conversation, a “thank-you” from both parties is an optional but highly effective way of acknowledging each other’s teamwork.

In summary, active listening creates a more dynamic relationship between a receiver and a sender. It strengthens personal investment in the information being shared. It also forges healthy working relationships among colleagues by making speakers and listeners equally valued members of the communication process.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Many barriers to effective communication exist. Examples include filtering, selective perception, information overload, emotional disconnects, lack of source familiarity or credibility, workplace gossip, semantics, gender differences, differences in meaning between sender and receiver, and biased language. The receiver can enhance the probability of effective communication by engaging in active listening, which involves (1) giving one’s full attention to the sender and (2) checking for understanding by repeating the essence of the message back to the sender.

Check Your Understanding

Answer the question(s) below to see how well you understand the topics covered in this section. This short quiz does **not** count toward your grade in the class, and you can retake it an unlimited number of times.

Use this quiz to check your understanding and decide whether to (1) study the previous section further or (2) move on to the next section.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

DEFINING GROUPS AND TEAMS

To understand group and team communication, we must first understand the definition of a group. Many people think that a group is simply a collection of people, but that is only part of it. If you walk out your front door and pull together the first ten people you see, do you have a group? No! According to Wilson and Hanna, **groups** are defined as, *“a collection of three or more individuals who interact about some common problem or interdependent goal and can exert mutual influence over one another”* (14). They goes on to say that the three key components of groups are, “size, goal orientation, and mutual influence” (14). Interpersonal communication is often thought about in terms of dyads, or pairs. Organizational communication might be thought of as a group that is larger than 12 people. While there are exceptions, for the most part, group size is often thought of in terms of 3-12 people.

Case In Point

Astronaut Jim Lovell's words during the Apollo 13 lunar mission, "Houston, we have a problem," launched a remarkable tale of effective teamwork and creative problem solving by NASA engineers working to try to save the lives of the jeopardized crew when two oxygen tanks exploded en route to the moon. Details of the dramatic and successful resolution to the problem became widely known in the motion picture Apollo 13, but it's not just during dramatic moments when the importance of good teamwork is needed or recognized. In fact, some form of team-oriented work is encouraged in most, if not all, organizations today (Hughes, Jones). So if you feel this is unimportant to know, remember that group communication and teamwork skills are critical for your success later in life.

For example, Joseph Bonito, a communication professor at University of Arizona, allows no more than five people in a group to ensure that everyone's opinions are reflected equally in a discussion. (Baughman and Everett-Haynes). According to Bonito, if there are too many people in a group it's possible that some individuals will remain silent without anyone noticing. He suggests using smaller groups when equal participation is desirable. So, if the ten people you gathered outside of your front door were all neighbors working together as part of a "neighborhood watch" to create safety in the community, then you would indeed have a group.

For those of you who have participated on athletic teams you'll notice that these definitions also apply to a team. While all of the qualities of groups hold true for teams, teams have additional qualities not necessarily present for all groups. We like to define a **team** as a *specialized group with a strong sense of belonging and commitment to each other that shapes an overall collective identity.* Members of a team each have their own part, or role, to fulfill in order to achieve the team's greater goals. One member's strengths can be other member's weaknesses, so working in a team is beneficial when balancing individual input. While all members of an athletic team share some athletic ability and special appreciation for a particular sport, for example, members of a football team, for example, have highly specialized skills as indicated in the various positions on the team—quarterback, receiver, and running back. In addition to athletic teams, work and professional teams also share these qualities. Now that you know how to define groups and teams, let's look at characteristics of groups and teams, as well as the different types of groups and teams.

Characteristics of Groups

- **Interdependence**. Groups cannot be defined simply as three or more people talking to each other or meeting together. Instead, a primary characteristic of groups is that members of a group are dependent on the others for the group to maintain its existence and achieve its goals. In essence, interdependence is the recognition by those in a group of their need for the others in the group (Lewin; Cragon, Wright& Kasch; Sherblom). Imagine playing in a basketball game as an individual against the five members of another team. Even if you're considered the best basketball player in the world, it's highly unlikely you could win a game against five other people. You must rely on four other teammates to make it a successful game.

- **Interaction.** It probably seems obvious to you that there must be interaction for groups to exist. However, what kind of interaction must exist? Since we all communicate every day, there must be something that distinguishes the interaction in groups from other forms of communication. Cragon, Wright and Kasch state that the primary defining characteristic of group interaction is that it is purposeful. They go on to break down purposeful interaction into four types: *problem solving, role playing, team building, and trust building* (7). Without purposeful interaction a true group does not exist. Roles, norms, and relationships between members are created through interaction. If you're put into a group for a class assignment, for example, your first interaction probably centers around exchanging contact information, settings times to meet, and starting to focus on the task at hand. It's purposeful interaction in order to achieve a goal.

Group Communication Then

The first study that was published on group communication in the New School era of communication study was credited to Edwin Black in 1955. He studied the breakdowns in group interactions by looking at communication sequences in groups. However, it wasn't until the 1960s and 70s that a large number of studies in group communication began to appear. Between 1970 and 1978 114 articles were published on group communication and 89 more were published by 1990 (Stacks & Salwen 360). Study in group communication is still important over a decade later as more and more organizations focus on group work for achieving their goals.

- Synergy. One advantage of working in groups and teams is that they allow us to accomplish things we wouldn't be able to accomplish on our own. Remember back to our discussion of Systems Theory in Chapter 5. Systems Theory suggests that "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." This is the very idea of synergy (Sherblom). In an orchestra or band, each person is there to perform in order to help the larger unit make music in a way that cannot be accomplished without each member working together.
- Common Goals. Having interaction and synergy would be relatively pointless in groups without a common goal. People who comprise groups are brought together for a reason or a purpose. While most members of a group have individual goals, a group is largely defined by the common goals of the group. Think of the example at the beginning of the chapter: Your common goal in a class group is to learn, complete an assignment, and earn a grade. While there may be differences regarding individual goals in the group (what final grade is acceptable for example), or how to achieve the common goals, the group is largely defined by the common goals it shares.
- Shared Norms. Because people come together for a specific purpose, they develop shared norms to help them achieve their goals. Even with a goal in place, random interaction does not define a group. Group interaction is generally guided by norms a group has established for acceptable behavior. Norms are essentially expectations of the group members, established by the group and can be conscious and formal, or unconscious and informal. A couple of examples of group norms include the expectation that all members show up at group meeting times, the expectation that all group members focus on the group instead of personal matters (for example, turning cell phones and other distractions off), and the expectation that group members finish their part of the work by the established due date. When members of the group violate group norms, other members of the group get frustrated and the group's overall goal may be affected.
- Cohesiveness. One way that members understand of the idea of communicating in groups and teams is when they experience a sense of cohesiveness with other members of the group. When we feel like we are part of something larger, we experience a sense of cohesion or wholeness, and may find a purpose that is bigger than our own individual desires and goals. It is the sense of connection and participation that characterizes the interaction in a group as different from the defined interaction among loosely connected individuals. If you've ever participated in a group that achieved its goal successfully, you are probably able to reflect back on your feelings of connections with the other members of that group.

You may be asking yourself, what about teams? We have focused primarily on groups, but it's critical to remember the importance of team communication characteristics as well as group communication characteristics. Check out this article that breaks down team characteristics and skills that ensure team success (we bet you'll find similarities to the group characteristics that we have just explained).

Types of Groups

Not all groups are the same or brought together for the same reasons. Brilhart and Galanes categorize groups "on the basis of the reason they were formed and the human needs they serve" (9). Let's take a look!

- Primary Groups. Primary groups are ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection. They are not generally formed to accomplish a task, but rather, to help us meet our fundamental needs as relational beings like acceptance, love, and affection. These groups are generally longer term than other groups and include family, roommates, and other relationships that meet as groups on a regular basis (Brilhart & Galanes). These special people in your life constitute primary groups because they offer love and support for the long run, and given this, primary groups are typically more meaningful than secondary groups.

- Secondary Groups. Unlike primary groups, we form secondary groups to accomplish work, perform a task, solve problems, and make decisions (Brilhart & Galanes; Sherblom; Cragan, Wright & Kasch). Larson and LaFasto state that secondary groups have "a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for attainment of the team goal or objective" (19).

- Activity Groups. Activity Groups are ones we form for the purpose of participating in activities. I'm sure your campus has many clubs that are organized for the sole purpose of doing activities. On our campus, for example, a popular club on our campus is the Surf Club, in which members meet for the purpose of scheduling surfing times, arranging rides, and choosing where to surf.

- Personal Growth Groups. We form Personal Growth Groups to obtain support and feedback from others, as well as to grow as a person. Personal Growth Groups may be thought of as therapy groups. An example that is probably familiar to you is Alcoholics Anonymous, where alcoholics can share their stories and struggles and get support from others affected by alcohol. There are many personal growth groups available for helping us develop as people through group interaction with others, such as book clubs, weight watchers, and spiritual groups.

- Learning Groups. Learning Groups focus mainly on obtaining new information and gaining knowledge. If you have ever been assigned to a group in a college class, it most likely was a learning group with the purpose of interacting in ways that can help those in the group learn new things about the course content.

- Problem-Solving Groups. These groups are created for the express purpose of solving a specific problem. The very nature of organizing people into this type of group is to get them to collectively figure out effective solutions to the problem they have before them. Committees are an excellent example of people who are brought together to solve problems.

After looking at the various types of groups, it's probably easy for you to recognize just how much of your daily interaction occurs within the contexts of groups. The reality is, we spend a great deal of time in groups, and understanding the types of groups you're in, as well as their purpose, goes a long way toward helping you function as a productive member.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING COMMUNICATION IN GROUPS AND TEAMS

One of the reasons communication scholars study groups and teams is because of the overwhelming amount of time we spend interacting in groups in professional contexts. More and more professional organizations are turning to groups and teams as an essential way of conducting business and getting things done. Even professions that are seemingly independent, such as being a college professor, are heavily laden with group work. The process of writing this book was a group effort as the authors and their students worked in groups to bring the book to you. Each of us had specific roles and tasks to perform.

Another vital area of group communication concerns the study of social change or social movement organizations. Groups such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Organization of Women (NOW) are all groups bound together by a shared social and political commitment—-to promote the rights of nonhuman animals, African-Americans, and women respectively. While individuals can be committed to these ideas, the social, political, and legal rights afforded to groups like these would not have been possible through individual action alone. It was when groups of like-minded people came together with shared commitments and goals, pooling their skills and resources, that change occurred. Just about any Interest Group you can think of has a presence in Washington D.C. and spends money to maintain that presence. Visit here for more information on Interest Groups.

The study of social movements reveals the importance of groups for accomplishing goals. Bowers, Ochs, Jensen and Schulz, in *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, explain seven progressive and cumulative strategies through which movements progress as they move toward success. Three of the seven strategies focus explicitly on group communication—-promulgation, solidification, and polarization. **Promulgation** refers to the *“a strategy where agitators publicly proclaim their goals and it includes tactics designed to win public support”* (23). Without a sufficient group the actions of individual protestors are likely to be dismissed. The strategy of **solidification** *“occurs mainly inside the agitating group” and is “primarily used to unite followers”* (29). The point is to unite group members and provide sufficient motivation and support. The communication that occurs through the collective action of singing songs or chanting slogans serves to unite group members. Because the success of social movements depends in part on the ability to attract a large number of followers, most employ the strategy of **polarization**, which is designed to *persuade neutral individuals or “fence sitters” to join a group* (40). The essence of this strategy is captured in the quote from Eldridge Cleaver, “You are either part of the problem or part of the solution.” Taken together these three strategies stress that the key to group success is the sustained effort of group members working together through communication.

Not only do Communication scholars focus on work and social movements, we are also interested in the role that one’s cultural identity and membership plays in our communicative choices, and how we interpret the communication of others. This focus sheds interesting insights when we examine membership and communication in groups and teams. One reason for this is that different cultures emphasize the role of individuals while other cultures emphasize the importance of the group. For example, **collectivist cultures** are ones that *place high value on group work because they understand that outcomes of our communication impact all members of the community and the community as a whole, not just the individuals in the group*. Conversely, **individualistic cultures** are ones that *place high value on the individual person above the needs of the group*. Thus, whether we view group work as favorable or unfavorable may stem from our cultural background. The U.S. is considered an individualistic culture in that we value the work and accomplishments of the individual through ideals such as being able to “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” and create success for yourself.

Case In Point

The Historic Number of Women in the 113th Congress

This Congress has 102 female members, including 20 female Senators, the most ever in the history of America. This was also an historic election for women of color. More than half of Asian Americans elected to the 113th Congress are women– including Mazie Hirono (D-HI), who is only the second woman of color and the only Asian American woman ever elected to the Senate. In the House, Grace Meng (D) will become New York's first Asian American member of Congress, and Iraq War veteran Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) the first American Samoan elected as a voting member of Congress. They will both join Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), a Thai-born, double amputee war hero. Among Latinas, Congresswoman-elect Michele Lujan Grisham became the first Hispanic woman elected representative from New Mexico.
See the faces of the 113th Congress

The Women's Caucus

The Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues (CCWI) is a Congressional Member Organization (CMO) registered with the House Organization (CMO) registered with the House Administration Committee; its membership includes the women members of the House of Representatives. CCWI is not formally affiliated with Women's Policy, Inc.; however, the two organizations share similar goals. This relates to our collectivistic culture in organizational groups.
WPI is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose sole focus is to help ensure that the most informed decisions on key women's issues are made by policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels. Audiences include elected officials, regulators, women's groups, labor groups, academia, the business community, the media, and the general public.
WPI achieves and shares its rare quality of insight into relevant issues by researching and producing the best available information in the form of compelling and unbiased legislative analyses, issue summaries, impact assessments, and educational briefings. This ensures that policy decisions affecting women and their families have the benefit of input from the most objective sources possible.
For more info on The Women's Caucus visit http://www.womenspolicy.org/

Power in Groups

Given the complexity of group interaction, it's short-sighted to try to understand group communication without looking at notions of power (think back to Critical Theories and Research Methods). **Power** *influences how we interpret the messages of others and determines the extent to which we feel we have the right to speak up and voice our concerns and opinions to others.* Take a moment to reflect on the different ways you think about power. What images come to mind for you when you think of power? Are there different kinds of power? Are some people inherently more powerful than others? Do you consider yourself to be a powerful person? We highlight three ways to understand power as it relates to group and team communication. The word "power" literally means "to be able" and has many implications.

If you associate power with control or dominance, this refers to the notion of power as **power-over**. According to Starhawk, "power-over *enables one individual or group to make the decisions that affect others, and to enforce control*" (9). Control can and does take many forms in society. Starhawk explains that,

> *This power is wielded from the workplace, in the schools, in the courts, in the doctor's office. It may rule with weapons that are physical or by controlling the resources we need to live: money, food, medical care; or by controlling more subtle resources: information, approval, love. We are so accustomed to power-over, so steeped in its language and its implicit threats, that we often become aware of its functioning only when we see its extreme manifestations. (9)*

When we are in group situations and someone dominates the conversation, makes all of the decisions, or controls the resources of the group such as money or equipment, this is power-over.

Power-from-within refers to a more personal sense of strength or agency. Power-from-within manifests *itself when we can stand, walk, and speak "words that convey our needs and thoughts*" (Starhawk 10). In groups, this type of power "arises from our sense of connection, our bonding with other human beings, and with the environment" (10). As Heider explains in The Tao of Leadership, "Since all creation is a whole, separateness is an illusion. Like it or not, we are team players. Power comes through cooperation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness" (77). If you think about your role in groups, how have you influenced other group members? Your strategies indicate your sense of power-from-within.

Finally, groups manifest **power-with**, which is "*the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen*" (Starhawk 10). For this to be effective in a group or team, at least two qualities must be present among members: 1) All group members must communicate respect and equality for one another, and 2) The leader must not abuse power-with and attempt to turn it into power-over. Have you ever been involved in a group where people did not treat each others as equals or with respect? How did you feel about the group? What was the outcome? Could you have done anything to change that dynamic?

Obviously, communication is the central activity of every group because it is how we organize and maintain groups. While we can all tell positive and negative stories about being in groups, how are they formed in the first place?

WHY TEAMWORK WORKS

Factors in Effective Teamwork

Now that we know a little bit about *how* teams work, we need to ask ourselves *why* they work. Not surprisingly, this is a fairly complex issue. In this section, we'll answer these closely related questions: Why are teams often effective? Why are they sometimes *in*effective?

First, let's begin by identifying several factors that, in practice, tend to contribute to effective teamwork. Generally speaking, teams are effective when the following factors are met: (((Note: This section is based on David A. Whetten and Kim S. Cameron, *Developing Management Skills*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2007), 497.)))

- *Members depend on each other*. When team members rely on each other to get the job done, team productivity and efficiency are high.
- *Members trust one another*. Teamwork is more effective when members trust each other.
- *Members work better together than individually*. When team members perform better as a group than alone, collective performance exceeds individual performance.
- *Members become boosters*. When each member is encouraged by other team members to do his or her best, collective results improve.
- *Team members enjoy being on the team*. The more that team members derive satisfaction from being on the team, the more committed they become.
- *Leadership rotates*. Teams function effectively when leadership responsibility is shared over time.

Most of these explanations probably make pretty clear intuitive sense. Unfortunately, because such issues are rarely as clear-cut as they may seem at first glance, we need to examine the issue of group effectiveness from another perspective—one that considers the effects of factors that aren't quite so straightforward.

Group Cohesiveness

The idea of group cohesiveness refers to the *attractiveness* of a team to its members. If a group is high in cohesiveness, membership is quite satisfying to its members; if it's low in cohesiveness, members are unhappy with it and may even try to leave it. The principle of group cohesiveness, in other words, is based on the simple idea that groups are most effective when their members like being members of the group. (((Note: This section is based mostly on Jennifer M. George and Gareth R. Jones, *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 371–77. See Leon Festinger, "Informal Social Communication, *Psychological Review* 57 (1950): 271–82.)))

What Makes a Team Cohesive?

Numerous factors may contribute to team cohesiveness, but in this section, we'll focus on five of the most important:

1. *Size*. The bigger the team, the less satisfied members tend to be. When teams get too large, members find it harder to interact closely with other members; a few members tend to dominate team activities, and conflict becomes more likely.
2. *Similarity*. People usually get along better with people like themselves, and teams are generally more cohesive when members perceive fellow members as people who share their own attitudes and experience.
3. *Success*. When teams are successful, members are satisfied, and other people are more likely to be attracted to their teams.
4. *Exclusiveness*. The harder it is to get into a group, the happier the people who are already in it. Status (the extent to which outsiders look up to a team, as well as the perks that come with membership) also increases members' satisfaction.
5. *Competition*. Members value membership more highly when they're motivated to achieve common goals—especially when those goals mean outperforming other teams.

There's such a thing as too much cohesiveness. When, for instance, members are highly motivated to collaborate in performing the team's activities, the team is more likely to be effective in achieving its goals. Clearly, when those goals are aligned with the goals of the larger organization, the organization, too, will be happy. If, however, its members get too wrapped up in more immediate team goals, the whole team may lose sight of the larger organizational goals toward which it's supposed to be working.

Groupthink

Likewise, it's easier for leaders to direct members toward team goals when members are all on the same page—when there's a basic willingness to conform to the team's rules and guidelines. When there's too much conformity, however, the group can become ineffective: It may resist change and fresh ideas and, what's worse, may end up adopting its own dysfunctional tendencies as its way of doing things. Such tendencies may also encourage a phenomenon known as groupthink—the tendency to conform to group pressure in making decisions, while failing to think critically or to consider outside influences. Groupthink is often cited as a factor in the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* in January 1986: Engineers from a supplier of components for the rocket booster warned that the launch might be risky because of the weather but were persuaded to reverse their recommendation by NASA officials who wanted the launch to proceed as scheduled. (((Note: See Em Griffin, "Groupthink of Irving Janis," 1997, (accessed October 11, 2011).)))

Why Teams Fail

Teams don't always work. To learn why, let's take a quick look at four common obstacles to success in introducing teams into an organization: (((Note: This section is based on Jerald Greenberg and Robert A. Baron, *Behavior in Organizations*, 9th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 317–18.)))

- *Unwillingness to cooperate*. Failure to cooperate can occur when members don't or won't commit to a common goal or set of activities. What if, for example, half the members of a product-development team want to create a brand-new product and half want to improve an existing product? The entire team may get stuck on this point of contention for weeks or even months.
- *Lack of managerial support*. Every team requires organizational resources to achieve its goals, and if management isn't willing to commit the needed resources—say, funding or key personnel—a team will probably fall short of those goals.
- *Failure of managers to delegate authority*. Team leaders are often chosen from the ranks of successful supervisors—first-line managers who give instructions on a day-to-day basis and expect to have them carried out. This approach to workplace activities may not work very well in leading a team—a position in which success depends on building a consensus and letting people make their own decisions.
- *Failure of teams to cooperate*. If you're on a workplace team, your employer probably depends on teams to perform much of the organization's work and meet many of its goals. In other words, it is, to some extent, a team-based organization, and as such, reaching its overall goals requires a high level of cooperation *among teams*. (((Note: See Leigh L. Thompson, *Making the Team: A Guide for Managers* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 323–24.))) When teams can't agree on mutual goals (or when they duplicate efforts), neither the teams nor the organization is likely to meet with much success.

Motivation and Frustration

Finally, remember that teams are composed of people, and whatever the roles they happen to be playing at a given time, people are subject to psychological ups and downs. As members of workplace teams, they need motivation; when motivation is down, so are effectiveness and productivity. As you can see below in Figure 1, "Sources of Frustration," the difficulty of maintaining a high level of motivation is the chief cause of frustration among members of teams. As such, it's also a chief cause of ineffective teamwork, and that's one reason why more employers now look for the ability to develop and sustain motivation when they're hiring new managers. (((Note: See Leigh L. Thompson, *Making the Team: A Guide for Managers* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008), 18–19.)))

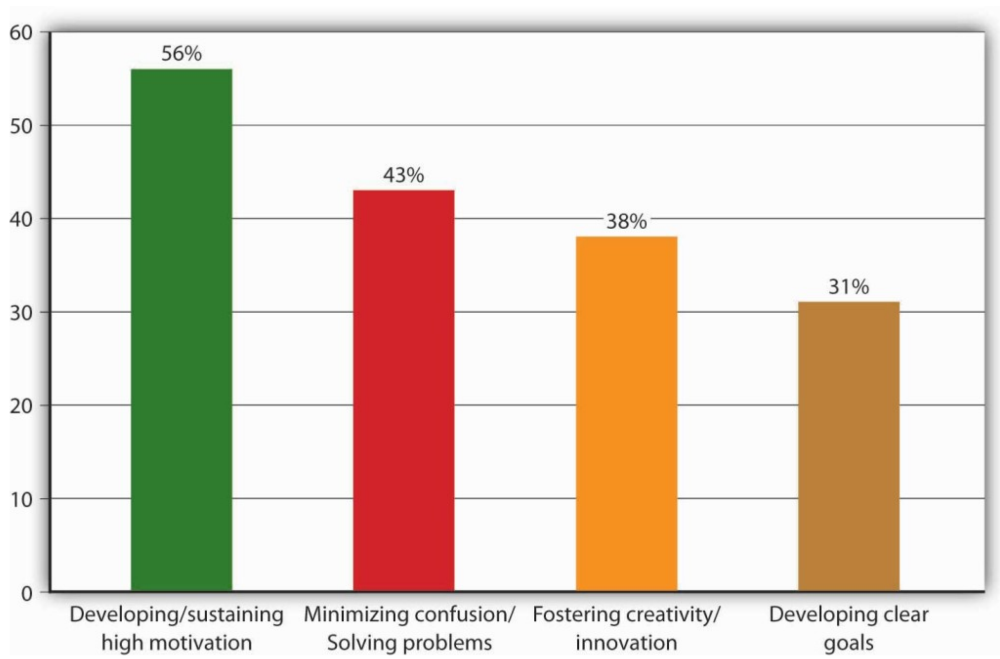


Figure 1. Sources of Frustration

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Generally speaking, teams are effective when the following are true:
  - Members are interdependent.
  - Members work better together than individually.
  - Teams work well enough to satisfy members.
  - Leadership rotates.
  - Members help one another.
  - Members become boosters.
  - Members trust one another.
- Group cohesiveness refers to the *attractiveness* of a team to its members. If a group is high in cohesiveness, membership is quite satisfying to its members; if it's low in cohesiveness, members are unhappy with it and may even try to leave it.
- Common obstacles to team success include the following:
  - Unwillingness to cooperate
  - Lack of managerial support
  - Failure of managers to delegate authority
  - Failure of teams to cooperate

Check Your Understanding

Answer the question(s) below to see how well you understand the topics covered in this section. This short quiz does **not** count toward your grade in the class, and you can retake it an unlimited number of times.

Use this quiz to check your understanding and decide whether to (1) study the previous section further or (2) move on to the next section.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

FORMING GROUPS

Sometimes we join a group because we want to. Other times, we might be assigned to work in groups in a class or at work. Either way, Lumsden, Lumsden and Wiethoff give three reasons why we form groups. First, we may join groups because *we share similar interests or attractions* with other group members. If you are a certain major in college, chances are you share some of the same interests as others in your class groups. Also, you might find yourself attracted to others in your group for romantic, friendship, political, religious or professional reasons. On our campus, our majors have formed the Communication Club to bring together students in the major. A second reason we join groups is called **drive reduction**. Essentially, we join groups so *our work with others reduces the drive to fulfill our needs by spreading out involvement*. As Maslow explains, we have drives for physiological needs like security, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Working with others helps us achieve these needs thereby reducing our obligation to meet these needs ourselves (Maslow; Paulson). If you accomplished a task successfully for a group, your group members likely complimented your work, thus fulfilling some of your self-esteem needs. If you had done the same work only for yourself, the building up of your self-esteem may not have occurred. A third reason we join groups is for **reinforcement**. We are often motivated to do things for the rewards they bring. Participating in *groups provides reinforcement from others in the pursuit of our goals and rewards*.

Much like interpersonal relationships, groups go through a series of stages as they come together. These stages are called *forming, storming, norming, and performing* (Tuckman; Fisher; Sherblom; Benson; Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Groups that form to achieve a task often go through a fifth stage called termination that occurs after a group accomplishes its goal. Let's look at each of the stages of group formation and termination.

- Forming. Obviously, for a group to exist and work together its members must first form the group. During the forming stage, group members begin to set the parameters of the group by establishing what characteristics identify the members of the group as a group. During this stage, the group's goals are made generally clear to members, initial questions and concerns are addressed, and initial role assignments may develop. This is the stage when group norms begin to be negotiated and established. Essentially, norms are a code of conduct which may be explicit or assumed and dictate acceptable and expected behavior of the group.
- Storming. The storming stage might be considered comparable to the "first fight" of a romantic couple. After the initial politeness passes in the forming stage, group members begin to feel more comfortable expressing their opinions about how the group should operate and the participation of other members in the group. Given the complexity of meeting both individual goals as well as group goals, there is constant negotiation among group members regarding participation and how a group should operate. Imagine being assigned to a group for class and you discover that all the members of the group are content with getting a C grade, but you want an A. If you confront your group members to challenge them to have higher expectations, you are in the storming stage.
- Norming. Back to our romantic couple example, if the couple can survive the first fight, they often emerge on the other side of the conflict feeling stronger and more cohesive. The same is true in groups. If a group is able to work through the initial conflict of the storming stage, there is the opportunity to really solidify the group's norms and get to the task at hand as a cohesive group. Norming signifies that the members of a group are willing to abide by group rules and values to achieve the group's goals.
- Performing. Performing is the stage we most often associate as the defining characteristic of groups. This stage is marked by a decrease in tensions, less conscious attention to norm establishment, and greater focus on the actual work at hand in order to accomplish the group's goals. While there still may be episodes of negotiating conflict and re-establishing norms, performing is about getting to the business at hand. When you are in a weekly routine of meeting at the library to work on a group project, you are in the performing stage.

- Terminating. Groups that are assigned a specific goal and timeline will experience the fifth stage of group formation, termination. Think about groups you have been assigned to in college. We're willing to bet that the group did not continue once you achieved the required assignment and earned your grade. This is not to say that we do not continue relationships with other group members. But, the defining characteristics of the group established during the forming stage have come to an end, and thus, so has the group.

Now that you understand how groups form, let's discuss the ways in which people participate in groups. Since groups are comprised of interdependent individuals, one area of research that has emerged from studying group communication is the focus on the roles that we play in groups and teams. Having an understanding of the various roles we play in groups can help us understand how to interact with various group members.

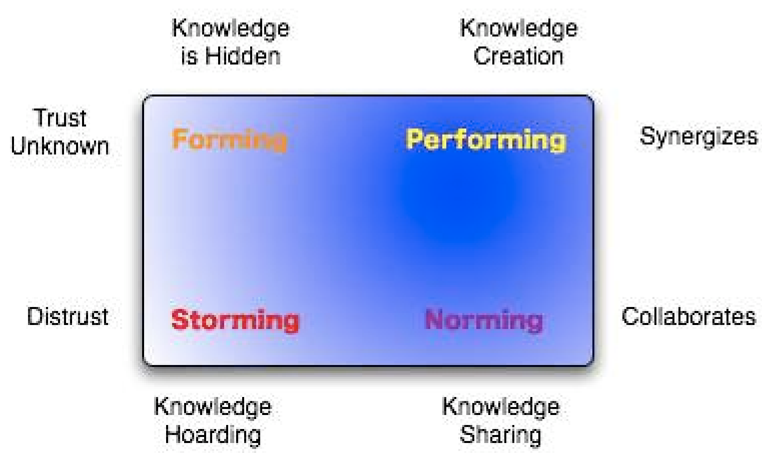
Group Communication Now

Technology is changing so many things about the ways we communicate. This is also true in group communication. One of the great frustrations for many people in groups is simply finding a time that everyone can meet together. However, computer technology has changed these dynamics as more and more groups "meet" in the virtual world, rather than face-to-face. But, what is the impact of technology on how groups function? Dr. Kiran Bala argues that "new media has brought a sea of changes in intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and mass communication processes and content." With group chat available on almost all social media networks and numerous technological devices, we have a lot to learn about the ways communication technologies are changing our notions of working in groups and individual communication styles.

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Stages of Team Development

Teams move through a series of stages, beginning when they are formed and ending when they are disbanded. Bruce Tuckman identified four distinct phases of team development: *forming, storming, norming,* and *performing*. Each has a primary purpose and a common set of interpersonal dynamics among team members. Tuckman proposed that all are inevitable and even necessary parts of a successful team's evolution.



Stages of Team Building

The Forming Stage

The first step in a team's life is bringing together a group of individuals. Individuals focus on defining and assigning tasks, establishing a schedule, organizing the team's work, and other startup matters. In addition to focusing on the scope of the team's purpose and how to approach it, individuals in the formation stage are also gathering information and impressions about each other. Since people generally want to be accepted by others, during this period they usually avoid conflict and disagreement. Team members may begin to work on their tasks independently, not yet focused on their relationships with fellow team members.

The Storming Stage

Once their efforts are under way, team members need clarity about their activities and goals, as well as explicit guidance about how they will work independently and collectively. This leads to a period known as storming—because it can involve brainstorming ideas and also because it usually causes disruption. During the storming stage members begin to share ideas about what to do and how to do it that compete for consideration. Team members start to open up to each other and confront one another's ideas and perspectives.

Because storming can be contentious, members who are averse to conflict will find it unpleasant or even painful. This can decrease motivation and effort by drawing attention away from tasks. In some cases storming (i.e., disagreements) can be resolved quickly. Other times a team never leaves this stage and becomes stuck and unable to do its work. Patience and consideration toward team members and their views go a long way toward avoiding this.

The Norming Stage

Successfully moving through the storming stage means that a team has clarified its purpose and strategy for achieving its goals. It now transitions to a period focused on developing shared values about how team members will work together. These norms of collaboration can address issues ranging from when to use certain modes of communication, such as e-mail versus telephone, to how team meetings will be run and what to do when conflicts arise. Norms become a way of simplifying choices and facilitating collaboration, since members have shared expectations about how work will get done.

The Performing Stage

Once norms are established and the team is functioning as a unit, it enters the performing stage. By now team members work together easily on interdependent tasks and are able to communicate and coordinate effectively. There are fewer time-consuming distractions based on interpersonal and group dynamics. For this reason, motivation is usually high and team members have confidence in their ability to attain goals.

While these four stages—forming, storming, norming, and performing—are distinct and generally sequential, they often blend into one another and even overlap. A team may pass through one phase only to return to it. For example, if a new member joins the team there may be a second brief period of formation while that person is integrated. A team may also need to return to an earlier stage if its performance declines. Team-building exercises are often done to help a team through its development process.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Teams move through a series of four phases—from when they are formed to when their work is complete.
- During the forming stage, a the team discusses it purpose, defines and assigns tasks, establishes timelines, and begins forming personal relationships.
- The often-contentious storming stage is the period when team members clarify their goals and the strategy for achieving them.
- The norming stage is when the team establishes its values for how individuals will interact and collaborate.
- Performing is the stage of team development when team members have productive relationships and are able to communicate and coordinate effectively and efficiently.
- While teams move through the four stages in sequence, the phases may overlap or be repeated.

GLOSSARY

Performing: The stage of group development when team members have productive relationships and are able to communicate and coordinate effectively and efficiently.

Norming: The stage of group development when the team establishes its values for how individuals will interact and collaborate.

Forming: The stage of group development when the team discusses its purpose, defines and assigns tasks, establishes timelines, and begins forming personal relationships.

Storming: The stage of group development when the team clarifies its goals and its strategy for achieving them.

Check Your Understanding

Answer the question(s) below to see how well you understand the topics covered in this section. This short quiz does not count toward your grade in the class, and you can retake it an unlimited number of times.

Use this quiz to check your understanding and decide whether to (1) study the previous section further or (2) move on to the next section.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

GROUPS ROLES

Take a moment to think about the individuals in a particular group you were in and the role each of them played. You may recall that some people were extremely helpful, organized and made getting the job done easy. Others may have been more difficult to work with, or seemed to disrupt the group process. In each case, the participants were performing roles that manifest themselves in most groups. Early studies on group communication provide an overwhelming number of different types of group roles. To simplify, we provide an overview of some of the more common roles. As you study group roles, remember that we usually play more than one role at a time, and that we do not always play the same roles from group to group.

We organize group roles into four categories—task, social-emotional, procedural, and individual. Task roles are those that *help or hinder a group's ability to accomplish its goals*. Social-emotional roles are those that *focus on building and maintaining relationships among individuals in a group* (the focus is on how people feel about being in the group). Procedural roles are *concerned with how the group accomplishes its task*. People occupying these roles are interested in following directions, proper procedure, and going through appropriate channels when making decisions or initiating policy. The final category,

individual roles, includes *any role "that detracts from group goals and emphasizes personal goals*" (Jensen & Chilberg 97). When people come to a group to promote their individual agenda above the group's agenda, they do not communicate in ways that are beneficial to the group. Let's take a look at each of these categories in more detail.

- **Task Roles**. While there are many task roles a person can play in a group, we want to emphasize five common ones. The **Task Leader** is *the person that keeps the group focused on the primary goal or task by setting agendas, controlling the participation and communication of the group's members, and evaluating ideas and contributions of participants*. Your associated students president probably performs the task leader role. **Information Gatherers** are those people who *seek and/or provide the factual information necessary for evaluating ideas, problem solving, and reaching conclusions*. This is the person who serves as the liaison with your professors about what they expect from a group project. **Opinion Gatherers** are those that *seek out and/or provide subjective responses about ideas and suggestions*. They most often take into account the values, beliefs, and attitudes of members. If you have a quiet member of your group, the opinion gatherer may ask, "What do you think?" in order to get that person's feedback. The **Devil's Advocate** is the person that*argues a contrary or opposing point of view*. This may be done positively in an effort to ensure that all perspectives are considered, or negatively as the unwillingness of a single person to participate in the group's ideas. The **Energizer** is the person who *functions as the group's cheer-leader, providing energy, motivation, and positive encouragement*.
- **Social-Emotional Roles**. Group members play a variety of roles in order to **build and maintain relationships in groups**. The **Social-Emotional Leader** is the person who is *concerned with maintaining and balancing the social and emotional needs of the group members and tends to play many, if not all, of the roles in this category*. The **Encourager** practices good listening skills in order to *create a safe space for others to share ideas and offer suggestions*. **Followers** are group members that do what they are told, *going along with decisions and assignments from the group*. The **Tension Releaser** is the person that *uses humor, or can skillfully change the subject in an attempt to minimize tension and avoid conflict*. The **Compromiser** is the one who *mediates disagreements or conflicts among members by encouraging others to give in on small issues for the sake of meeting the goals of the group*. What role do you find yourself most likely to enact in groups? Or, do you find you switch between these roles depending on the group?
- **Procedural Roles**. Groups cannot function properly without having a system of rules or norms in place. Members are responsible for maintaining the norms of a group and play many roles to accomplish this. The **Facilitator** acts like a traffic director by *managing the flow of information to keep the group on task*. **Gatekeepers** are those group members that attempt to *maintain proper communicative balance*. These people also serve as the points of contact between times of official group meetings. The **Recorder** is the person responsible for *tracking group ideas, decisions, and progress*. Often, a written record is necessary, thus, this person has the responsibility for keeping, maintaining, and sharing group notes. If you're the person who pulls out a pen and paper in order to track what the group talks about, you're the recorder.
- **Individual Roles**. Because groups are made of individuals, group members often play various roles in order to achieve individual goals. The **Aggressor** engages in *forceful or dominating communication to put others down or initiate conflict with other members*. This communication style can cause some members to remain silent or passive. The **Blocker** is the person that fusses or *complains about small procedural matters, often blocking the group's progress by not letting them get to the task*. They worry about small details that, overall, are not important to achieving the group's desired outcome. The **Self-Confessor** uses the group as a setting to *discuss personal or emotional matters not relevant to the group or its task*. This is the person that views the group as one that is there to perform group therapy. The **Playboy or Playgirl** *shows little interest in the group or the problem at hand* and does not contribute in a meaningful way, or at all. This is the person who does essentially no work, yet still gets credit for the group's work. The **Joker or Clown** uses *inappropriate humor or remarks that can steer the group from its mission*.

Case-in-Point

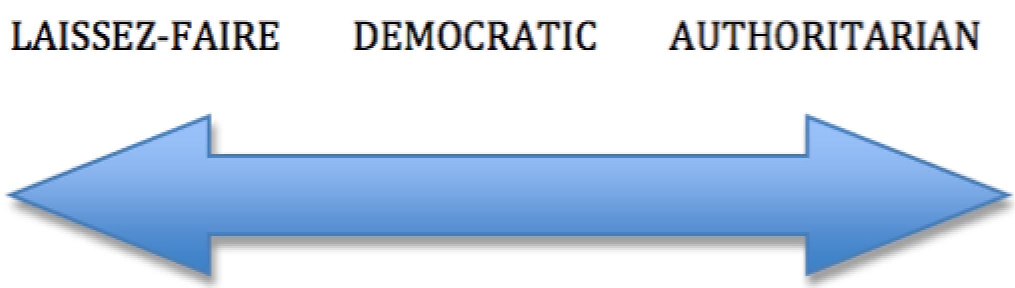
The popular sitcom Workaholics (2011-present) follows three college drop-outs who work in a telemarketing company and are notoriously terrible workers. Always working as a group in their shared cubicle, the three young men are all prime examples of group members who play Individual Roles: Anders as the Aggressor, Blake as the Self-Confessor, Adam as the Blocker, and all three of them as the joker or clown at one point or another. As you might guess, this group is very unproductive and ineffective.

While we certainly do not have the space to cover every role you might encounter in a group, we're sure you can point to your own examples of people who have filled the roles we've discussed. Perhaps you can point to examples of when you have filled some of these roles yourself. Important for group members to understand, are the various roles they play in groups in order to engage in positive actions that help the group along. One dynamic that these roles contribute to in the process of group communication is leadership in groups. Let's briefly examine how leadership functions in groups.

LEADERSHIP IN GROUPS

While we've examined roles we can play in groups, the role that often gets the most attention is that of the leader. Like defining communication, many people have an idea of what a leader is, but can't really come up with a good definition for the term as there are many ways to conceptualize the role of leader. One way to do this is to think of leaders in terms of their leadership styles. Let's look at three broad leadership styles to better understand the communication choices leaders can make, as well as the outcome of such choices, in a group.

First, let's visualize leadership styles by seeing them as a continuum. The position to the left (Laissez-faire) indicates a leader who exerts little to no control over a group, while the position on the right (Authoritarian) indicates a leader who seeks complete control. The position in the middle (Democratic) is one where a leader maintains a moderate level of control or influence in a group with the group's permission (Bass & Stogdill; Berkowitz).



- **Laissez-faire** is a French term that literally means "let do." This leadership style is one in which the leader *takes a laid back or hands-off approach*. For a variety of reasons, leaders may choose to keep their input at a minimum and refrain from directing a group. What do you think some reasons may be for selecting this leadership style? Perhaps a person feels uncomfortable being a leader. Perhaps a person does not feel that she/he possesses the skills required to successfully lead the group. Or, perhaps the group is highly skilled, motivated, and efficient and does not require much formal direction from a leader. If the latter is the case, then a laissez-faire approach may work well. However, if a group is in need of direction then a laissez-faire style may result in frustration and inefficiency.

- An **authoritarian leadership style** is one in which a leader attempts *to exert maximum control over a group*. This may be done by making unilateral decisions rather than consulting all members, assigning members to specific tasks or duties, and generally controlling group processes. This leadership style may be beneficial when a group is in need of direction or there are significant time pressures. Authoritarian leaders may help a group stay efficient and organized in order to accomplish its goals. However, group members may be less committed to the outcomes of the group process than if they had been a part of the decision making process. One term that you may have heard on your campus is "shared-governance." In general, faculty do not like working in groups where one person is making the decisions. Instead, most faculty prefer a system where all members of a group share in the leadership process. This can also be called the democratic style of leadership.
- The **democratic style of leadership** falls somewhere in the middle of laissez-faire and authoritarian styles. In these situations, *the decision-making power is shared among group members, not exercised by one individual*. In order for this to be effective, group members must spend considerable time sharing and listening to various positions and weighing the effects of each. Groups organized in this fashion may be more committed to the outcomes of the group, creative, and participatory. However, as each person's ideas are taken into account, this can extend the amount of time it takes for a group to accomplish its goals.

While we've certainly oversimplified our coverage of the complex nature of group leaders, you should be able to recognize that there are pros and cons to each leadership style depending on context. There is not one right way to be a leader for every group. Effective leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to fit the needs of the group. Furthermore, as a group's needs and members change over time, leadership styles can accommodate natural changes in the group's life cycle. Take a moment to think of various group situations in which each leadership style may be the most and the least desirable. What are examples of groups where each style of leadership could be practiced effectively?

Group Norms

Every group in which we participate has a set of norms like we discussed in the "norming" stage. Each group's rules and norms are different, and we must learn them to be effective participants. Some groups formalize their norms and rules, while others are less formal and more fluid. Norms are the recognized rules of behavior for group members. **Norms** *influence the ways we communicate with other members, and ultimately, the outcome of group participation*. Norms are important because, as we highlighted in the "norming" stage of group formation, they are the defining characteristics of groups.

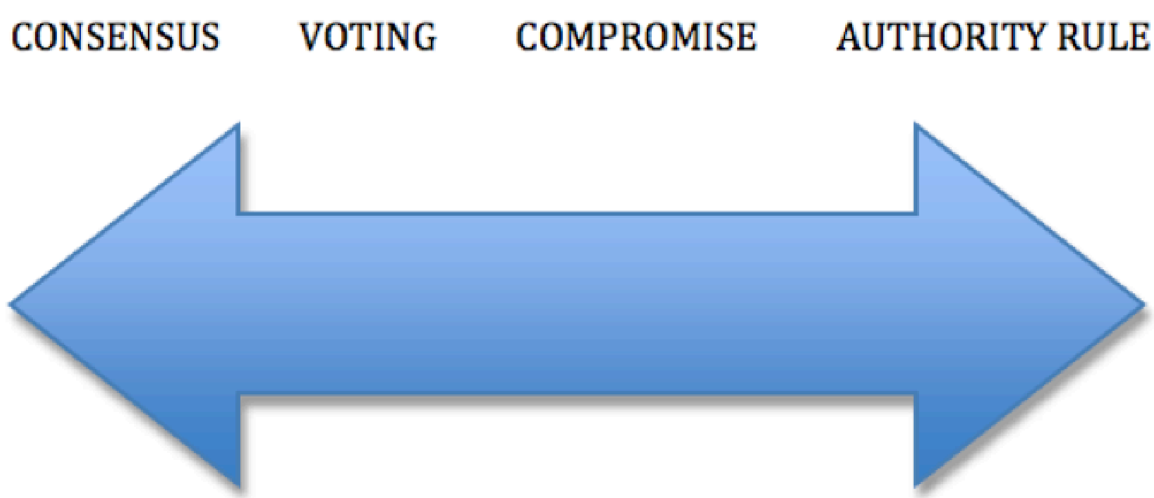
Brilhart and Galanes divide norms into two categories. **General norms** *"direct the behavior of the group as a whole"* (130). Meeting times, how meetings run, and the division of tasks are all examples of general norms that groups form and maintain. These norms establish the generally accepted rules of behavior for all group members. The second category of norms is role-specific norms. **Role-specific norms** *"concern individual members with particular roles, such as the designated leader"* (130).

Not only are there norms that apply to all members of a group, there are norms that influence the behaviors of each role. Consider our brief discussion on leadership. If a group's members are self-motivated, and do not need someone imposing structure, they will set a norm that the group leader should act as a laissez-faire or democratic leader rather than an authoritarian leader. Violation of this norm would most likely result in conflict if leaders try to impose their will. A violation like this will send a group back to the "storming" stage to renegotiate the acceptable norms of the group. When norms are violated, group members most often will work to correct the violation to get the group back on task and functioning properly. Have you ever been in a group in which a particular group member did not do the task that was assigned to them? What happened? How did the group handle this situation as a whole? What was the response of the person who did not complete the task? In hindsight, would you have handled it differently? If so, how?

As groups progress through the various stages, and as members engage in the various roles, the group is in a continual process of decision making. Since this is true, it makes sense to ask the question, “How is it that groups make decisions?”

DECISION MAKING IN GROUPS

When groups need to get a job done they should have a method in place for making decisions. The decision making process is a norm that may be decided by a group leader or by the group members as a whole. Let’s look at four common ways of making decisions in groups. To make it simple we will again use a continuum as a way to visualize the various options groups have for making decisions. On the left side are those methods that require maximum group involvement (consensus and voting). On the right are those methods that use the least amount of input from all members (compromise and authority rule).



The decision-making process that requires the most group input is called consensus. To reach consensus *group members must participate in the crafting of a decision and agree to adopt it*. While not all members may support the decision equally, all will agree to carry it out. In individualistic cultures like the U.S., where a great deal of value is placed on independence and freedom of choice, this option can be seen by group members as desirable, since no one is forced to go along with a policy or plan of action to which they are opposed. Even though this style of decision making has many advantages, it has its limitations as well—it requires a great deal of creativity, trust, communication, and time on the part of all group members. When groups have a hard time reaching consensus, they may opt for the next strategy which does not require buy-in from all or most of the group.

Group Communication and You

Okay, you're a Communication major and this whole idea of working in groups really appeals to you and seems to come naturally. But perhaps you're not a Communication major and you're thinking to yourself that your future career isn't really going to require group or team work. Well, you might want to think again. Forbes magazine released an article titled The Ten Skills Employers Most Want in 2015 Graduates which stated that technical knowledge related to the job is not nearly as important as effective teamwork and communications skills. In fact, the top three skills listed include, 1) ability to work in a team structure, 2) ability to make decisions and solve problems, and 3) ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization. Even non-Communication majors need to develop effective group communication skills to succeed at work.

Even non-Communication majors need to develop effective group communication skills to succeed at work.

Voting by majority may be as simple as having 51% of the vote for a particular decision, or may require a larger percentage, such as two-thirds or three-fourths, before reaching a decision. Like consensus, voting is advantageous because everyone is able to have an equal say in the decision process (as long as they vote). Unlike consensus, everyone may not be satisfied with the outcome. In a simple majority, 49% of voters may be displeased and may be resistant to abide by the majority vote. In this case the decision or policy may be difficult to carry out and implement. For example, our campus recently had a department vote on whether or not they wanted to hire a particular person to be a professor. Three faculty voted yes for the person, while two faculty voted no. Needless to say, there was a fair amount of contention among the professors who voted. Ultimately, the person being considered for the job learned about the split vote and decided that he did not want to take the job because he felt that the two people that voted no would not treat him well.

Toward the right of our continuum is compromise. This method often carries a positive connotation in the U.S. because it is perceived as fair since *each member gives up something, as well as gains something*. Nevertheless, this decision making process may not be as fair as it seems on the surface. The main reason for this has to do with what is being given up and obtained. There is nothing in a compromise that says these two factors must be equal (that may be the ideal, but it is often not the reality). For individuals or groups that feel they have gotten the unfair end of the bargain, they may be resentful and refuse to carry out the compromise. They may also foster ill will toward others in the group, or engage in self-doubt for going along with the compromise in the first place. However, if groups cannot make decisions through consensus or voting, compromise may be the next best alternative.

At the far right of our continuum is decision by **authority rule**. This decision-making process *requires essentially no input from the group, although the group's participation may be necessary for implementing the decision*. The authority in question may be a member of the group who has more power than other members, such as the leader, or a person of power outside the group. While this method is obviously efficient, members are often resentful when they feel they have to follow another's orders and feel the group process was a façade and waste of valuable time.

During the decision making process, groups must be careful not to fall victim to groupthink. **Groupthink** happens when *a group is so focused on agreement and consensus that they do not examine all of the potential solutions available to them*. Obviously, this can lead to incredibly flawed decision making and outcomes. Groupthink occurs when members strive for unanimity, resulting in self-deception, forced consent, and conformity to group values and ethics (Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Many people argue that groupthink is the reason behind some of history's worst decisions, such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion, The Pearl Harbor attack, The North Korea escalation, the Vietnam escalation, and the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq (Rose, Hopthrow & Crisp). Let's think about groupthink on a smaller, less detrimental level. Imagine you are participating in a voting process during a group meeting where everyone votes yes on a particular subject, but you want to vote no. You might feel pressured to conform to the group and vote yes for the sole purpose of unanimity, even though it goes against your individual desires.

As with leadership styles, appropriate decision making processes vary from group to group depending on context, culture, and group members. There is not a "one way fits all" approach to making group decisions. When you find yourself in a task or decision-making group you should consider taking stock of the task at hand before deciding as a group the best ways to proceed.

Group Work and Time

By now you should recognize that working in groups and teams has many advantages. However, one issue that is of central importance to group work is time. When working in groups time can be both a source of frustration, as well as a reason to work together. One obvious problem is that it takes much longer to make decisions with two or more people as opposed to just one person. Another problem is that it can be difficult to coordinate meeting times when taking into account people's busy lives of work, school, family, and other personal commitments. On the flip side, when time is limited and there are multiple tasks to accomplish, it is often more efficient to work in a group where tasks can be delegated according to resources and skills. When each member can take on certain aspects of a project, this limits the amount of work an individual would have to do if he/she were solely responsible for the project.

For example, Alex, Kellsie and Teresa all had a project to work on. The project was large and would take a full semester to complete. They had to split up the amount of work equally to each person as well as based on skills. The thought of doing all the work alone was daunting in terms of the required time and labor. Being able to delegate assignments and work together to achieve a professional result for their project indicated that the best option for them was to work together. In the end, the group's work produced different results and views that you wouldn't have necessarily come to working alone. On the flip side, imagine having to work in a group where you believe you could do just the same on your own. When deciding whether or not to work in groups, it is important to consider time. Is the time and effort of working in a group worth the outcome? Or, is it better to accomplish the task as an individual?

Groups and Technology and Social Media

Social media and technology are changing the ways we communicate in groups. There is no doubt that technology is rapidly changing the ways we communicate in a variety of contexts, and group communication is no exception. Many organizations use computers and cell phones as a primary way to keep groups connected given their ease of use, low cost, and asynchronous nature. In fact, it's likely that your course web pages also have "group forums" for class groups to deal with the complexities of finding times to meet. In fact, the group that worked on this chapter used Google Docs to have live chats online, transfer documents back and forth, and form messages to achieve the group's goals–all without ever having to meet in person. As you enter the workforce, you'll likely find yourself participating in virtual groups with people who have been brought together from a variety of geographical locations.

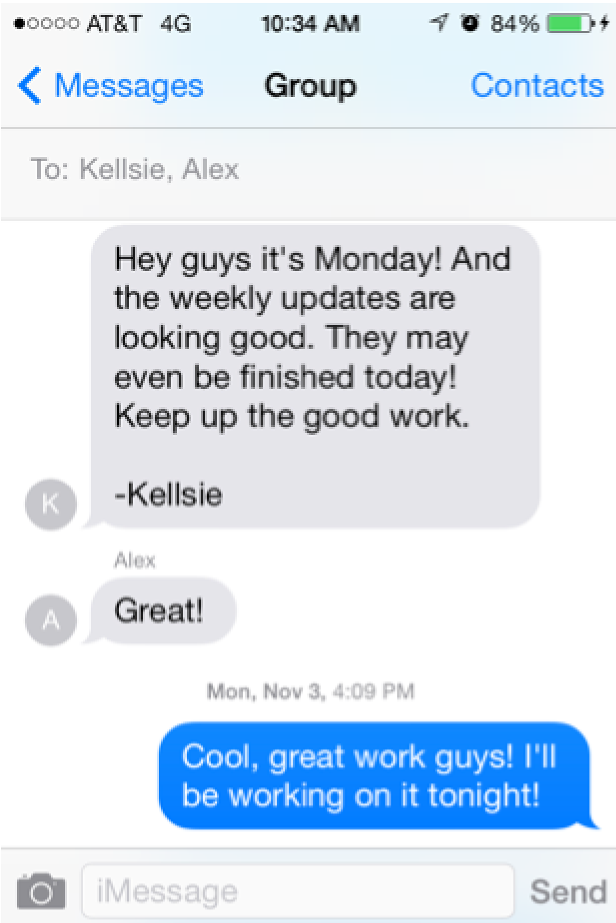
Group Communication and You

Today, we know that social media has the power to bring people together and drive change. Sports fans flock to Twitter and other social media outlets to follow their favorite teams and athletes. Less than 5 percent of TV is sport, but 50 percent of what is tweeted is about sports. And if there was any thought that this phenomenon was only for Americans that is quickly debunked by the worldwide usage statistics.

"The power to create the global sports village and encourage the next generation of pro-social media sports fans is at our fingertips." - Adam C. Earnheardt

While communication technologies can be beneficial for bringing people together and facilitating groups, they also have drawbacks. When we lack face-to-face encounters, and rely on asynchronous forms of communication, there is greater potential for information to be lost and messages to be ambiguous. The face-to-face nature of traditional group meetings provides immediate processing and feedback through the interaction of group members. When groups communicate through email, threads, discussion forums, text messaging, etc., they lose the ability to provide immediate feedback to other members. Also, using communication technologies takes a great deal more time for a group to achieve its goals due to the asynchronous nature of these channels.

Case in Point



This screen shot is from an iMessage group chat between the group that is responsible for this chapter's content. Texting helped our group stay connected, updated, and motivated without having to meet face-to-face.

Nevertheless, technology is changing the ways we understand groups and participate in them. We have yet to work out all of the new standards for group participation introduced by technology. Used well, technology opens the door for new avenues of working in groups to achieve goals. Used poorly, technology can add to the many frustrations people often experience working in groups and teams.

DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Learning Objectives

1. Learn how to improve your own listening habits.
2. Learn how to handle personal communications in a career-friendly manner.
3. Learn what communication freezers are and how to avoid them.

By being sensitive to the errors outlined in this chapter and adopting active listening skills, you may increase your communication effectiveness, increasing your ability to carry out the managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. The following are additional tools for helping you increase your communication effectiveness.

Ten Ways to Improve Your Listening Habits

1. *Start by stopping*. Take a moment to inhale and exhale quietly before you begin to listen. Your job as a listener is to receive information openly and accurately.
2. *Don't worry about what you'll say when the time comes*. Silence can be a beautiful thing.
3. *Join the Sender's team*. When she pauses, summarize what you believe she has said. "What I'm hearing is that we need to focus on marketing as well as sales. Is that correct?" Be attentive to physical as well as verbal communications. "I hear you saying that we should focus on marketing. But the way you're shaking your head tells me the idea may not really appeal to you—is that right?"
4. *Don't multitask while listening*. Listening is a full-time job. It's tempting to multitask when you and the Sender are in different places, but doing that is counterproductive. The human mind can only focus on one thing at a time. Listening with only half your brain increases the chances that you'll have questions later, requiring more of the Speaker's time. (And when the speaker is in the same room, multitasking signals a disinterest that is considered rude.)
5. *Try to empathize with the Sender's point of view*. You don't have to agree; but can you find common ground?
6. Confused? *Ask questions*. There's nothing wrong with admitting you haven't understood the Sender's point. You may even help the Sender clarify the Message.
7. *Establish eye contact*. Making eye contact with the speaker (if appropriate for the culture) is important.
8. *What is the goal of this communication*? Ask yourself this question at different points during the communication to keep the information flow on track. Be polite. Differences in opinion can be the starting point of consensus.
9. *It's great to be surprised*. Listen with an open mind, not just for what you want to hear.
10. *Pay attention to what is not said*. Does the Sender's body language seem to contradict her Message? If so, clarification may be in order.

Career-Friendly Communications

Communication can occur without your even realizing it. Consider the following: Is your e-mail name professional? The typical convention for business e-mail contains some form of your name. While an e-mail name like "LazyGirl" or "DeathMonkey" may be fine for chatting online with your friends, they may send the wrong signal to individuals you e-mail such as professors and prospective employers.

- *Is your outgoing voice mail greeting professional*? If not, change it. Faculty and prospective recruiters will draw certain conclusions if, upon calling you, they hear a message that screams, "Party, party, party!"
- *Do you have a "private" social networking Web site on MySpace.com, Facebook.com, or Xanga.com*? If so, consider what it says about you to employers or clients. If it is information you wouldn't share at work, it probably shouldn't be there.

- *Googled yourself lately*? If not, you probably should. Potential employers have begun searching the Web as part of background checking and you should be aware of what's out there about you.

Communication Freezers

Communication freezers put an end to effective communication by making the Receiver feel judged or defensive. Typical communication stoppers include critizing, blaming, ordering, judging, or shaming the other person. The following are some examples of things to avoid saying:

1. Telling people what to do:
    - "You must…"
    - "You cannot…"
2. Threatening with "or else" implied:
    - "You had better…"
    - "If you don't…"
3. Making suggestions or telling other people what they ought to do:
    - "You should…"
    - "It's your responsibility to…"
4. Attempting to educate the other person:
    - "Let me give you the facts."
    - "Experience tells us that…"
5. Judging the other person negatively:
    - "You're not thinking straight."
    - "You're wrong."
6. Giving insincere praise:
    - "You have so much potential."
    - "I know you can do better than this."
7. Psychoanalyzing the other person:
    - "You're jealous."
    - "You have problems with authority."
8. Making light of the other person's problems by generalizing:
    - "Things will get better."
    - "Behind every cloud is a silver lining."
9. Asking excessive or inappropriate questions:
    - "Why did you do that?"
    - "Who has influenced you?"
10. Making light of the problem by kidding:
    - "Think about the positive side."
    - "You think *you've* got problems!"

Key Takeaway

By practicing the skills associated with active listening, you can become more effective in your personal and professional relationships. Managing your online communications appropriately can also help you avoid career pitfalls. Finally, be aware of the types of remarks that freeze communication and try not to use them.

Exercises

1. How can you assess if you are engaging in active listening?
2. How does it feel when someone does not seem to be listening to you?
3. Some companies have MySpace pages where employees can mingle and share ideas and information. Do you think this practice is a good idea? Why or why not?
4. What advice would you give to someone who is going to become a first time manager in terms of communication?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION

Summary

In this module you learned about the importance of teamwork and communication in business. Below is a summary of the key points that were covered.

Groups and Teams

Teams are groups of individuals with complementary skills who come together to achieve a specific goal. Teams can be manager-led, self-directed, cross-functional, or even virtual. Companies use teams because they are an effective means of achieving objectives, and they bring increased efficiency to operations.

Team Development

When teams are formed they evolve from individuals into a cohesive unit. The stages of team development are: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

Team Success

What differentiates a successful team from an unsuccessful one? Some of the hallmarks of successful teams are the following: the members trust one another, the members become “boosters” for one another, members enjoy the team activities, and leadership is shared.

Effective Communication

Effective communications are based on empathy, and they are thoughtful, clear, specific, brief, and timely. Effective communicators are aware that only a portion of their message is verbally conveyed, so they are careful about tone, diction, and body language. Finally, in order to communicate effectively one must be an active and engaged listener.

Appropriate Communication in Business

Knowing how to appropriately communicate in a business setting has been complicated by the introduction and use of mobile technology and social media. In addition, some workplaces have adopted a more casual dress code, making it appear that casual communication methods are appropriate. Understanding when and how each form of communication should be used depends on the sender, receiver, and message involved.

Communication Flow

Communications flow like a river through a variety of channels, both formal and informal. In addition, communication channels are both external and internal to the organization. Each channel has advantages and disadvantages and must be managed in order to ensure that the appropriate message is being conveyed to the appropriate parties.

Barriers to Communication

"Getting one's message across" can be tricky and challenging due to barriers that impede communication. Among the barriers to effective communication are filtering, selective perspective, information overload, lack of source credibility, emotional disconnects, semantics, gender differences, and poor listening skills.

Synthesis

What did it take for these eight people to jump out of a perfectly good airplane and join hands to form a figure eight? Yes, nerves of steel and a measure of pure insanity. But it also took something else—the very thing you learned about in this module: teamwork and communication. As for these skydivers, the consequences of poor teamwork and faulty communication can be serious and even deadly. Defective parts can wind up in automobiles and airplanes, the wrong medications can be given to patients in a hospital, food can be contaminated . . . all as a result of poor teamwork and communication. Understanding the ways in which people communicate and learning to overcome potential barriers can help you be a more effective communicator and a better team member. Moreover, the skills you've learned in this module are not only important in business—they're useful in skydiving and life.

GROUP COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

We participate in groups and teams at all stages and phases of our lives, from play groups, to members of an athletic team, to performing in a band, or performing in a play. We form groups based on personal and professional interests, drive reduction, and for reinforcement. Through group and team work we can save time and resources, enhance the quality of our work, succeed professionally, or accomplish socio-political change.

As you recall, a group is composed of three or more people who interact over time, depend on each other, and follow shared rules and norms. A team is a specialized group which possesses a strong sense of collective identity and compatible and complimentary resources. There are five general types of groups depending on the intended outcome. Primary groups are formed to satisfy our long-term emotive needs. Secondary groups are more performance based and concern themselves with accomplishing tasks or decision making. Personal growth groups focus on specific areas of personal problem solving while providing a supportive and emotionally positive context. Learning groups are charged with the discovery and dissemination of new ideas while problem solving groups find solutions.

Once a group comes together they go through typical stages (forming, storming, norming, performing, and terminating) to develop roles, create a leadership strategy, and determine the process for decision making. While numerous specific group roles exit, the four categories of roles include: task, social-emotional, procedural, and individual roles. It is likely that members will occupy multiple roles simultaneously as they participate in groups.

There are three broad leadership styles ranging from least to most control—laissez faire, democratic, and authoritarian. Also related to power and control are options for decision making. Consensus gives members the most say, voting and compromise may please some but not others, and authority rule gives all control to the leader. None of the options for leadership styles and decision making are inherently good or bad—the appropriate choice depends on the individual situation and context. It is important for groups not to become victims of groupthink as they make decisions.

New technologies are continually changing how we engage in group communication. The asynchronous nature of communication technologies can facilitate group processes. However, they also have the potential to slow groups down and make it more difficult to accomplish group goals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences between the terms “team” and “group?” Write down a team you have been a part of and a group you have been a part of. In what ways were they effective or not effective?
2. Review all the different types of group roles. Reflect back on a time when you worked in a group and discuss the role(s) you played. If there were any individuals in this group that prevented the group’s progress, identify their role and explain why it was problematic.
3. Thinking back to groups that you have been involved with in the past, which types of groups had the most effective leader(s) and what were the qualities of those leaders that made them so strong?
4. What are the potential strengths of group discussions? What are the potential limitations of group discussions? What are some strategies to enhance a group’s cohesion?
5. Reflect back on a time when you were working on a group project in class. Discuss each stage of development (forming, storming, norming, performing, and terminating) as it applied to this group.
6. How were/are decisions made in your family? Has the process changed over time? What kinds of communication surround the decision making?

KEY TERMS

- activity groups
- aggressor
- authoritarian
- authority rule
- blocker
- brainstorming
- climate
- cohesiveness
- collectivist
- common goals
- compromise
- consensus
- democratic
- devil’s advocate
- drive reduction
- encourager
- energizer
- facilitator
- followers
- forming

- gatekeepers
- general norms
- group
- groupthink
- individualistic
- individual roles
- information gatherers
- interaction
- interdependence
- interests/attraction
- joker/clown
- laissez-faire
- leadership
- learning groups
- norming
- norms
- opinion gatherers
- performing
- personal growth groups
- playboy/playgirl
- polarization
- power
- power-from-within
- power-over
- power-with
- primary groups
- problem solving groups
- procedural roles
- promulgation
- recorder
- reinforcement
- role-specific norms
- secondary groups
- self-confessor
- shared norms
- social-emotional roles
- social-emotional leader
- solidification
- storming
- synergy
- task leader
- task roles
- teams
- tension releasers
- terminating
- voting

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Defining Groups and Teams

Group	Team
a collection of three or more individuals who interact about some common problem or interdependent goal and can exert mutual influence over one another	is a special kind of group characterized by different and complimentary resources of members and by a strong sense of collective identity
size, goal orientation, and mutual influence	feel and exhibit a strong sense of belonging and commitment to one another
group size is often thought of in terms of 3-12 people	combining these specialized skills to achieve particular outcomes
requires motivation and effort	

Characteristics of Groups

- Interdependence
- Interaction
- Synergy
- Common Goals
- Shared Norms
- Cohesiveness

Types of Groups

Primary	ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection; ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection
Secondary	ones we form to help us realize our human needs like inclusion and affection
Activity	purpose of participating in activities
Personal Growth	to come together to develop personal insights, overcome personal problems, and grow as individuals from the feedback and support of others

Learning	are concerned primarily with discovering and developing new ideas and ways of thinking
Problem-Solving	express purpose of solving a specific problem

- **Power** influences how we interpret the messages of others and determines the extent to which we feel we have the right to speak up and voice our concerns and opinions to others
- **power-over** associate power with control or dominance; enables one individual or group to make the decisions that affect others, and to enforce control"
- **Power-from-within** refers to a more personal sense of strength or agency. Power-from-within manifests itself when we can stand, walk, and speak "words that convey our needs and thoughts"
- **power-with**, which is "the power of a strong individual in a group of equals, the power not to command, but to suggest and be listened to, to begin something and see it happen"

Forming Groups

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Terminating

Groups Roles

- **Task Roles**– focuses on primary object and goal
- **Social-Emotional Roles**– build and maintain relationships
- **Procedural Role**s- maintain norms and rules
- **Individual Roles**– focuses on individual not group goals

Leadership In Groups

- **Laissez-faire** is a laid back or hands-off approach
- **Authoritarian leadership style** is one in which a leader attempts to exert maximum control over a group.
- **Democratic style of leadership** falls somewhere in the middle of laissez-faire and authoritarian styles. In these situations, the decision-making power is shared among group members, not exercised by one individual.

Group Norms

- **Norms** influence the ways we communicate with other members, and ultimately, the outcome of group participation
- **General norms** direct the behavior of the group as a whole
- **Role-specific norms** concern individual members with particular roles, such as the designated leader

Groupthink happens when a group is so focused on agreement and consensus that they do not examine all of the potential solutions available to them.

- can lead to incredibly flawed decision making and outcomes.
- occurs when a group overestimates its power and morality, becomes closed-minded, and group members are pressured to conform and not raise serious objections to decisions being proposed

Key Terms

- activity groups
- aggressor
- authoritarian
- authority rule
- blocker
- cohesiveness
- collectivist
- common goals
- compromise
- consensus
- democratic
- devil's advocate
- drive reduction
- encourager
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- facilitator
- followers
- forming
- gatekeepers
- general norms
- group
- individualistic
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- information gatherers
- interaction
- interdependence
- interests/attraction
- joker/clown
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- social-emotional roles
- social-emotional leader
- solidification
- storming
- synergy
- task leader
- task roles

- team
- tension releasers
- terminating
- voting

A PDF of this Small Group Study Guide can be downloaded here.

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BERNARD EBBERS CREATES BIASED DECISION MAKING AT WORLDCOM

You could argue that Bernard Ebbers, of the now defunct WorldCom, created a culture of poor decision making. As CEO, Ebbers avoided internal company conflict at all costs, and he ultimately avoided the reality that WorldCom, once the dominant company in the telecommunications industry, was in serious economic trouble. Notorious for his temper, employees were reluctant to present Ebbers with company information that he didn't like. A 2002 *Economist* article describes Ebbers as "parochial, stubborn, preoccupied with penny-pinching.…Mr. Ebbers was a difficult man to work for." Under Ebbers, WorldCom's $9 billion accounting fraud grew in order to avoid facing its worsening economic reality.

Figure 11.3 Source: U.S. National Communications System.

WorldCom's roots stem from a Mississippi telecom company called LDDS where Ebbers was CEO. Growing to over 80,000 employees through multiple acquisitions of other telecom businesses, WorldCom became the overwhelming industry leader. However, many of WorldCom's executives had worked with Ebbers since his start as CEO 2 decades before. Ebbers, who was regularly seen in cowboy boots and a 10-gallon hat, led his close-knit staff in a "shoot from the hip" style. He was resistant to new technology and famously refused to use e-mail to communicate with his employees. A well-known company mantra was "That's the way we did it at LDDS." Ebbers lead WorldCom through over 60 acquisitions over a period of 15 years. He grew annual revenues from $1 million in 1984 to over $17 billion in 1998. However, Ebbers had little regard for long-term plans and avoided making larger strategic decisions as his company accumulated increasing debt.

As WorldCom acquired new companies, its accounting procedures, computer systems, and customer service issues became increasingly more complex, and industry experts note that WorldCom struggled to keep up with the growth. Company employees who tried to bring initial problems to Ebbers's attention were discouraged; Ebbers made it clear he only wanted to hear good news and then based decisions on this good news. This avoidance of factoring in potential problems during decision making created a company culture that demanded success at all costs. That ultimately included falsifying financial reports. For example, former employees admitted to registering "rolling revenue" to inflate earnings, recording a single sale multiple times. Another 2002 *Economist* article reports that this and other dishonest techniques were "endemic in the sales hierarchy of WorldCom.…Increasing reported revenues came above all else."

Despite efforts to inflate the books, WorldCom's stock prices dramatically declined, and Ebbers left the company in 2002 after pressure from WorldCom's board of directors. What came to light after his departure, however, highlighted the significant problems he avoided confronting. Under new CEO John Sidgmore, internal auditor Cynthia Cooper uncovered multiple instances of financial dishonesty and illegal activity overseen by CFO Scott Sullivan, a close confidant of Ebbers. A 2002 *Wall Street Journal* article reports, "As she pursued the trail of fraud, Ms. Cooper time and again was obstructed by fellow employees, some of whom disapproved of WorldCom's accounting methods but were unwilling to contradict their bosses or thwart the company's goals."

Ultimately Cooper's investigation revealed the fraud that took place under Sullivan and Ebbers. Sullivan later admitted to having booked $3.8 billion of costs as capital expenditures and that five quarters' worth of profits should have been recorded as losses. Ebbers's refusal to honestly face the harsh economic truth for WorldCom was ultimately highlighted to be a source of WorldCom's financial problems. In 2005, he was found guilty of fraud, conspiracy, and filing false documentation. WorldCom was purchased for $7.6 billion and subsequently integrated into Verizon (NYSE: VE) in 2006, and Ebbers began serving a 25-year jail sentence in 2005.

Discussion Questions

1. Decision making is a key component of the leading facet of the P-O-L-C framework. What decision-making traps might WorldCom's board have succumbed to? Why might the concept of groupthink be especially relevant to boards?
2. What potential causes of poor decision making existed at WorldCom during Bernard Ebbers' administration?
3. What might have happened if Ebbers had been prone to a different conflict-handling style, such as compromise or collaboration?
4. How did having a small "inner circle" of leadership affect the decision-making culture at WorldCom?
5. What key decisions did Cynthia Cooper make?
6. What responsibility did the board of directors have to detect and confront the decision-making problems at WorldCom?

SMALL GROUP SELF CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click "Check Your Understanding" to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three "Maybe"/"Probably"/"Definitely" options to see if you were correct.
- Click "Next" to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

SPEAKING CONFIDENTLY

Battling Nerves and the Unexpected

One of your biggest concerns about public speaking might be how to deal with nervousness or unexpected events. If that's the case, you're not alone—fear of speaking in public consistently ranks at the top of lists of people's common fears. Some people are not joking when they say they would rather die than stand up and speak in front of a live audience. The fear of public speaking ranks right up there with the fear of flying, death, and spiders. (((Note: Wallechinsky, D., Wallace, I., & Wallace, A. (1977). *The people's almanac presents the book of lists*. New York, NY: Morrow. See also Boyd, J. H., Rae, D. S., Thompson, J. W., Burns, B. J., Bourdon, K., Locke, B. Z., & Regier, D. A. (1990). Phobia: Prevalence and risk factors. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *25*(6), 314–323.))) Even if you are one of the fortunate few who don't typically get nervous when speaking in public, it's important to recognize things that can go wrong and be mentally prepared for them. On occasion, everyone misplaces speaking notes, has technical difficulties with a presentation aid, or gets distracted by an audience member. Speaking confidently involves knowing how to deal with these and other unexpected events while speaking.

In this chapter, we will help you gain knowledge about speaking confidently by exploring what communication apprehension is, examining the different types and causes of communication apprehension, suggesting strategies you can use to manage your fears of public speaking, and providing tactics you can use to deal with a variety of unexpected events you might encounter while speaking.

SPEAKING COMPETENCIES

We assume you are reading this book or chapter because you wish to improve your speaking skills – a worthy goal. As Ayn Rand alludes to in her quote, a desire to succeed is the first step in achieving this objective. Nevertheless, you cannot hit a target unless you know what it is. Thus, the final portion of this chapter is devoted to an overview of eleven speaking competencies which we consider to be the standards for evaluating a variety of presentations at every level of mastery. These are based on the *Public Speaking Competence Rubric* [PSCR]. (((Note: Schreiber, L., Paul, G. & Shibley, L. R. (2012). The development and test of the Public Speaking Competence Rubric. *Communication Education*, *61*(3), 205–233))) A complete copy of the rubric can be found at Activities.

1. **Useful topic.** The first speaking competency is to *select a topic that is appropriate to the audience and the occasion*. An advanced speaker selects a worthwhile topic that engages the audience. His topic also presents the audience with new information that they did not know before the speech. A beginning speaker

selects a topic that lacks originality or is out of date. His topic provides no new information to the audience. An ineffective speaker may give a speech in which a single topic cannot be deduced by the audience.

2. Engaging introduction. To *formulate an introduction that orients the audience to the topic and the speaker* is the second speaking competency. An advanced speaker writes an introduction that contains an excellent attention-getter. She firmly establishes her credibility. She provides a sound orientation to the topic, states her thesis clearly, and previews her points in a cogent and memorable way. For the beginning speaker, her attention-getter is mundane and she somewhat develops her credibility. Her thesis is awkwardly composed and she provides little direction for the audience. The ineffective speaker has no opening technique, no credibility statement and provides no background on the topic. In addition she has no thesis statement and no preview of her points.

"Untitled" by Krystle. *CC-BY.*

3. Clear organization. Competency three is to *use an effective organizational pattern*. An advanced speaker is very well organized and delivers a speech with clear main points. His points are mutually exclusive and directly related to the thesis. Further, he employs effective transitions and signposts to help the speech flow well. The beginning speaker has main points that are somewhat organized, but the content of these points may overlap. Transitions may also be present in his speech, but they are not particularly effective. In the ineffective speaker's speech, there is no clear organizational pattern, there are no transitions, and it sounds as if the information is randomly presented.

Don't leave inferences to be drawn when evidence can be presented. -Richard Wright

4. Well-supported ideas. Fourth on the list of speaking competencies is to *locate, synthesize, and employ compelling supporting materials*. In the advanced speaker's speech, her key points are well supported with a variety of credible materials, and her sources provide excellent support for her thesis. In addition, all of her sources are clearly cited. A beginning speaker has points that are generally supported with a fair mix of materials. Only some of her evidence supports her thesis, and her source citations need to be clarified. An ineffective speaker gives a speech with no supporting materials or no source citations.

5. Closure in conclusion. The fifth speaking competency is to *develop a conclusion that reinforces the thesis and provides psychological closure*. The advanced speaker provides a clear and memorable summary of his points, and he refers back to the thesis or big picture. His speech also ends with a strong clincher or call to action. A beginning speaker provides some summary of his points, but there is no clear reference back to his thesis. The closing technique of his speech can also be strengthened. In an ineffective speaker's speech, there is no conclusion. His speech ends abruptly and without closure.

"Speaking Out – Public speaking made easy" by Christian Heilmann. *CC-BY.*

6. Clear and vivid language. *To demonstrate a careful choice of words* is the sixth speaking competency. An advanced speaker's language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid. Her language is also completely free from bias, grammatical errors and inappropriate usage. The beginning speaker selects language that is adequate to make her point. She has some errors in grammar and occasionally uses slang, jargon or awkward sentence structure. The ineffective speaker has many errors in her grammar and syntax. She also mispronounces words and extensively uses slang, jargon, and/or sexist or racist terms.

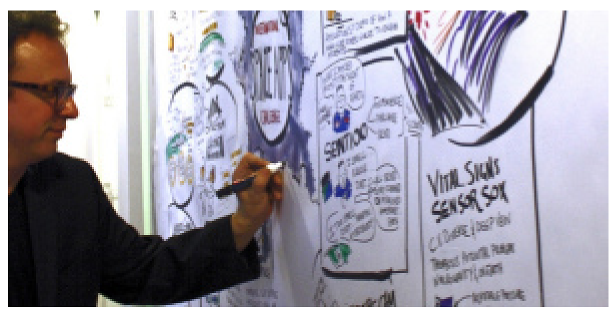
7. Suitable vocal expression. Competency number seven is to *effectively use vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience*. Excellent use of vocal variation, intensity and pacing are characteristics of the advanced speaker. His vocal expression is also natural and enthusiastic, and he avoids fillers. Some vocal variation is evident in the beginning speaker's speech. He also enunciates clearly, speaks audibly, and generally avoids fillers (e.g., "um," "uh," "like," etc.). An ineffective speaker is inaudible, enunciates poorly, and speaks in a monotone voice. His speech also has poor pacing, and he distracts listeners with fillers.

8. Corresponding nonverbals. Eighth on the list of competencies is to *demonstrate nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message.* An advanced speaker has posture, gestures, facial expression and eye contact that are natural, well developed, and display high levels of poise and confidence. Some reliance on notes is seen with the beginning speaker, but she has adequate eye contact. She also generally avoids distracting mannerisms. The ineffective speaker usually looks down and avoids eye contact. She has nervous gestures and other nonverbal behaviors that distract from or contradict the message.

Body language is a very powerful tool. We had body language before we had speech, and apparently, 80% of what you understand in a conversation is read through the body, not the words. – Deborah Bull

9. Adapted to the audience. The ninth speaking competency is to *successfully adapt the presentation to the audience*. The advanced speaker shows how information is important to audience members, and his speech is tailored to their beliefs, values and attitudes. He may also make allusions to culturally shared experiences. A beginning speaker assumes but does not articulate the importance of the topic. His presentation is minimally adapted to the audience, and some of the ideas presented in the speech are removed from the audience's frame of reference or experiences. An ineffective speaker's speech is contrary to the audience's beliefs, values and attitudes. His message may be generic or canned and no attempt is made to establish common ground.

10. Adept use of visual aids. To skillfully make use of visual aids is the tenth competency. Exceptional explanation and presentation of visual aids is characteristic of the advanced speaker. Her speech has visuals that provide powerful insight into the speech topic, and her visuals are of high professional quality. The beginning speaker's visual aids are generally well developed and explained, although there may be minor errors present in the visuals. An ineffective speaker uses visual aids that distract from her speech. Her visuals may not be relevant, or her visuals may be of poor professional quality.



"Space Apps NYC Hackathon-2014" by jonny goldstein. CC-BY.

11. Convincing persuasion. The eleventh and final speaking competency is to *construct an effectual persuasive message with credible evidence and sound reasoning*. An advanced speaker articulates the problem and solution in a clear, compelling manner. He supports his claims with powerful and credible evidence while completely avoiding reasoning fallacies. His speech also contains a memorable call to action. In the beginning speaker's speech, the problem and solution are evident, and most claims are supported with evidence. He also has generally sound reasoning and a recognizable call to action. For the ineffective speaker, the problem and/or solution are not defined. His claims are not supported with evidence, his speech contains poor reasoning, and there is no call to action. Readers should note that the competencies listed above are not all inclusive. Ultimately one must adjust, expand, and apply these competencies as best fits the requirements of the speaking situation. But they do provide a starting point for new or less experienced speakers to begin to understand all of the interrelated components of a speech.

Being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn. – Benjamin Franklin

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION?

Learning Objectives

- Explain the nature of communication apprehension.
- List the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension.
- Identify different misconceptions about communication anxiety.

"Speech is a mirror of the soul," commented Publilius Syrus, a popular writer in 42 BCE. (((Note: Bartlett, J. (comp.). (1919). *Familiar quotations* (10th ed.). Rev. and enl. by Nathan Haskell Dole. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company. Retrieved from Bartleby.com website: http://www.bartleby.com/100))) Other people come to know who we are through our words. Many different social situations, ranging from job interviews to dating to public speaking, can make us feel uncomfortable as we anticipate that we will be evaluated and judged by others. How well we communicate is intimately connected to our self-image, and the process of revealing ourselves to the evaluation of others can be threatening whether we are meeting new acquaintances, participating in group discussions, or speaking in front of an audience.

Definition of Communication Apprehension

According to James McCroskey, communication apprehension is the broad term that refers to an individual's "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons." (((Note: McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p. 40.))) At its heart, communication apprehension is a psychological response to evaluation. This psychological response, however, quickly becomes physical as our body responds to the threat the mind perceives. Our bodies cannot distinguish between psychological and physical threats, so we react as though we were facing a Mack truck barreling in our direction. The body's circulatory and adrenal systems shift into overdrive, preparing us to function at maximum physical efficiency—the "flight or fight" response. (((Note: Sapolsky, R. M. (2004). *Why zebras don't get ulcers* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Henry Holt.))) Yet instead of running away or fighting, all we need to do is stand and talk. When it comes to communication apprehension, our physical responses are often not well adapted to the nature of the threat we face, as the excess energy created by our body can make it harder for us to be effective public speakers. But because communication apprehension is rooted in our minds, if we understand more about the nature of the body's responses to stress, we can better develop mechanisms for managing the body's misguided attempts to help us cope with our fear of social judgment.

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension

There are a number of physical sensations associated with communication apprehension. We might notice our heart pounding or our hands feeling clammy. We may break out in a sweat. We may have "stomach butterflies" or even feel nauseated. Our hands and legs might start to shake, or we may begin to pace nervously. Our voices may quiver, and we may have a "dry mouth" sensation that makes it difficult to articulate even simple words. Breathing becomes more rapid and, in extreme cases, we might feel dizzy or light-headed. Anxiety about communicating is profoundly disconcerting because we feel powerless to control our bodies. Furthermore, we may become so anxious that we fear we will forget our name, much less remember the main points of the speech we are about to deliver.

The physiological changes produced in the body at critical moments are designed to contribute to the efficient use of muscles and expand available energy. Circulation and breathing become more rapid so that additional oxygen can reach the muscles. Increased circulation causes us to sweat. Adrenaline rushes through our body, instructing the body to speed up its movements. If we stay immobile behind a lectern, this hormonal urge to speed up may produce shaking and trembling. Additionally, digestive processes are inhibited so we will not lapse into the relaxed, sleepy state that is typical after eating. Instead of feeling sleepy, we feel butterflies in the pit of our stomach. By understanding what is happening to our bodies in response to the stress of public speaking, we can better cope with these reactions and channel them in constructive directions.

Any conscious emotional state such as anxiety or excitement consists of two components: a primary reaction of the central nervous system and an intellectual interpretation of these physiological responses. The physiological state we label as communication anxiety does not differ from ones we label rage or excitement. Even experienced, effective speakers and performers experience some communication apprehension. What differs is the mental label that we put on the experience. Effective speakers have learned to channel their body's reactions, using the energy released by these physiological reactions to create animation and stage presence.

Myths about Communication Apprehension

A wealth of conventional wisdom surrounds the discomfort of speaking anxiety, as it surrounds almost any phenomenon that makes us uncomfortable. Most of this "folk" knowledge misleads us, directing our attention away from effective strategies for thinking about and coping with anxiety reactions. Before we look in more detail at the types of communication apprehension, let's dispel some of the myths about it.

1. People who suffer from speaking anxiety are neurotic. As we have explained, speaking anxiety is a normal reaction. Good speakers can get nervous just as poor speakers do. Winston Churchill, for example, would get physically ill before major speeches in Parliament. Yet he rallied the British people in a time of crisis. Many people, even the most professional performers, experience anxiety about communicating. Such a widespread problem, Dr. Joyce Brothers contends, "cannot be attributed to deep-seated neuroses." (((Note: Brothers, J. (2008, July 1). Public speaking among people's top fears. *Seattle Pi*. Retrieved from http://www.seattlepi.com)))
2. Telling a joke or two is always a good way to begin a speech. Humor is some of the toughest material to deliver effectively because it requires an exquisite sense of timing. Nothing is worse than waiting for a laugh that does not come. Moreover, one person's joke is another person's slander. It is extremely easy to offend when using humor. The same material can play very differently with different audiences. For these reasons, it is not a good idea to start with a joke, particularly if it is not well related to your topic. Humor is just too unpredictable and difficult for many novice speakers. If you insist on using humor, make sure the "joke" is on you, not on someone else. Another tip is never to pause and wait for a laugh that may not come. If the audience catches the joke, fine. If not, you're not left standing in awkward silence waiting for a reaction.
3. Imagine the audience is naked. This tip just plain doesn't work because imagining the audience naked will do nothing to calm your nerves. As Malcolm Kushner noted, "There are some folks in the audience I wouldn't want to see naked—especially if I'm trying *not* to be frightened." (((Note: Kushner, M. (1999). *Public speaking for dummies*. New York, NY: IDG Books Worldwide, p. 242.))) The audience is not some abstract image in your mind. It consists of real individuals who you can connect with through your material. To "imagine" the audience is to misdirect your focus from the real people in front of you to an "imagined" group. What we imagine is usually more threatening than the reality that we face.
4. Any mistake means that you have "blown it." We all make mistakes. What matters is not whether we make a mistake but how well we recover. One of the authors of this book was giving a speech and wanted to thank a former student in the audience. Instead of saying "former student," she said, "former friend." After the audience stopped laughing, the speaker remarked, "Well, I guess she'll be a *former* friend now!"—which got more laughter from the audience. A speech does not have to be perfect. You just have to make an effort to relate to the audience naturally and be willing to accept your mistakes.
5. Avoid speaking anxiety by writing your speech out word for word and memorizing it. Memorizing your speech word for word will likely make your apprehension worse rather than better. Instead of remembering three to five main points and subpoints, you will try to commit to memory more than a thousand bits of data. If you forget a point, the only way to get back on track is to start from the beginning. You are inviting your mind to go blank by overloading it with details. In addition, audiences do not like to listen to "canned," or memorized, material. Your delivery is likely to suffer if you memorize. Audiences appreciate speakers who talk naturally to them rather than recite a written script.
6. Audiences are out to get you. With only a few exceptions, which we will talk about in Section 3.2 "All Anxiety Is Not the Same: Sources of Communication Apprehension", the natural state of audiences is empathy, not antipathy. Most face-to-face audiences are interested in your material, not in your image. Watching someone who is anxious tends to make audience members anxious themselves. Particularly in public speaking classes, audiences want to see you succeed. They know that they will soon be in your shoes and they identify with you, most likely hoping you'll succeed and give them ideas for how to make

their own speeches better. If you establish direct eye contact with real individuals in your audience, you will see them respond to what you are saying, and this response lets you know that you are succeeding.

7. **You will look to the audience as nervous as you feel.** Empirical research has shown that audiences do not perceive the level of nervousness that speakers report feeling. (((Note: Clevenger, T. J. (1959). A synthesis of experimental research in stage fright. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, *45*, 135–159. See also Savitsky, K., & Gilovich, T. (2003). The illusion of transparency and the alleviation of speech anxiety. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *39*, 601–625.))) Most listeners judge speakers as less anxious than the speakers rate themselves. In other words, the audience is not likely to perceive accurately the level of anxiety you might be experiencing. Some of the most effective speakers will return to their seats after their speech and exclaim they were so nervous. Listeners will respond, "You didn't look nervous." Audiences do not necessarily perceive our fears. Consequently, don't apologize for your nerves. There is a good chance the audience will not notice if you do not point it out to them.
8. **A little nervousness helps you give a better speech.** This "myth" is true! Professional speakers, actors, and other performers consistently rely on the heightened arousal of nervousness to channel extra energy into their performance. People would much rather listen to a speaker who is alert and enthusiastic than one who is relaxed to the point of boredom. Many professional speakers say that the day they stop feeling nervous is the day they should stop speaking in public. The goal is to control those nerves and channel them into your presentation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety people experience at the thought of being evaluated by others. Some anxiety is a normal part of the communication process.
- The psychological threat individuals perceive in the communication situation prompts physiological changes designed to help the body respond. These physical reactions to stress create the uncomfortable feelings of unease called speech anxiety and may include sweaty palms, shaking, butterflies in the stomach, and dry mouth.
- A great deal of conventional advice for managing stage fright is misleading, including suggestions that speech anxiety is neurotic, that telling a joke is a good opening, that imagining the audience naked is helpful, that any mistake is fatal to an effective speech, that memorizing a script is useful, that audiences are out to get you, and that your audience sees how nervous you really are.

EXERCISES

1. Create an inventory of the physiological symptoms of communication apprehension you experience when engaged in public speaking. Which ones are you most interested in learning to manage?
2. With a partner or in a small group, discuss which myths create the biggest problems for public speakers. Why do people believe in these myths?

ALL ANXIETY IS NOT THE SAME: SOURCES OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish among the four different types of communication apprehension.
- Identify various factors that cause communication apprehension.

We have said that experiencing some form of anxiety is a normal part of the communication process. Most people are anxious about being evaluated by an audience. Interestingly, many people assume that their nervousness is an experience unique to them. They assume that other people do not feel anxious when confronting the threat of public speaking. (((Note: McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An introduction to rhetorical communication.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.))) Although anxiety is a widely shared response to the stress of public speaking, not all anxiety is the same. Many researchers have investigated the differences between apprehension grounded in personality characteristics and anxiety prompted by a particular situation at a particular time. (((Note: Witt, P. L., Brown, K. C., Roberts, J. B., Weisel, J., Sawyer, C., & Behnke, R. (2006, March). Somatic anxiety patterns before, during and after giving a public speech. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*, 87–100.))) McCroskey argues there are four types of communication apprehension: anxiety related to trait, context, audience, and situation. (((Note: McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.))) If you understand these different types of apprehension, you can gain insight into the varied communication factors that contribute to speaking anxiety.

Trait Anxiety

Some people are just more disposed to communication apprehension than others. As Witt, Brown, Roberts, Weisel, Sawyer, and Behnke explain, "Trait anxiety measures how people *generally* feel across situations and time periods." (((Note: Witt, P. L., Brown, K. C., Roberts, J. B., Weisel, J., Sawyer, C., & Behnke, R. (2006, March). Somatic anxiety patterns before, during and after giving a public speech. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*, 88.))) This means that some people feel more uncomfortable than the average person regardless of the context, audience, or situation. It doesn't matter whether you are raising your hand in a group discussion, talking with people you meet at a party, or giving speeches in a class, you're likely to be uncomfortable in all these settings if you experience trait anxiety. While trait anxiety is not the same as shyness, those with high trait anxiety are more likely to avoid exposure to public speaking situations, so their nervousness might be compounded by lack of experience or skill. (((Note: Witt, P. L., Brown, K. C., Roberts, J. B., Weisel, J., Sawyer, C., & Behnke, R. (2006, March). Somatic anxiety patterns before, during and after giving a public speech. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*, 87–100.))) People who experience trait anxiety may never like public speaking, but through preparation and practice, they can learn to give effective public speeches when they need to do so.

Context Anxiety

Context anxiety refers to anxiety prompted by specific communication contexts. Some of the major context factors that can heighten this form of anxiety are formality, uncertainty, and novelty.

Formality

Some individuals can be perfectly composed when talking at a meeting or in a small group; yet when faced with a more formal public speaking setting, they become intimidated and nervous. As the formality of the communication context increases, the stakes are raised, sometimes prompting more apprehension. Certain communication contexts, such as a press conference or a courtroom, can make even the most confident individuals nervous. One reason is that these communication contexts presuppose an adversarial relationship between the speaker and some audience members.

Uncertainty

In addition, it is hard to predict and control the flow of information in such contexts, so the level of uncertainty is high. The feelings of context anxiety might be similar to those you experience on the first day of class with a new instructor: you don't know what to expect, so you are more nervous than you might be later in the semester when you know the instructor and the class routine better.

Novelty

Additionally, most of us are not experienced in high-tension communication settings. The novelty of the communication context we encounter is another factor contributing to apprehension. Anxiety becomes more of an issue in communication environments that are new to us, even for those who are normally comfortable with speaking in public.

Most people can learn through practice to cope with their anxiety prompted by formal, uncertain, and novel communication contexts. Fortunately, most public speaking classroom contexts are not adversarial. The opportunities you have to practice giving speeches reduces the novelty and uncertainty of the public speaking context, enabling most students to learn how to cope with anxiety prompted by the communication context.

Audience Anxiety

For some individuals, it is not the communication context that prompts anxiety; it is the people in the audience they face. Audience anxiety describes communication apprehension prompted by specific audience characteristics. These characteristics include similarity, subordinate status, audience size, and familiarity.

You might have no difficulty talking to an audience of your peers in student government meetings, but an audience composed of parents and students on a campus visit might make you nervous because of the presence of parents in the audience. The degree of perceived similarity between you and your audience can influence your level of speech anxiety. We all prefer to talk to an audience that we believe shares our values more than to one that does not. The more dissimilar we are compared to our audience members, the more likely we are to be nervous. Studies have shown that subordinate status can also contribute to speaking anxiety. (((Note: Witt, P. L., Brown, K. C., Roberts, J. B., Weisel, J., Sawyer, C., & Behnke, R. (2006, March). Somatic anxiety patterns before, during and after giving a public speech. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*, 87–100.))) Talking in front of your boss or teacher may be intimidating, especially if you are being evaluated. The size of the audience can also play a role: the larger the audience, the more threatening it may seem. Finally, familiarity can be a factor. Some of us prefer talking to strangers rather than to people we know well. Others feel more nervous in front of an audience of friends and family because there is more pressure to perform well.

Situational Anxiety

Situational anxiety, McCroskey explains, is the communication apprehension created by "the unique combination of influences generated by audience, time and context." (((Note: McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p. 43.))) Each communication event involves several dimensions: physical, temporal, social-psychological, and cultural. These dimensions combine to create a unique communication situation that is different from any previous communication event. The situation created by a given audience, in a given time, and in a given context can coalesce into situational anxiety.

For example, I once had to give a presentation at a general faculty meeting on general education assessment. To my surprise, I found myself particularly nervous about this speech. The audience was familiar to me but was relatively large compared to most classroom settings. I knew the audience well enough to know that my topic was controversial for some faculty members who resented the mandate for assessment coming from top administration. The meeting occurred late on a Friday afternoon, and my presentation was scheduled more than an hour into the two-hour meeting. All these factors combined to produce situational anxiety for me. While I successfully applied the principles that we will discuss in Section 3.3 "Reducing Communication Apprehension" for managing stage fright, this speaking situation stands out in my mind as one of the most nerve-wracking speaking challenges I have ever faced.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Communication apprehension stems from many sources, including the speaker's personality characteristics, communication context, nature of the audience, or situation.
- Many factors exaggerate communication apprehension. Formality, familiarity, novelty, perceived similarity, and subordinate status are a few of the factors that influence our tendency to feel anxious while speaking.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of sources of your communication apprehension. What factors contribute most to your anxiety about public speaking?

REDUCING COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION

Learning Objectives

- Explain steps for managing anxiety in the speech preparation process.
- Identify effective techniques for coping with anxiety during delivery.
- Recognize the general options available for stress reduction and anxiety management.

Experiencing some nervousness about public speaking is normal. The energy created by this physiological response can be functional if you harness it as a resource for more effective public speaking. In this section, we suggest a number of steps that you can take to channel your stage fright into excitement and animation. We will begin with specific speech-related considerations and then briefly examine some of the more general anxiety management options available.

Speech-Related Considerations

Communication apprehension does not necessarily remain constant throughout all the stages of speech preparation and delivery. One group of researchers studied the ebb and flow of anxiety levels at four stages in the delivery of a speech. They compared indicators of physiological stress at different milestones in the process:

- anticipation (the minute prior to starting the speech),
- confrontation (the first minute of the speech),
- adaptation (the last minute of the speech), and

- release (the minute immediately following the end of the speech). (((Note: Witt, P. L., Brown, K. C., Roberts, J. B., Weisel, J., Sawyer, C., & Behnke, R. (2006, March). Somatic anxiety patterns before, during and after giving a public speech. *Southern Communication Journal*, *71*, 89.)))

These researchers found that anxiety typically peaked at the anticipatory stage. In other words, we are likely to be most anxious right before we get up to speak. As we progress through our speech, our level of anxiety is likely to decline. Planning your speech to incorporate techniques for managing your nervousness at different times will help you decrease the overall level of stress you experience. We also offer a number of suggestions for managing your reactions while you are delivering your speech.

Think Positively

As we mentioned earlier, communication apprehension begins in the mind as a psychological response. This underscores the importance of a speaker's psychological attitude toward speaking. To prepare yourself mentally for a successful speaking experience, we recommend using a technique called cognitive restructuring. Cognitive restructuring is simply changing how you label the physiological responses you will experience. Rather than thinking of public speaking as a dreaded obligation, make a conscious decision to consider it an exciting opportunity. The first audience member that you have to convince is yourself, by deliberately replacing negative thoughts with positive ones. If you say something to yourself often enough, you will gradually come to believe it.

We also suggest practicing what communication scholars Metcalfe, Beebe, and Beebe call positive self-talk rather than negative self-talk. (((Note: Metcalfe, S. (1994). *Building a speech*. New York, NY: The Harcourt Press; Beebe, S.A., & Beebe, S. J. (2000). *Public speaking: An audience centered approach*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.))) If you find yourself thinking, "I'm going to forget everything when I get to the front of the room," turn that negative message around to a positive one. Tell yourself, "I have notes to remind me what comes next, and the audience won't know if I don't cover everything in the order I planned." The idea is to dispute your negative thoughts and replace them with positive ones, even if you think you are "conning" yourself. By monitoring how you talk about yourself, you can unlearn old patterns and change the ways you think about things that produce anxiety.

Reducing Anxiety through Preparation

As we have said earlier in this chapter, uncertainty makes for greater anxiety. Nothing is more frightening than facing the unknown. Although no one can see into the future and predict everything that will happen during a speech, every speaker can and should prepare so that the "unknowns" of the speech event are kept to a minimum. You can do this by gaining as much knowledge as possible about whom you will be addressing, what you will say, how you will say it, and where the speech will take place.

Analyze Your Audience

The audience that we imagine in our minds is almost always more threatening than the reality of the people sitting in front of us. The more information you have about the characteristics of your audience, the more you will be able to craft an effective message. Since your stage fright is likely to be at its highest in the beginning of your speech, it is helpful to open the speech with a technique to prompt an audience response. You might try posing a question, asking for a show of hands, or sharing a story that you know is relevant to your listeners' experience. When you see the audience responding to you by nodding, smiling, or answering questions, you will have directed the focus of attention from yourself to the audience. Such responses indicate success; they are positively reinforcing, and thus reduce your nervousness.

Clearly Organize Your Ideas

Being prepared as a speaker means knowing the main points of your message so well that you can remember them even when you are feeling highly anxious, and the best way to learn those points is to create an outline for your speech. With a clear outline to follow, you will find it much easier to move from one point to the next without stumbling or getting lost.

A note of caution is in order: you do not want to react to the stress of speaking by writing and memorizing a manuscript. Your audience will usually be able to tell that you wrote your speech out verbatim, and they will tune out very quickly. You are setting yourself up for disaster if you try to memorize a written text because the pressure of having to remember all those particulars will be tremendous. Moreover, if you have a momentary memory lapse during a memorized speech, you may have a lot of trouble continuing without starting over at the beginning.

What you do want to prepare is a simple outline that reminds you of the progression of ideas in your speech. What is important is the order of your points, not the specifics of each sentence. It is perfectly fine if your speech varies in terms of specific language or examples each time you practice it.

It may be a good idea to reinforce this organization through visual aids. When it comes to managing anxiety, visual aids have the added benefit of taking attention off the speaker.

Adapt Your Language to the Oral Mode

Another reason not to write out your speech as a manuscript is that to speak effectively you want your language to be adapted to the oral, not the written, mode. You will find your speaking anxiety more manageable if you speak in the oral mode because it will help you to feel like you are having a conversation with friends rather than delivering a formal proclamation.

Appropriate oral style is more concrete and vivid than written style. Effective speaking relies on verbs rather than nouns, and the language is less complex. Long sentences may work well for novelists such as William Faulkner or James Joyce, where readers can go back and reread passages two, three, or even seven or eight times. Your listeners, though, cannot “rewind” you in order to catch ideas they miss the first time through.

Don’t be afraid to use personal pronouns freely, frequently saying “I” and “me”—or better yet, “us” and “we.” Personal pronouns are much more effective in speaking than language constructions, such as the following “this author,” because they help you to build a connection with your audience. Another oral technique is to build audience questions into your speech. Rhetorical questions, questions that do not require a verbal answer, invite the audience to participate with your material by thinking about the implications of the question and how it might be answered. If you are graphic and concrete in your language selection, your audience is more likely to listen attentively. You will be able to see the audience listening, and this feedback will help to reduce your anxiety.

Practice in Conditions Similar to Those You Will Face When Speaking

It is not enough to practice your speech silently in your head. To reduce anxiety and increase the likelihood of a successful performance, you need to practice out loud in a situation similar to the one you will face when actually performing your speech. Practice delivering your speech out loud while standing on your feet. If you make a mistake, do not stop to correct it but continue all the way through your speech; that is what you will have to do when you are in front of the audience.

If possible, practice in the actual room where you will be giving your speech. Not only will you have a better sense of what it will feel like to actually speak, but you may also have the chance to practice using presentation aids and potentially avoid distractions and glitches like incompatible computers, blown projector bulbs, or sunlight glaring in your eyes.

Two very useful tools for anxiety-reducing practice are a clock and a mirror. Use the clock to time your speech, being aware that most novice speakers speak too fast, not too slowly. By ensuring that you are within the time guidelines, you will eliminate the embarrassment of having to cut your remarks short because you’ve run out of time or of not having enough to say to fulfill the assignment. Use the mirror to gauge how well you are maintaining eye contact with your audience; it will allow you to check that you are looking up from your notes. It will also help you build the habit of using appropriate facial expressions to convey the emotions in your speech. While you might feel a little absurd practicing your speech out loud in front of a mirror, the practice that you do before your speech can make you much less anxious when it comes time to face the audience.

Watch What You Eat

A final tip about preparation is to watch what you eat immediately before speaking. The butterflies in your stomach are likely to be more noticeable if you skip normal meals. While you should eat normally, you should avoid caffeinated drinks because they can make your shaking hands worse. Carbohydrates operate as natural sedatives, so you may want to eat carbohydrates to help slow down your metabolism and to avoid fried or very spicy foods that may upset your stomach. Especially if you are speaking in the morning, be sure to have breakfast. If you haven't had anything to eat or drink since dinner the night before, dizziness and light-headedness are very real possibilities.

Reducing Nervousness during Delivery

Anticipate the Reactions of Your Body

There are a number of steps you can take to counteract the negative physiological effects of stress on the body. Deep breathing will help to counteract the effects of excess adrenaline. You can place symbols in your notes, like "slow down" or ☺, that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech. It is also a good idea to pause a moment before you get started to set an appropriate pace from the onset. Look at your audience and smile. It is a reflex for some of your audience members to smile back. Those smiles will reassure you that your audience members are friendly.

Physical movement helps to channel some of the excess energy that your body produces in response to anxiety. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life (avoid pacing nervously from side to side, however). Move closer to the audience and then stop for a moment. If you are afraid that moving away from the lectern will reveal your shaking hands, use note cards rather than a sheet of paper for your outline. Note cards do not quiver like paper, and they provide you with something to do with your hands.

Vocal warm-ups are also important before speaking. Just as athletes warm up before practice or competition and musicians warm up before playing, speakers need to get their voices ready to speak. Talking with others before your speech or quietly humming to yourself can get your voice ready for your presentation. You can even sing or practice a bit of your speech out loud while you're in the shower (just don't wake the neighbors), where the warm, moist air is beneficial for your vocal mechanism. Gently yawning a few times is also an excellent way to stretch the key muscle groups involved in speaking.

Immediately before you speak, you can relax the muscles of your neck and shoulders, rolling your head gently from side to side. Allow your arms to hang down your sides and stretch out your shoulders. Isometric exercises that involve momentarily tensing and then relaxing specific muscle groups are an effective way to keep your muscles from becoming stiff.

Focus on the Audience, Not on Yourself

During your speech, make a point of establishing direct eye contact with your audience members. By looking at individuals, you establish a series of one-to-one contacts similar to interpersonal communication. An audience becomes much less threatening when you think of them not as an anonymous mass but as a collection of individuals.

A colleague once shared his worst speaking experience when he reached the front of the room and forgot everything he was supposed to say. When I asked what he saw when he was in the front of the room, he looked at me like I was crazy. He responded, "I didn't see anything. All I remember is a mental image of me up there in the front of the room blowing it." Speaking anxiety becomes more intense if you focus on yourself rather than concentrating on your audience and your material.

Maintain Your Sense of Humor

No matter how well we plan, unexpected things happen. That fact is what makes the public speaking situation so interesting. When the unexpected happens to you, do not let it rattle you. At the end of a class period late in the afternoon of a long day, a student raised her hand and asked me if I knew that I was wearing two different colored shoes, one black and one blue. I looked down and saw that she was right; my shoes did not match. I laughed at myself, complimented the student on her observational abilities and moved on with the important thing, the material I had to deliver.

Stress Management Techniques

Even when we employ positive thinking and are well prepared, some of us still feel a great deal of anxiety about public speaking. When that is the case, it can be more helpful to use stress management than to try to make the anxiety go away.

One general technique for managing stress is positive visualization. Visualization is the process of seeing something in your mind's eye; essentially it is a form of self-hypnosis. Frequently used in sports training, positive visualization involves using the imagination to create images of relaxation or ultimate success. Essentially, you imagine in great detail the goal for which you are striving, say, a rousing round of applause after you give your speech. You mentally picture yourself standing at the front of the room, delivering your introduction, moving through the body of your speech, highlighting your presentation aids, and sharing a memorable conclusion. If you imagine a positive outcome, your body will respond to it as through it were real. Such mind-body techniques create the psychological grounds for us to achieve the goals we have imagined. As we discussed earlier, communication apprehension has a psychological basis, so mind-body techniques such as visualization can be important to reducing anxiety. It's important to keep in mind, though, that visualization does not mean you can skip practicing your speech out loud. Just as an athlete still needs to work out and practice the sport, you need to practice your speech in order to achieve the positive results you visualize.

Systematic desensitization is a behavioral modification technique that helps individuals overcome anxiety disorders. People with phobias, or irrational fears, tend to avoid the object of their fear. For example, people with a phobia of elevators avoid riding in elevators—and this only adds to their fear because they never "learn" that riding in elevators is usually perfectly safe. Systematic desensitization changes this avoidance pattern by gradually exposing the individual to the object of fear until it can be tolerated.

First, the individual is trained in specific muscle relaxation techniques. Next, the individual learns to respond with conscious relaxation even when confronted with the situation that previously caused them fear. James McCroskey used this technique to treat students who suffered from severe, trait-based communication apprehension. (((Note: McCroskey, J. C. (1972). The implementation of a large-scale program of systematic desensitization for communication apprehension. *The Speech Teacher*, *21*, 255–264.)) He found that "the technique was eighty to ninety percent effective" for the people who received the training.McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An introduction to rhetorical communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p. 57.) If you're highly anxious about public speaking, you might begin a program of systematic desensitization by watching someone else give a speech. Once you are able to do this without discomfort, you would then move to talking about giving a speech yourself, practicing, and, eventually, delivering your speech.

The success of techniques such as these clearly indicates that increased exposure to public speaking reduces overall anxiety. Consequently, you should seek out opportunities to speak in public rather than avoid them. As the famous political orator William Jennings Bryan once noted, "The ability to speak effectively is an acquirement rather than a gift." (((Note: Carnegie, D. (1955). *Public speaking and influencing men in business*. New York, NY: American Book Stratford Press, Inc.)))

KEY TAKEAWAYS
There are many steps you can take during the speech preparation process to manage your communication apprehension, including thinking positively, analyzing your audience, clearly organizing your ideas, adapting your language to the oral mode, and practicing.
You can employ a variety of techniques while you are speaking to reduce your apprehension, such as anticipating your body's reactions, focusing on the audience, and maintaining your sense of humor.

Stress management techniques, including cognitive restructuring and systematic desensitization, can also be helpful.

EXERCISES

1. Go to http://www.hypknowsis.com and practice a few of the simple beginning visualization exercises presented there.
2. Make a plan for managing your anxiety before and during your speech that includes specific techniques you want to try before your next public speaking assignment.

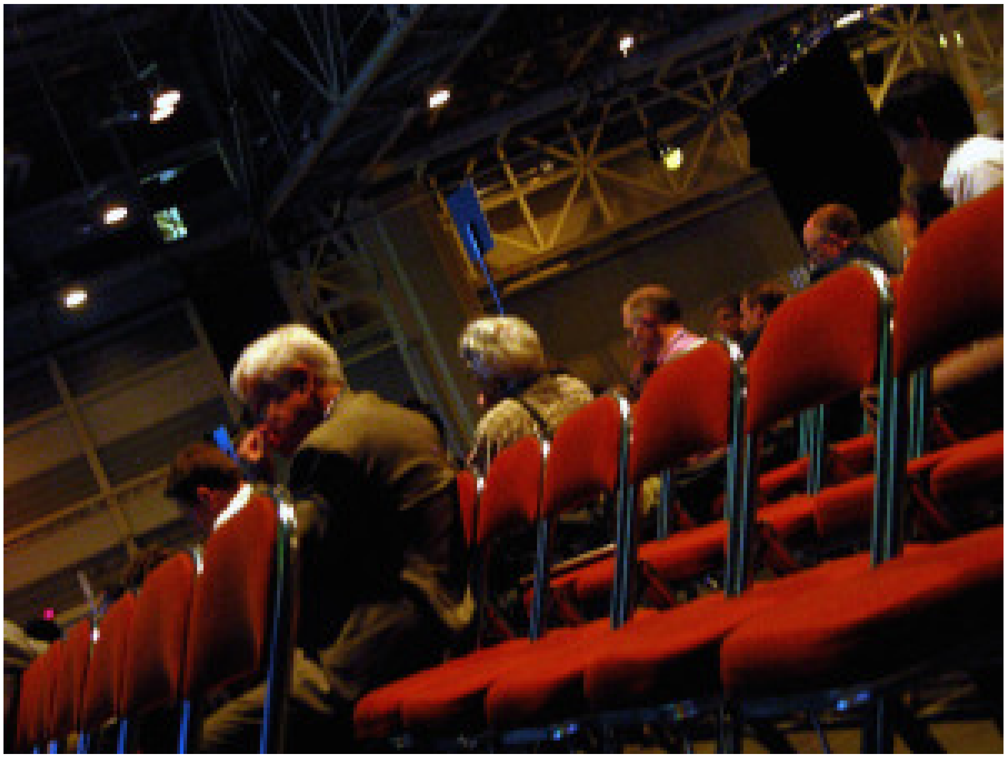
REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Our capacity to communicate through systems of language differentiates us from other species, but the use of that language to communicate effectively is actually harder than anticipated, particularly in front of an audience. Fortunately, by reading this book, you can learn the skills required to communicate more effectively one-on-one and in a speaking situation.

The speeches you present will be given in a particular context. In your role as communicator, you will encode and deliver a message which will then be decoded by audience members (also communicators). At the same time you are speaking, you will be receiving verbal and nonverbal feedback from the audience. The way that the message is decoded will depend entirely on the amount of noise interfering with the message as well as the worldviews of audience members.

Every new speaker should work to become skilled at the eleven core public speaking competencies. These competencies include: selecting a useful topic, writing an engaging introduction, organizing the points of the speech, finding effective supporting materials for the points, adding a conclusion that provides closure, using clear and vivid language, making sure that one's vocal expression corresponds to the goals of the speech, using nonverbals that complement the message, adapting the message to one's audience, using visual aids effectively, and using credible evidence and sound reasoning in persuasive messages. Each one of the competencies just listed is covered in depth in one or more chapters in this book.

The authors of this textbook hope that readers will find the chapters useful in developing their own communication competence. Whether you are new to giving presentations, or a more experienced speaker, it is important to remember that the best way to improve your public speaking skills is through preparation and practice. Although it may take time to learn effective speaking skills, the effort is well worth the benefits you will reap in your personal, professional, and public life.



"Untitled" by clarita. morgueFile.

An effective speaker knows that the success or failure of his talk is not for him to decide—it will be decided in the minds and hearts of his hearers. – Dale Carnegie

Review Questions

1. What are the personal, professional and public benefits of enhancing your public speaking skills?
2. What is the difference between the linear and transactional model of communication?
3. Define and give an original example of each of the elements of the communication process.
4. Which of the elements of the communication process do you think has the greatest impact on the way a message is interpreted. Explain.
5. What are the three types of speeches? For each of the three types of speeches, give two examples of an occasion or situation in which that type of speech might be given.
6. List the eleven speaking competencies. For each competency listed, describe the differences between the advanced speaker and the inexperienced speaker.

Activities

1. Working in groups of 3–5, generate a list of the characteristics of ineffective speakers you have seen. Next, generate a list of the characteristics of the effective speakers you have seen. What three qualities do you believe are most important to be a successful speaker? Explain.
2. Locate a speech on YouTube. While watching the speech, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the speaker's content and delivery? What three things could the speaker improve on? What three things did you like about the speaker? If you were to deliver the speech, how would you do things differently?

3. Locate a copy of the *Public Speaking Competence Rubric.* Read through each of the levels of each of the competencies, and try to determine what your level of skill is for each of the speaking competencies. If you are able, have a friend or colleague watch one of your speeches and ask him or her to evaluate your level of skill for each of the competencies. Compare your responses to see how much correspondence there is between your responses and the evaluator's responses. In what areas are you strongest? What do you need to improve upon?

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Conclusion

In this chapter, we've discussed *Communication Apprehension* or CA. This difficult condition can be the result of many, varied causes. Even professional researchers don't always agree on whether CA is inherent in the person, or the result of what the person experiences or perceives—with some calling it "*trait-anxiety*;" others "*state-anxiety*;" and still others classifying it as "*scrutiny fear*." The first step for any person to address this condition is self-reflection. Try to identify what has caused you to feel the way you do about public speaking. Careful introspection can result in a more productive level of self-awareness.

Whatever the root cause of CA might be for any particular individual, the first step in addressing CA is to objectively view the *habitual frame of reference* that has emerged in your mind regarding public speaking. Consider all those "what-if's" that keep cropping up in your mind and how you might begin to address them productively, rather than simply to ignore them and hope they go away. Go through the steps of *Cognitive Restructuring* or CR. Consider how many of those "what-if's" are nothing more than invented pressure that you place upon yourself.

Relaxation techniques, such as "*Breathe and Release*," have proven to be effective for many speakers, especially those concerned with the physical manifestations of nervousness like trembling hands or shaky knees. Remember that those sorts of tremors can often be exacerbated by efforts to hold still. Don't force yourself to hold still! Relax instead.

Lastly, we discussed the most effective means to prepare—which is toward the goal of becoming *conversant* in your topic, rather than being able to recite a memorized script. By familiarizing yourself with your topic, you become better able to consider the best way to talk to your audience, rather than becoming "married to your script" and ultimately consumed with saying the words in the right order. Practicing out-loud, without a mirror to distract you, is the best way to prepare yourself.

CA is a real issue, but it need not be an obstacle to success. Take the time to become more aware of your personal brand of CA. Take positive steps to minimize its impact. Your willingness to work and your positive attitude are the keys to your success.

> Believe you can and you're halfway there.- Theodore Roosevelt

Review Questions

1. What percentage of the general population is likely dealing with CA?
2. What are some of the potential issues or problems that can result from CA?
3. What are some of the different ways researchers classify CA? What are the differences between these ideas?
4. What are some of your sources of CA? Would you classify these as examples of trait-anxiety or state-anxiety?
5. How does Cognitive Restructuring work? Does it work the same for every person who tries it?
6. What does it mean to become conversant in your topic?
7. Why is memorizing a presentation a risky move? Is there any part of your presentation that should be memorized?

Activities

1. Prior to a speech, practice the following relaxation technique from Williams College (from http://wso.williams.edu/orgs/peerh/stress/relax.html):
    1. Tighten the muscles in your toes. Hold for a count of 10. Relax and enjoy the sensation of release from tension.
    2. Flex the muscles in your feet. Hold for a count of 10. Relax.
    3. Move slowly up through your body—legs, abdomen, back, neck, face—contracting and relaxing muscles as you go.
    4. Breathe deeply and slowly.
2. After your speech, evaluate the technique. Did you find that this exercise reduced your nervousness? If so, why do you think it was effective? If not, what technique do you think would have been more effective? Together with a partner or in a small group, generate a list of relaxation techniques that you currently use to relieve stress. Once you have run out of ideas, review the list and eliminate the techniques that would not work for helping you cope with nervousness before a speech. Of the remaining ideas, select the top three that you believe would help you personally and that you would be willing to try.
3. The author of this chapter says that one of the keys to overcoming nervousness is preparation. Make a list of the barriers to your own preparation process (e.g. "I don't know how to use the library," or "I have young children at home who make demands on my time"). Having identified some of the things that make it difficult for you to prepare, now think of at least one way to overcome each obstacle you have listed. If you need to, speak with other people to get their ideas too.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

"Philip Levy spoke at the U.S. Embassy" by US Embassy. CC-BY-ND.

When considering topics for your speech, it is critical for you to keep your audience in mind. Not doing so will put your speech at risk of not corresponding with the information needs of your audience, and further jeopardize your credibility as a speaker. This chapter examined methods of conducting an audience analysis and five categories of audience analysis. In sum, this information equips you with the foundational knowledge and skill-set required to ensure that your topic complements your audience. And, after all, if we are not adapting to meet the needs of our audience, we are not going to be informative or convincing speakers.

Winston Churchill is credited with the origin of the saying: "Fail to plan, plan to fail." (((Note: Lakein, A. (1989) *How to get control of your time and your life.* New York: Signet.))) We, your authors, believe that if you have failed to fully consider the nature, make-up, and characteristics of your audience, you are—for all intents and purposes—neglecting the spirit of the public speaking exercise. Confidently speaking to audiences can be somewhat addictive. The experience, when properly executed, can be empowering and help you succeed personally and professionally throughout your life. But, you must first consider the audience you will be addressing and take their every requirement into account. (((Note: Lewis, D. (1989) The secret language of success. New York: Galahad Books.))) We are linked to, joined with, if not bound by, our audiences. Your main speaking ambition should be to seek identification with them, and for them to seek identification with you.

Review Questions

1. Why is it important to conduct an audience analysis prior to developing your speech?
2. What is the purpose of performing a demographics survey?
3. Why is audience analysis by direct observation the most simple of the three paradigms?
4. What are some the problems a speaker faces when delivering an unacquainted-audience presentation?
5. Under what circumstances would a speaker make inferences about an audience during the course of an audience analysis??
6. What is a variable, and how is it used in data sampling?
7. Why are statistics considered to be a form of quantitative analysis and not qualitative analysis?
8. How does conducting a value hierarchy help the speaker when developing a speech?
9. What value does performing a Likert-type testing of attitudes give the speaker?
10. Which of the Five Categories of Audience Analysis is the most effective, and why do you think that?
11. What are the differences between beliefs, attitudes, and values?
12. What challenges does a speaker face when delivering a speech to a multicultural audience?

Activities

1. If you know who your audience will be prior to speaking, try performing a demographic analysis. You may want to find out data, such as age, group affiliation, sex, socio-economic status, marital status,

etc. Once you've done that, see if any of that information can impact any aspects of your speech. If it does, then determine how and why it impacts your speech.

2. Another survey to conduct is an attitudinal survey. If you are delivering a persuasive speech, you'll want to know what your audience thinks about your topic. Audience members who have opinions about things generally have a self-interest in it; that is why they are interested in what you have to say. Perform a Likert-type survey analysis to help you determine how best to create your speech.
3. As you know, a person's values are the most difficult for any speaker to change. You can perform a values survey to determine how difficult it will be to change the minds of your audience. Every persuasive speech addresses some value or values. Take a position, such as "consuming horse meat as an alternative to beef," and ask potential audience members how they feel about eating horse meat—why and why not. By conducting a hypothetical survey you begin to understand how to create an effective survey and why it is so important to the speaker to conduct.

DEVELOPING AND ORGANIZING YOUR SPEECH

FINDING A PURPOSE AND SELECTING A TOPIC

Finding Your Purpose

In the 2004 Tony Award–winning musical *Avenue Q*, the lead character sings a song about finding his purpose in life: "I don't know how I know / But I'm gonna find my purpose / I don't know where I'm gonna look / But I'm gonna find my purpose." Although the song is about life in general, the lyrics are also appropriate when thinking about the purpose of your speech. You may know that you have been assigned to deliver a speech, but finding a purpose and topic seems like a formidable task. You may be asking yourself questions like, "What if the topic I pick is too common?"; "What if no one is interested in my topic?"; "What if my topic is too huge to cover in a three- to five-minute speech?"; or many others.

Finding a speech's purpose and topic isn't as complex or difficult as you might believe. This may be hard to accept right now, but trust us. After you read this chapter, you'll understand how to go about finding interesting topics for a variety of different types of speeches. In this chapter, we are going to explain how to identify the general purpose of a speech. We will also discuss how to select a topic, what to do if you're just drawing a blank, and four basic questions you should ask yourself about the speech topic you ultimately select. Finally, we will explain how to use your general purpose and your chosen topic to develop the specific purpose of your speech.

GENERAL PURPOSES OF SPEAKING

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate among the three types of general speech purposes.
- Examine the basics of informative speech topics and some common forms of informative speeches.
- Examine the basics of persuasive speech topics and some common forms of persuasive speeches.
- Examine the basics of entertaining speech topics and some common forms of entertaining speeches.

What do you think of when you hear the word "purpose"? Technically speaking, a purpose can be defined as why something exists, how we use an object, or why we make something. For the purposes of public speaking, all three can be applicable. For example, when we talk about a speech's purpose, we can question why a specific speech was given; we can question how we are supposed to use the information within a speech; and we can question why we are personally creating a speech. For this specific chapter, we are more interested in that last aspect of the definition of the word "purpose": why we give speeches.

Ever since scholars started writing about public speaking as a distinct phenomenon, there have been a range of different systems created to classify the types of speeches people may give. Aristotle talked about three speech purposes: deliberative (political speech), forensic (courtroom speech), and epideictic (speech of praise or blame). Cicero also talked about three purposes: judicial (courtroom speech), deliberative (political speech), and demonstrative (ceremonial speech—similar to Aristotle's epideictic). A little more recently, St. Augustine of Hippo also wrote about three specific speech purposes: to teach (provide people with information), to delight (entertain people or show people false ideas), and to sway (persuade people to a religious ideology). All these systems of identifying public speeches have been attempts at helping people determine the general purpose of their speech. A general purpose refers to the broad goal in creating and delivering a speech.

These typologies or classification systems of public speeches serve to demonstrate that general speech purposes have remained pretty consistent throughout the history of public speaking. Modern public speaking scholars typically use a classification system of three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain.

To Inform

The first general purpose that some people have for giving speeches is to inform. Simply put, this is about helping audience members acquire information that they do not already possess. Audience members can then use this information to understand something (e.g., speech on a new technology, speech on a new virus) or to perform a new task or improve their skills (e.g., how to swing a golf club, how to assemble a layer cake). The most important characteristic of informative topics is that the goal is to gain knowledge. Notice that the goal is not to encourage people to use that knowledge in any specific way. When a speaker starts encouraging people to use knowledge in a specific way, he or she is no longer informing but is persuading.

Let's look at a real example of how an individual can accidentally go from informing to persuading. Let's say you are assigned to inform an audience about a new vaccination program. In an informative speech, the purpose of the speech is to explain to your audience what the program is and how it works. If, however, you start encouraging your audience to participate in the vaccination program, you are no longer informing them about the program but rather persuading them to become involved in the program. One of the most common mistakes new public speaking students make is to blur the line between informing and persuading.

Why We Share Knowledge

Knowledge sharing is the process of delivering information, skills, or expertise in some form to people who could benefit from it. In fact, understanding and exchanging knowledge is so important that an entire field of study, called *knowledge management*, has been created to help people (especially businesses) become more effective at harnessing and exchanging knowledge. In the professional world, sharing knowledge is becoming increasingly important. Every year, millions of people attend some kind of knowledge sharing conference or convention in hopes of learning new information or skills that will help them in their personal or professional lives. (((Note: Atwood, C. G. (2009). *Knowledge management basics*. Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press.)))

People are motivated to share their knowledge with other people for a variety of reasons. (((Note: Hendriks, P. (1999). Why share knowledge? The influence of ICT on the motivation for knowledge sharing. *Knowledge and Process Management, 6*, 91–100.))) For some, the personal sense of achievement or of responsibility drives them to share their knowledge (internal motivational factors). Others are driven to share knowledge because of the desire for recognition or the possibility of job enhancement (external motivational factors). Knowledge sharing is an important part of every society, so learning how to deliver informative speeches is a valuable skill.

Common Types of Informative Topics

O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein identified six general types of informative speech topics: objects, people, events, concepts, processes, and issues. (((Note: O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2007). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.))) The first type of informative speech relates to objects, which can include how objects are designed, how they function, and what they mean. For example, a student of one of our coauthors gave a speech on the design of corsets, using a mannequin to demonstrate how corsets were placed on women and the amount of force necessary to lace one up.

The second type of informative speech focuses on people. People-based speeches tend to be biography-oriented. Such topics could include recounting an individual's achievements and explaining why he or she is important in history. Some speakers, who are famous themselves, will focus on their own lives and how various events shaped who they ultimately became. Dottie Walters is most noted as being the first female in the United States to run an advertising agency. In addition to her work in advertising, Dottie also spent a great deal of time as a professional speaker. She often would tell the story about her early years in advertising when she would push around a stroller with her daughter inside as she went from business to business trying to generate interest in her copywriting abilities. You don't have to be famous, however, to give a people-based speech. Instead, you could inform your audience about a historical or contemporary hero whose achievements are not widely known.

The third type of informative speech involves explaining the significance of specific events, either historical or contemporary. For example, you could deliver a speech on a specific battle of World War II or a specific presidential administration. If you're a history buff, event-oriented speeches may be right up your alley. There are countless historical events that many people aren't familiar with and would find interesting. You could also inform your audience about a more recent or contemporary event. Some examples include concerts, plays, and arts festivals; athletic competitions; and natural phenomena, such as storms, eclipses, and earthquakes. The point is to make sure that an informative speech is talking about the event (who, what, when, where, and why) and not attempting to persuade people to pass judgment upon the event or its effects.

The fourth type of informative speech involves concepts, or "abstract and difficult ideas or theories." (((Note: O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2007). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, p. 95.)))For example, if you want to explain a specific communication theory, E. M. Griffin provides an excellent list of communication theories on his website, http://www.afirstlook.com/main.cfm/theory_list. Whether you want to discuss theories related to business, sociology, psychology, religion, politics, art, or any other major area of study, this type of speech can be very useful in helping people to understand complex ideas.

The fifth type of informative speech involves processes. The process speech can be divided into two unique types: how-it-functions and how-to-do. The first type of process speech helps audience members understand how a specific object or system works. For example, you could explain how a bill becomes a law in the United States. There is a very specific set of steps that a bill must go through before it becomes a law, so there is a very clear process that could be explained to an audience. The how-to-do speech, on the other hand, is designed to help people come to an end result of some kind. For example, you could give a speech on how to quilt, how to change a tire, how to write a résumé, and millions of other how-to oriented topics. In our experience, the how-to speech is probably the most commonly delivered informative speech in public speaking classes.

The final type of informative speech involves issues, or "problems or matters of dispute." (((Note: O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2007). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins, p. 25.))) This informative speech topic is probably the most difficult for novice public speakers because it requires walking a fine line between informing and persuading. If you attempt to deliver this type of speech, remember the goal is to be balanced when discussing both sides of the issue. To see an example of how you can take a very divisive topic and make it informative, check out the series *Point/Counterpoint* published by Chelsea House. This series of books covers everything from the pros and cons of blogging to whether the United States should have mandatory military service.

Sample: Jessy Ohl's Informative Speech

The following text represents an informative speech prepared and delivered by an undergraduate student named Jessy Ohl. While this speech is written out as a text for purposes of analysis, in your public speaking course, you will most likely be assigned to speak from an outline or notes, not a fully written script. As you read through this sample speech, notice how Ms. Ohl uses informative strategies to present the information without trying to persuade her audience.

In 1977, a young missionary named Daniel Everett traveled deep into the jungles of Brazil to spread the word of God. However, he soon found himself working to translate the language of a remote tribe that would ultimately change his faith, lead to a new profession, and pit him in an intellectual fistfight with the world-famous linguist Noam Chomsky. As *New Scientist Magazine* of January 2008 explains, Everett's research on a small group of 350 people called the Pirahã tribe has revealed a language that has experts and intellectuals deeply disturbed.

While all languages are unique, experts like Noam Chomsky have argued that they all have universal similarities, such as counting, that are hard-wired into the human brain. So as National Public Radio reported on April 8, 2007, without the ability to count, conceptualize time or abstraction, or create syntax, the Pirahã have a language that by all accounts shouldn't exist.

Daniel Everett is now a professor of linguistics at Illinois State University, and he has created controversy by calling for a complete reevaluation of all linguistic theory in light of the Pirahã. Exploration of the Pirahã could bring further insight into the understanding of how people communicate and even, perhaps, what it means to be human. Which is why we must: first, examine the unique culture of the Pirahã; second, explore what makes their language so surprising; and finally, discover the implications the Pirahã have for the way we look at language and humanity.

Taking a closer look at the tribe's culture, we can identify two key components of Pirahã culture that help mold language: first, isolation; and second, emphasis on reality.

First, while globalization has reached nearly every corner of the earth, it has not been able to penetrate the Pirahã natives in the slightest. As Dr. Everett told the *New Yorker* of April 16, 2007, no group in history has resisted change like the Pirahã. "They reject everything from outside their world" as unnecessary and silly. Distaste for all things foreign is the reason why the people have rejected technology, farming, religion, and even artwork.

The lack of artwork illustrates the second vital part of Pirahã culture: an emphasis on reality. According to the *India Statesman* of May 22, 2006, all Pirahã understanding is based around the concept of personal experience. If something cannot be felt, touched, or experienced directly then to them, it doesn't exist, essentially eliminating the existence of abstract thought. Since art is often a representation of reality, it has no value among the people. During his work as a missionary, Everett was amazed to find that the natives had no interest in the story of Jesus once they found out that he was dead. The Pirahã psyche is so focused on the present that the people have no collective memory, history, written documents, or creation myths. They are unable to even remember the names of dead grandparents because once something or someone cannot be experienced, they are no longer important.

Since his days as a missionary, Everett remains the only Western professor able to translate Pirahã. His research has discovered many things missing with the language: words for time, direction, and color. But more importantly, Pirahã also lacks three characteristics previously thought to be essential to all languages: complexity, counting, and recursion.

First, the Pirahã language seems incredibly simple. Now, this isn't meant to imply that the people are uncivilized or stupid, but instead, they are minimalist. As I mentioned earlier, they only talk in terms of direct experience. *The London Times* of January 13, 2007, notes that with only eight consonants and three vowels, speakers rely on the use of tone, pitch, and humming to communicate. In fact, Pirahã almost sounds more like song than speech.

Second, Noam Chomsky's famous universal grammar theory includes the observation that every language has a means of counting. However, as reported in the June 2007 issue of *Prospect Magazine*, the Pirahã only have words for "one, two, and MANY." This demonstrates the Pirahã's inability to conceptualize a difference between three and five or three and a thousand. Dr. Everett spent six months attempting to teach even a single Pirahã person to count to ten, but his efforts were in vain, as tribal members considered the new numbers and attempts at math "childish."

Third, and the biggest surprise for researchers, is the Pirahã's apparent lack of recursion. Recursion is the ability to link several thoughts together. It is characterized in Christine Kenneally's 2007 book, *The Search for the Origins of Language*, as the fundamental principle of all language and the source of limitless expression. Pirahã is unique since the language does not have any conjunctions or linking words. Recursion is so vital for expression that the *Chicago Tribune* of June 11, 2007, reports that a language without recursion is like disproving gravity.

Although the Pirahã don't care what the outside world thinks of them, their language and world view has certainly ruffled feathers. And while civilization hasn't been able to infiltrate the Pirahã, it may ultimately be the Pirahã that teaches civilization a thing or two, which brings us to implications on the communicative, philosophical, and cultural levels. By examining the culture, language, and implications of the Pirahã tribe we are able to see how this small Brazilian village could shift the way that we think and talk about the world. Daniel Everett's research hasn't made him more popular with his colleagues. But his findings do show that more critical research is needed to make sure that our understanding of language is not lost in translation.

To Persuade

The second general purpose people can have for speaking is to persuade. When we speak to persuade, we attempt to get listeners to embrace a point of view or to adopt a behavior that they would not have done otherwise. A persuasive speech can be distinguished from an informative speech by the fact that it includes a call for action for the audience to make some change in their behavior or thinking.

Why We Persuade

The reasons behind persuasive speech fall into two main categories, which we will call "pure persuasion" and "manipulative persuasion." Pure persuasion occurs when a speaker urges listeners to engage in a specific behavior or change a point of view because the speaker truly believes that the change is in the best interest of the audience members. For example, you may decide to give a speech on the importance of practicing good oral hygiene because you truly believe that oral hygiene is important and that bad oral hygiene can lead to a range of physical, social, and psychological problems. In this case, the speaker has no ulterior or hidden motive (e.g., you are not a toothpaste salesperson).

Manipulative persuasion, on the other hand, occurs when a speaker urges listeners to engage in a specific behavior or change a point of view by misleading them, often to fulfill an ulterior motive beyond the face value of the persuasive attempt. We call this form of persuasion manipulative because the speaker is not being honest about the real purpose for attempting to persuade the audience. Ultimately, this form of persuasion is perceived as highly dishonest when audience members discover the ulterior motive. For example, suppose a physician who also owns a large amount of stock in a pharmaceutical company is asked to speak before a group of other physicians about a specific disease. Instead of informing the group about the disease, the doctor spends the bulk of his time attempting to persuade the audience that the drug his company manufactures is the best treatment for that specific disease.

Obviously, the key question for persuasion is the speaker's intent. Is the speaker attempting to persuade the audience because of a sincere belief in the benefits of a certain behavior or point of view? Or is the speaker using all possible means—including distorting the truth—to persuade the audience because he or she will derive personal benefits from their adopting a certain behavior or point of view? Unless your speech assignment specifically calls for a speech of manipulative persuasion, the usual (and ethical) understanding of a "persuasive speech" assignment is that you should use the pure form of persuasion.

Persuasion: Behavior versus Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

As we've mentioned in the preceding sections, persuasion can address behaviors—observable actions on the part of listeners—and it can also address intangible thought processes in the form of attitudes, values, and beliefs.

When the speaker attempts to persuade an audience to change behavior, we can often observe and even measure how successful the persuasion was. For example, after a speech attempting to persuade the audience to donate money to a charity, the charity can measure how many donations were received. The following is a short list of various behavior-oriented persuasive speeches we've seen in our own classes: washing one's hands frequently and using hand sanitizer, adapting one's driving habits to improve gas mileage, using open-source software, or drinking one soft drink or soda over another. In all these cases, the goal is to make a change in the basic behavior of audience members.

The second type of persuasive topic involves a change in attitudes, values, or beliefs. An attitude is defined as an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, negative or positive. If you believe that dress codes on college campuses are a good idea, you want to give a speech persuading others to adopt a positive attitude toward campus dress codes.

A speaker can also attempt to persuade listeners to change some value they hold. Value refers to an individual's perception of the usefulness, importance, or worth of something. We can value a college education, we can value technology, and we can value freedom. Values, as a general concept, are fairly ambiguous and tend to be very lofty ideas. Ultimately, what we value in life actually motivates us to engage in a range of behaviors. For example, if you value protecting the environment, you may recycle more of your trash than someone who does not hold this value. If you value family history and heritage, you may be more motivated to spend time with your older relatives and ask them about their early lives than someone who does not hold this value.

Lastly, a speaker can attempt to persuade people to change their personal beliefs. Beliefs are propositions or positions that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof. Typically, beliefs are divided into two basic categories: core and dispositional. Core beliefs are beliefs that people have actively engaged in and created over the course of their lives (e.g., belief in a higher power, belief in extraterrestrial life forms). Dispositional beliefs, on the other hand, are beliefs that people have not actively engaged in; they are judgments based on related subjects, which people make when they encounter a proposition. Imagine, for example, that you were asked the question, “Can gorillas speak English?” While you may never have met a gorilla or even seen one in person, you can make instant judgments about your understanding of gorillas and fairly certainly say whether you believe that gorillas can speak English.

When it comes to persuading people to alter beliefs, persuading audiences to change core beliefs is more difficult than persuading audiences to change dispositional beliefs. If you find a topic related to dispositional beliefs, using your speech to help listeners alter their processing of the belief is a realistic possibility. But as a novice public speaker, you are probably best advised to avoid core beliefs. Although core beliefs often appear to be more exciting and interesting than dispositional ones, you are very unlikely to alter anyone's core beliefs in a five- to ten-minute classroom speech.

Sample: Jessy Ohl's Persuasive Speech

The following speech was written and delivered by an undergraduate student named Jessy Ohl. As with our earlier example, while this speech is written out as a text for purposes of analysis, in your public speaking course, you will most likely be assigned to speak from an outline or notes, not a fully written script.

Take a few minutes and compare this persuasive speech to the informative speech Ms. Ohl presented earlier in this chapter. What similarities do you see? What differences do you see? Does this speech seek to change the audience's behavior? Attitudes? Values? Dispositional or core beliefs? Where in the speech do you see one or more calls for action?

> With a declining population of around 6,000, my home town of Denison, Iowa, was on the brink of extinction when a new industry rolled in bringing jobs and revenue. However, as the *Canadian Globe and Mail* of July 23, 2007, reports, the industry that saved Denison may ultimately lead to its demise.
>
> Denison is one of 110 communities across the country to be revolutionized by the production of corn ethanol. Ethanol is a high-powered alcohol, derived from plant matter, that can be used like gasoline. According to the *Omaha World Herald* of January 8, 2008, our reliance on foreign oil combined with global warming concerns have many holding corn ethanol as our best energy solution. But despite the good intentions of helping farmers and lowering oil consumption, corn ethanol is filled with empty promises. In fact, *The Des Moines Register* of March 1, 2008, concludes that when ethanol is made from corn, all of its environmental and economic benefits disappear. With oil prices at 100 dollars per barrel, our nation is in an energy crisis, and luckily, the production of ethanol can be a major help for both farmers and consumers, if done correctly. Unfortunately, the way we make ethanol—over 95% from corn—is anything but correct. Although hailed as a magic bullet, corn ethanol could be the worst agricultural catastrophe since the Dust Bowl.

The serious political, environmental, and even moral implications demand that we critically rethink this so-called yellow miracle by: first, examining the problems created by corn ethanol; second, exploring why corn ethanol has gained such power; and finally, discovering solutions to prevent a corn ethanol disaster.

Now, if you have heard anything about the problems of corn ethanol, it probably dealt with efficiency. As the *Christian Science Monitor* of November 15, 2007, notes, it takes a gallon of gasoline or more to make a gallon of ethanol. And while this is an important concern, efficiency is the least of our worries. Turning this crop into fuel creates two major problems for our society: first, environmental degradation; and second, acceleration of global famine.

First, corn ethanol damages the environment as much as, if not more than, fossil fuels. The journal *Ethanol and Bio-diesel News* of September 2007 asserts that the production of corn ethanol is pushing natural resources to the breaking point. Since the Dust Bowl, traditional farming practices have required farmers to "rotate" crops. But with corn ethanol being so profitable, understandably, farmers have stopped rotating crops, leading to soil erosion, deforestation, and fertilizer runoff—making our soil less fertile and more toxic. And the story only gets worse once the ethanol is manufactured. According to National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation* of February 10, 2008, corn ethanol emits more carbon monoxide and twice the amount of carcinogens into the air as traditional gasoline.

The second problem created from corn ethanol is the acceleration of global famine. According to the US Grains Council, last year, 27 million tons of corn, traditionally used as food, was turned into ethanol, drastically increasing food prices. The March 7, 2007, issue of *The Wall Street Journal* explains that lower supplies of corn needed for necessities such as farm feed, corn oil, and corn syrup have increased our food costs in everything from milk to bread, eggs, and even beer as much as 25 percent. *The St. Louis Post Dispatch* of April 12, 2007, reports that the amount of corn used to fill one tank of gas could feed one person for an entire year. In October, Global protests over corn ethanol lead the United Nations to call its production "a crime against humanity."

If you weren't aware of the environmental or moral impacts of corn ethanol, you're not alone. The *Financial Times* of May 27, 2007, reports that the narrative surrounding corn ethanol as a homegrown fuel is so desirable that critical thinking is understandably almost nonexistent. To start thinking critically about corn ethanol, we need to examine solutions on both the federal and personal levels.

First, at the federal level, our government must end the ridiculously high subsidies surrounding corn ethanol. On June 24, 2007, *The Washington Post* predicted that subsidies on corn ethanol would cost the federal government an extra 131 billion dollars by 2010.

This isn't to say that the federal government should abandon small farmers. Instead, let's take the excitement around alternative fuels and direct it toward the right kinds of ethanol. *The Economist* of June 2, 2007, reports that other materials such as switch grass and wood chips can be used instead of corn. And on July 6, 2011, *The New York Times* reported on ethanol made from corn cobs, leaves, and husks, which leaves the corn kernels to be used as food. The government could use the money paid in subsidies to support this kind of responsible production of ethanol. The point is that ethanol done right can honestly help with energy independence.

On the personal level, we have all participated in the most important step, which is being knowledgeable about the true face of corn ethanol. However, with big business and Washington proclaiming corn ethanol's greatness, we need to spread the word. So please, talk to friends and family about corn ethanol while there is still time. To make this easier, visit my website, at http://www.responsibleethanol.com. Here you will find informational materials, links to your congressional representatives, and ways to invest in switch grass and wood ethanol.

Today, we examined the problems of corn ethanol in America and discovered solutions to make sure that our need for energy reform doesn't sacrifice our morality. Iowa is turning so much corn into ethanol that soon the state will have to import corn to eat. And while my hometown of Denison has gained much from corn ethanol, we all have much more to lose from it.

To Entertain

The final general purpose people can have for public speaking is to entertain. Whereas informative and persuasive speech making is focused on the end result of the speech process, entertainment speaking is focused on the theme and occasion of the speech. An entertaining speech can be either informative or persuasive at its root, but the context or theme of the speech requires speakers to think about the speech primarily in terms of audience enjoyment.

Why We Entertain

Entertaining speeches are very common in everyday life. The fundamental goal of an entertaining speech is audience enjoyment, which can come in a variety of forms. Entertaining speeches can be funny or serious. Overall, entertaining speeches are not designed to give an audience a deep understanding of life but instead to function as a way to divert an audience from their day-to-day lives for a short period of time. This is not to say that an entertaining speech cannot have real content that is highly informative or persuasive, but its goal is primarily about the entertaining aspects of the speech and not focused on the informative or persuasive quality of the speech.

Common Forms of Entertainment Topics

There are three basic types of entertaining speeches: the after-dinner speech, the ceremonial speech, and the inspirational speech. The after-dinner speech is a form of speaking where a speaker takes a serious speech topic (either informative or persuasive) and injects a level of humor into the speech to make it entertaining. Some novice speakers will attempt to turn an after-dinner speech into a stand-up comedy routine, which doesn't have the same focus. (((Note: Roye, S. (2010). Austan Goolsbee a funny stand-up comedian? Not even close… [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.realfirststeps.com/1184/austan-goolsbee-funny-standup-comedian-close))) After-dinner speeches are first and foremost speeches.

A ceremonial speech is a type of entertaining speech where the specific context of the speech is the driving force of the speech. Common types of ceremonial speeches include introductions, toasts, and eulogies. In each of these cases, there are specific events that drive the speech. Maybe you're introducing an individual who is about to receive an award, giving a toast at your best friend's wedding, or delivering the eulogy at a relative's funeral. In each of these cases, the speech and the purpose of the speech is determined by the context of the event and not by the desire to inform or persuade.

The final type of entertaining speech is one where the speaker's primary goal is to inspire her or his audience. Inspirational speeches are based in emotion with the goal to motivate listeners to alter their lives in some significant way. Florence Littauer, a famous professional speaker, delivers an emotionally charged speech titled "Silver Boxes." In the speech, Mrs. Littauer demonstrates how people can use positive comments to encourage others in their daily lives. The title comes from a story she tells at the beginning of the speech where she was teaching a group of children about using positive speech, and one of the children defined positive speech as giving people little silver boxes with bows on top.

Sample: Adam Fink's Entertainment Speech

The following speech, by an undergraduate student named Adam Fink, is an entertainment speech. Specifically, this speech is a ceremonial speech given at Mr. Fink's graduation. As with our earlier examples, while this speech is written out as a text for purposes of analysis, in your public speaking course you will most likely be assigned to speak from an outline or notes, not a fully written script. Notice that the tenor of this speech is persuasive but that it persuades in a more inspiring way than just building and proving an argument.

> Good evening! I've spent the last few months looking over commencement speeches on YouTube. The most notable ones had eight things in common. They reflected on the past, pondered about the future. They encouraged the honorees. They all included some sort of personal story and application. They made people laugh at least fifteen times. They referred to the university as the finest university in the

nation or world, and last but not least they all greeted the people in attendance. I'll begin by doing so now.

President Holst, thank you for coming. Faculty members and staff, salutations to you all. Distinguished guests, we are happy to have you. Family members and friends, we could not be here without you. Finally, ladies and gentlemen of the class of 2009, welcome to your commencement day here at Concordia University, Saint Paul, this, the finest university in the galaxy, nay, universe. Really, it's right up there with South Harlem Institute of Technology, the School of Hard Knocks, and Harvard. Check and check!

Graduates, we are not here to watch as our siblings, our parents, friends, or other family walk across this stage. We are here because today is our graduation day. I am going to go off on a tangent for a little bit. Over the past umpteen years, I have seen my fair share of graduations and ceremonies. In fact, I remember getting dragged along to my older brothers' and sisters' graduations, all 8,000 of them—at least it seems like there were that many now. Seriously, I have more family members than friends. I remember sitting here in these very seats, intently listening to the president and other distinguished guests speak, again saying welcome and thank you for coming. Each year, I got a little bit better at staying awake throughout the entire ceremony. Every time I would come up with something new to keep myself awake, daydreams, pinching my arms, or pulling leg hair; I was a very creative individual. I am proud to say that I have been awake for the entirety of this ceremony. I would like to personally thank my classmates and colleagues sitting around me for slapping me every time I even thought about dozing off. Personal story, check—and now, application!

Graduates, don't sleep through life. If you need a close friend or colleague to keep you awake, ask. Don't get bored with life. In the words of one of my mentors, the Australian film director, screen writer, and producer Baz Luhrman, "Do one thing every day that scares you." Keep yourself on your toes. Stay occupied but leave room for relaxation; embrace your hobbies. Don't get stuck in a job you hate. I am sure many of you have seen the "Did You Know?" film on YouTube. The film montages hundreds of statistics together, laying down the ground work to tell viewers that we are approaching a crossroad. The way we live is about to change dramatically. We are living in exponential times. It's a good thing that we are exponential people.

We are at a crossing point here, now. Each of us is graduating; we are preparing to leave this place we have called home for the past few years. It's time to move on and flourish. But let's not leave this place for good. Let us walk away with happy memories. We have been fortunate enough to see more change in our time here than most alumni see at their alma mater in a lifetime. We have seen the destruction of Centennial, Minnesota, and Walther. Ladies, it might not mean a lot to you, but gentlemen, we had some good times there. We have seen the building and completion of the new Residence Life Center. We now see the beginnings of our very own stadium. We have seen enough offices and departments move to last any business a lifetime. Let us remember these things, the flooding of the knoll, Ultimate Frisbee beginning at ten o'clock at night, and two back-to-back Volleyball National Championship teams, with one of those championship games held where you are sitting now. I encourage all of you to walk out of this place with flashes of the old times flickering through your brains. Reflection, check!

Honorees, in the words of Michael Scott, only slightly altered, "They have no idea how high [we] can fly." Right now you are surrounded by future politicians, film critics, producers, directors, actors, actresses, church workers, artists, the teachers of tomorrow, musicians, people who will change the world. We are all held together right here and now, by a common bond of unity. We are one graduating class.

In one of his speeches this year, President Barack Obama said, "Generations of Americans have connected their stories to the larger American story through service and helped move our country forward. We need that service now." He is right. America needs selfless acts of service.

Hebrews 10:23–25 reads, "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Let us not leave this place as enemies but rather as friends and companions. Let us come back next fall for our first reunion, the Zero Class Reunion hosted by the wonderful and amazing workers in the alumni department. Let us go and make disciples of all nations, guided by His Word. Let us spread God's peace, joy, and love through service to others. Congratulations, graduates! I hope to see you next homecoming. Encouragement, check!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are three general purposes that all speeches fall into: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Depending on what your ultimate goal is, you will start by picking one of these general purposes and then selecting an appropriate speech pattern that goes along with that general purpose.
- Informative speeches can focus on objects, people, events, concepts, processes, or issues. It is important to remember that your purpose in an informative speech is to share information with an audience, not to persuade them to do or believe something.
- There are two basic types of persuasion: pure and manipulative. Speakers who attempt to persuade others for pure reasons do so because they actually believe in what they are persuading an audience to do or think. Speakers who persuade others for manipulative reasons do so often by distorting the support for their arguments because they have an ulterior motive in persuading an audience to do or think something. If an audience finds out that you've been attempting to manipulate them, they will lose trust in you.
- Entertainment speeches can be after-dinner, ceremonial, or inspirational. Although there may be informative or persuasive elements to your speech, your primary reason for giving the speech is to entertain the audience.

EXERCISES

1. Imagine you're giving a speech related to aardvarks to a group of fifth graders. Which type of informative speech do you think would be the most useful (objects, people, events, concepts, processes, and issues)? Why?
2. Imagine you're giving a speech to a group of prospective voters supporting a specific political candidate. Which type of persuasive speech do you think would be the most useful (change of behavior, change of attitude, change of value, or change of belief)? Why?
3. Imagine that you've been asked to speak at a business luncheon and the host has asked you to keep it serious but lighthearted. Which type of entertainment speech do you think would be the most useful (the after-dinner speech, the ceremonial speech, or the inspirational speech)? Why?

SELECTING A TOPIC

Learning Objectives

- Understand the four primary constraints of topic selection.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how a topic is narrowed from a broad subject area to a manageable specific purpose.

One of the most common stumbling blocks for novice public speakers is selecting their first speech topic. Generally, your public speaking instructor will provide you with some fairly specific parameters to make this a little easier. You may be assigned to tell about an event that has shaped your life or to demonstrate how to do something. Whatever your basic parameters, at some point you as the speaker will need to settle on a specific topic. In this section, we're going to look at some common constraints of public speaking, picking a broad topic area, and narrowing your topic.

Common Constraints of Public Speaking

When we use the word "constraint" with regard to public speaking, we are referring to any limitation or restriction you may have as a speaker. Whether in a classroom situation or in the boardroom, speakers are typically given specific instructions that they must follow. These instructions constrain the speaker and limit what the speaker can say. For example, in the professional world of public speaking, speakers are often hired to speak about a specific topic (e.g., time management, customer satisfaction, entrepreneurship). In the workplace, a supervisor may assign a subordinate to present certain information in a meeting. In these kinds of situations, when a speaker is hired or assigned to talk about a specific topic, he or she cannot decide to talk about something else.

Furthermore, the speaker may have been asked to speak for an hour, only to show up and find out that the event is running behind schedule, so the speech must now be made in only thirty minutes. Having prepared sixty minutes of material, the speaker now has to determine what stays in the speech and what must go. In both of these instances, the speaker is constrained as to what he or she can say during a speech. Typically, we refer to four primary constraints: purpose, audience, context, and time frame.

Purpose

The first major constraint someone can have involves the general purpose of the speech. As mentioned earlier, there are three general purposes: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. If you've been told that you will be delivering an informative speech, you are automatically constrained from delivering a speech with the purpose of persuading or entertaining. In most public speaking classes, this is the first constraint students will come in contact with because generally teachers will tell you the exact purpose for each speech in the class.

Audience

The second major constraint that you need to consider as a speaker is the type of audience you will have. As discussed in the chapter on audience analysis, different audiences have different political, religious, and ideological leanings. As such, choosing a speech topic for an audience that has a specific mindset can be very tricky. Unfortunately, choosing what topics may or may not be appropriate for a given audience is based on generalizations about specific audiences. For example, maybe you're going to give a speech at a local meeting of Democratic leaders. You may think that all Democrats are liberal or progressive, but there are many conservative Democrats as well. If you assume that all Democrats are liberal or progressive, you may end up offending your audience by making such a generalization without knowing better. Obviously, the best way to prevent yourself from picking a topic that is inappropriate for a specific audience is to really know your audience, which is why we recommend conducting an audience analysis, as described in Chapter 5 "Audience Analysis".

Context

The third major constraint relates to the context. For speaking purposes, the context of a speech is the set of circumstances surrounding a particular speech. There are countless different contexts in which we can find ourselves speaking: a classroom in college, a religious congregation, a corporate boardroom, a retirement village, or a political convention. In each of these different contexts, the expectations for a speaker are going to be unique and different. The topics that may be appropriate in front of a religious group may not be appropriate in the corporate boardroom. Topics appropriate for the corporate boardroom may not be appropriate at a political convention.

Time Frame

The last—but by no means least important—major constraint that you will face is the time frame of your speech. In speeches that are under ten minutes in length, you must narrowly focus a topic to one major idea. For example, in a ten-minute speech, you could not realistically hope to discuss the entire topic of the US Social Security program. There are countless books, research articles, websites, and other forms of media on the topic of Social Security, so trying to crystallize all that information into ten minutes is just not realistic.

Instead, narrow your topic to something that is more realistically manageable within your allotted time. You might choose to inform your audience about Social Security disability benefits, using one individual disabled person as an example. Or perhaps you could speak about the career of Robert J. Myers, one of the original architects of Social Security. (((Note: See, for example, Social Security Administration (1996). Robert J. Myers oral history interview. Retrieved from http://www.ssa.gov/history/myersorl.html))) By focusing on information that can be covered within your time frame, you are more likely to accomplish your goal at the end of the speech.

Selecting a Broad Subject Area

Once you know what the basic constraints are for your speech, you can then start thinking about picking a topic. The first aspect to consider is what subject area you are interested in examining. A subject area is a broad area of knowledge. Art, business, history, physical sciences, social sciences, humanities, and education are all examples of subject areas. When selecting a topic, start by casting a broad net because it will help you limit and weed out topics quickly.

Furthermore, each of these broad subject areas has a range of subject areas beneath it. For example, if we take the subject area "art," we can break it down further into broad categories like art history, art galleries, and how to create art. We can further break down these broad areas into even narrower subject areas (e.g., art history includes prehistoric art, Egyptian art, Grecian art, Roman art, Middle Eastern art, medieval art, Asian art, Renaissance art, modern art). As you can see, topic selection is a narrowing process.

Narrowing Your Topic

Narrowing your topic to something manageable for the constraints of your speech is something that takes time, patience, and experience. One of the biggest mistakes that new public speakers make is not narrowing their topics sufficiently given the constraints. In the previous section, we started demonstrating how the narrowing process works, but even in those examples, we narrowed subject areas down to fairly broad areas of knowledge.

Think of narrowing as a funnel. At the top of the funnel are the broad subject areas, and your goal is to narrow your topic further and further down until just one topic can come out the other end of the funnel. The more focused your topic is, the easier your speech is to research, write, and deliver. So let's take one of the broad areas from the art subject area and keep narrowing it down to a manageable speech topic. For this example, let's say that your general purpose is to inform, you are delivering the speech in class to your peers, and you have five to seven minutes. Now that we have the basic constraints, let's start narrowing our topic. The broad area we are going to narrow in this example is Middle Eastern art. When examining the category of Middle Eastern art, the first thing you'll find is that Middle Eastern art is generally grouped into four distinct categories: Anatolian, Arabian, Mesopotamian, and Syro-Palestinian. Again, if you're like us, until we started doing some research on the topic, we had no idea that the historic art of the Middle East was grouped into these specific categories. We'll select Anatolian art, or the art of what is now modern Turkey.

You may think that your topic is now sufficiently narrow, but even within the topic of Anatolian art, there are smaller categories: pre-Hittite, Hittite, Uratu, and Phrygian periods of art. So let's narrow our topic again to the Phrygian period of art (1200–700 BCE). Although we have now selected a specific period of art history in Anatolia, we are still looking at a five-hundred-year period in which a great deal of art was created. One famous Phrygian king was King Midas, who according to myth was given the ears of a donkey and the power of a golden touch by the Greek gods. As such, there is an interesting array of art from the period of Midas and its Greek counterparts representing Midas. At this point, we could create a topic about how Phrygian and Grecian art differed in their portrayals of King Midas. We now have a topic that is unique, interesting, and definitely manageable in five to seven minutes. You may be wondering how we narrowed the topic down; we just started doing a little research using the Metropolitan Museum of Art's website.

Overall, when narrowing your topic, you should start by asking yourself four basic questions based on the constraints discussed earlier in this section:

1. Does the topic match my intended general purpose?
2. Is the topic appropriate for my audience?
3. Is the topic appropriate for the given speaking context?
4. Can I reasonably hope to inform or persuade my audience in the time frame I have for the speech?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Selecting a topic is a process. We often start by selecting a broad area of knowledge and then narrowing the topic to one that is manageable for a given rhetorical situation.
- When finalizing a specific purpose for your speech, always ask yourself four basic questions: (1) Does the topic match my intended general purpose?; (2) Is the topic appropriate for my audience?; (3) Is the topic appropriate for the given speaking context?; and (4) Can I reasonably hope to inform or persuade my audience in the time frame I have for the speech?

EXERCISES

1. Imagine you've been asked to present on a new technology to a local business. You've been given ten minutes to speak on the topic. Given these parameters, take yourself through the narrowing process from subject area (business) to a manageable specific purpose.
2. Think about the next speech you'll be giving in class. Show how you've gone from a large subject area to a manageable specific purpose based on the constraints given to you by your professor.

BRAINSTORMING

Learning Objectives

- Understand and conduct a basic personal inventory.
- Explain how to identify and use finding aids for topic selection.
- Examine the importance of polling one's audience to determine speech topics.

Uh-oh, what if you have no clue what to speak about at all? Thankfully, there are many places where you can get help finding a good topic for you. In this section, we're going to talk about a range of ways to find the best topic.

Conduct a Personal Inventory

The first way to find a good topic is to conduct what we call a personal inventory. A personal inventory is a detailed and descriptive list about an individual. In this case, we want you to think about you. Here are some basic questions to get you started:

- What's your major?
- What are your hobbies?
- What jobs have you had?
- What extracurricular activities have you engaged in?
- What clubs or groups do you belong to?

- What political issues interest you?
- Where have you traveled in life?
- What type of volunteer work have you done?
- What goals do you have in life?
- What social problems interest you?
- What books do you read?
- What movies do you watch?
- What games do you play?
- What unique skills do you possess?

After responding to these questions, you now have a range of areas that are unique to you that you could realistically develop into a speech. Here are some unique inventory items that could be turned into speeches for some of the authors of this textbook:

Jason S. Wrench

1. Grew up as an Air Force dependent and lived on the island of Crete
2. Is a puppeteer
3. Has two puggles (half pug/half beagle) named Daikin and Teddy

Anne Goding

1. Worked as a teacher for the Medicine Chief of the Bear Tribe Medicine Society in Spokane, Washington
2. Was codirector of Bear Tribe Publishing Company
3. Specializes in storytelling

Danette Ifert-Johnson

1. Is an avid fan of the Baltimore Orioles
2. Spent a month in South Korea as part of a study/travel group
3. Is a history buff who likes visiting historic sites and national parks

Bernardo Attias

1. Briefly lived in the Dominican Republic with his family as a young boy
2. Is a DJ
3. Occasionally practices yoga

We wanted to note these interesting facts about our personal lives to illustrate the fact that each and every one of us has done unique and interesting things in our lives that could make really interesting and informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches.

Use Finding Aids

If you're still just stumped after conducting a personal inventory, the next recommendation we have for helping you find a good topic is to use a finding aid. A finding aid is a tool that will help you find lists of possible topics. Let's look at four of them: best-seller lists, organizations that tally information, media outlets, and the Internet.

Best-Seller Lists

A best-seller list is a list of books that people are currently buying. These lists often contain various subdivisions including fiction, nonfiction, business, advice, or graphic novels. Table 1 "Best-Seller Lists" contains a range of best-seller lists to examine:

Table 1. Best-Seller Lists

Name	Website
New York Times	http://www.nytimes.com/pages/books/bestseller
Amazon.com	http://www.amazon.com/gp/bestsellers/books
USA Today	http://www.usatoday.com/life/books/leb1.htm
American Booksellers	http://www.bookweb.org/indiebound/bestsellers.html
Publisher's Weekly	http://www.publishersweekly.com
The Washington Post	http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/artsandliving/books/bestsellers-list
Business Week	http://www.businessweek.com/lifestyle/books.htm
CNN	http://www.cnn.com/books/bestsellers

It is important to realize that your goal in looking at best-seller lists is not to choose a book to serve as the topic of your speech—unless you've been assigned to give a book review! The point is that while all these lists indicate what people are reading, you can use them to find out what topics people are generally interested in right now.

Polling Organizations

In addition to numerous sources for best sellers, there are also a number of polling organizations that regularly conduct research on the American public. Not only are these organizations good for finding interesting research, but generally the most recent polls are an indication of what people are interested in understanding today. For example, The Gallup Organization regularly conducts polls to find out Americans' perceptions of current political issues, business issues, social issues, and a whole range of other interesting information. Often just looking at the Gallup Organization's website can help you find very interesting speech topics.

Table 2. Tallied Information

Name	Website
The Gallup Organization	http://www.gallup.com
US Census Bureau	http://www.census.gov
Polling Report	http://www.pollingreport.com
Rasmussen Reports	http://www.rasmussenreports.com
Zogby International	http://www.zogby.com
Pew Research Center	http://pewresearch.org

Media Outlets

The next great ways to find interesting topics for your speeches are watching television and listening to the radio. The evening news, the History Channel, and the National Geographic channel can all provide ideas for many different speech topics. There are even a host of television shows that broadcast the latest and most interesting topics weekly (e.g., *Dateline*, *20/20*, *60 Minutes*). Here are some recent segments from *20/20* that could make interesting speeches: former *Tarzan* actor, Steve Sipek, has lived with tigers for forty years; the science behind the *Bachelor* phenomenon; the world of childhood schizophrenia; and a girl born with a rare "mermaid" condition.

As for listening to the radio, talk radio is often full of interesting possibilities for speech topics. Many of the most prominent talk radio shows have two or three hours to fill five days a week, so the shows' producers are always looking for interesting topics. Why not let those producers do the investigative work for you? If you're listening to talk radio and hear an interesting topic, write it down and think about using it for your next speech.

As with the best-seller list, it is important to realize that your goal is not to use a given television or radio program as the basis for your speech, much less to repeat the exact arguments that a talk radio host or caller has made. We are not advocating stealing someone's ideas—you need to do your own thinking to settle on your speech topic. You can certainly use ideas from the media as contributions to your speech; however, if you do this, it is only ethical to make sure that you correctly cite the show where you heard about the topic by telling your audience the title, station, and date when you heard it.

The Internet

You can, of course, also look for interesting speech topics online. While the Internet may not always provide the most reliable information, it is a rich source of interesting topics. For example, to browse many interesting blogs, check out http://www.blogcatalog.com/ or http://www.findblogs.com/. Both websites link to hundreds of blogs you could peruse, searching for a topic that inspires you.

If you find yourself really stumped, there are even a handful of websites that specialize in helping people, just like you, find speech topics. Yes, that's right! Some insightful individuals have posted long lists of possible topics for your next speech right on the Internet. Here are some we recommend:

- http://www.hawaii.edu/mauispeech/html/infotopichelp.html
- http://web.sau.edu/WastynRonaldO/topics.html
- http://daphne.palomar.edu/kerbe/documents/inform_speech_topics.pdf
- http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/comm/nfa/journal/vol9no2-6.pdf

Using the Internet is a great way to find a topic, but you'll still need to put in the appropriate amount of your own thinking and time to really investigate your topic once you've found one that inspires you.

Poll Your Audience for Interests and Needs

The last way you can find a great topic is to conduct a simple poll of your audience to see what their interests and needs are. Let's handle these two methods separately. When you ask potential audience members about their interests, it's not hard to quickly find that patterns of interests exist in every group. You can find out about interests by either formally handing people a questionnaire or just asking people casually. Suppose it's your turn to speak at your business club's next meeting. If you start asking your fellow club members and other local business owners if there are any specific problems their businesses are currently facing, you will probably start to see a pattern develop. While you may not be an expert on the topic initially, you can always do some research to see what experts have said on the topic and pull together a speech using that research.

The second type of poll you may conduct of your potential audience is what we call a needs analysis. A needs analysis involves a set of activities designed to determine your audience's needs, wants, wishes, or desires. The purpose of a needs analysis is to find a gap in information that you can fill as a speaker. Again, you can use either informal or formal methods to determine where a need is. Informally, you may ask people if they have problems with something specific like writing a business plan or cooking in a wok. The only problem that can occur with the informal method is that you often find out that people overestimate their own knowledge about a topic. Someone may think they know how to use a wok even though they've never owned one and never cooked in one. For that reason, we often use more formal methods of assessing needs.

The formal process for conducting a needs analysis is threefold: (1) find a gap in knowledge, (2) figure out the cause, and (3) identify solutions. First, you need to find that a gap in knowledge actually exists. Overall, this isn't very hard to do. You can have people try to accomplish a task or just orally have them explain a task to you, and if you find that they are lacking you'll know that there is a possible need. Second, you need to figure out what is causing the gap. One of the mistakes that people make is assuming that all gaps exist because of a lack of information. This is not necessarily true—it can also be because of lack of experience. For example, people may have learned how to drive a car in a driver education class, but if they've never been behind the wheel of a car, they're not really going to know how to drive. Would giving a speech on how to drive a car at this point be useful? No. Instead, these people need practice, not another speech. Lastly, when you determine that the major cause of the need is informational, it's time to determine the best way to deliver that information.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Conducting a personal inventory is a good way to start the topic selection process. When we analyze our own experiences, interests, knowledge, and passions, we often find topics that others will also find interesting and useful.
- A speaker can investigate finding aids when searching for a good topic. Various finding aids have their positives and negatives, so we recommend investigating several different finding aids to see what topic ideas inspire you.
- One way to ensure a successful speech is to identify your audience's interests or needs. When the speaker's topic is immediately useful for the audience, the audience will listen to the speech and appreciate it.

EXERCISES

1. Look at the questions posed in this chapter related to conducting a personal inventory. Do you see any potential speech ideas developing from your personal inventory? If yes, which one do you think would impact your audience the most?
2. Take a broad subject area and then use two of the different finding aids to see what types of topics appear. Are you finding similarities or differences? The goal of this activity is to demonstrate how taking a very broad topic can be narrowed down to a more manageable topic using finding aids.
3. For an upcoming speech in your public speaking class, create a simple survey to determine your audience's needs. Find out what your audience may find interesting. Remember, the goal is to find out what your audience needs, not necessarily what you think your audience needs.

SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Learning Objectives

- Understand the process of extending a general purpose into a specific purpose.
- Integrate the seven tips for creating specific purposes.

Once you have chosen your general purpose and your topic, it's time to take your speech to the next phase and develop your specific purpose. A specific purpose starts with one of the three general purposes and then specifies the actual topic you have chosen and the basic objective you hope to accomplish with your speech. Basically, the specific purpose answers the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* questions for your speech.

Getting Specific

When attempting to get at the core of your speech (the specific purpose), you need to know a few basic things about your speech. First, you need to have a general purpose. Once you know whether your goal is to inform, persuade, or entertain, picking an appropriate topic is easier. Obviously, depending on the general purpose, you will have a range of different types of topics. For example, let's say you want to give a speech about hygiene. You could still give a speech about hygiene no matter what your general purpose is, but the specific purpose would vary depending on whether the general purpose is to inform (discussing hygiene practices around the globe), to persuade (discussing why people need to adopt a specific hygiene practice), or to entertain (discussing some of the strange and unique hygiene practices that people have used historically). Notice that in each of these cases, the general purpose alters the topic, but all three are still fundamentally about hygiene.

Now, when discussing specific purposes, we are concerned with who, what, when, where, why, and how questions for your speech. Let's examine each of these separately. First, you want to know who is going to be in your audience. Different audiences, as discussed in the chapter on audience analysis, have differing desires, backgrounds, and needs. Keeping your audience first and foremost in your thoughts when choosing a specific purpose will increase the likelihood that your audience will find your speech meaningful.

Second is the "what" question, or the basic description of your topic. When picking an effective topic, you need to make sure that the topic is appropriate for a variety of constraints or limitations within a speaking context.

Third, you need to consider when your speech will be given. Different speeches may be better for different times of the day. For example, explaining the importance of eating breakfast and providing people with cereal bars may be a great topic at 9:00 a.m. but may not have the same impact if you're giving it at 4:00 p.m.

Fourth, you need to consider where your speech will be given. Are you giving a speech in front of a classroom? A church? An executive meeting? Depending on the location of your speech, different topics may or may not be appropriate.

The last question you need to answer within your speech is why. Why does your audience need to hear your speech? If your audience doesn't care about your specific purpose, they are less likely to attend to your speech. If it's a topic that's a little more off-the-wall, you'll really need to think about why they should care.

Once you've determined the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* aspects of your topic, it's time to start creating your actual specific purpose. First, a specific purpose, in its written form, should be a short, declarative sentence that emphasizes the main topic of your speech. Let's look at an example:

Topic	The military
Narrower Topic	The military's use of embedded journalists
Narrowed Topic	The death of British reporter Rupert Hamer in 2010 in a roadside bombing in Nawa, Afghanistan, along with five US Marines

In this example, we've quickly narrowed a topic from a more general topic to a more specific topic. Let's now look at that topic in terms of a general purpose and specific purpose:

General Purpose	To inform
Specific Purpose	To inform my audience about the danger of embedded journalism by focusing on the death of British reporter Rupert Hamer
General Purpose	To persuade

Specific Purpose	To persuade a group of journalism students to avoid jobs as embedded journalists by using the death of British reporter Rupert Hamer as an example of what can happen

For the purpose of this example, we used the same general topic area, but demonstrated how you could easily turn the topic into either an informative speech or a persuasive speech. In the first example, the speaker is going to talk about the danger embedded journalists face. In this case, the speaker isn't attempting to alter people's ideas about embedded journalists, just make them more aware of the dangers. In the second case, the specific purpose is to persuade a group of journalism students (the audience) to avoid jobs as embedded journalists.

Your Specific Statement of Purpose

To form a clear and succinct statement of the specific purpose of your speech, start by naming your general purpose (to inform, to persuade, or to entertain). Follow this by a capsule description of your audience (my peers in class, a group of kindergarten teachers, etc.). Then complete your statement of purpose with a prepositional phrase (a phrase using "to," "about," "by," or another preposition) that summarizes your topic. As an example, "My specific purpose is to persuade the students in my residence hall to protest the proposed housing cost increase" is a specific statement of purpose, while "My speech will be about why we should protest the proposed housing cost increase" is not.

Specific purposes should be statements, not questions. If you find yourself starting to phrase your specific purpose as a question, ask yourself how you can reword it as a statement. Table 1 "My Specific Purpose Is…" provides several more examples of good specific purpose statements.

Table 1. My Specific Purpose Is…

General Purpose	Audience	Topic
To inform	my audience	**about** the usefulness of scrapbooking to save a family's memories.
To persuade	a group of kindergarten teachers	**to** adopt a new disciplinary method for their classrooms.
To entertain	a group of executives	**by** describing the lighter side of life in "cubicle-ville."
To inform	community members	**about** the newly proposed swimming pool plans that have been adopted.
To persuade	my peers in class	**to** vote for me for class president.
To entertain	the guests attending my mother's birthday party	**by** telling a humorous story followed by a toast.

Basic Tips for Creating Specific Purposes

Now that we've examined what specific purposes are, we are going to focus on a series of tips to help you write specific purposes that are appropriate for a range of speeches.

Audience, Audience, Audience

First and foremost, you always need to think about your intended audience when choosing your specific purpose. In the previous section, we talked about a speech where a speaker is attempting to persuade a group of journalism students to not take jobs as embedded journalists. Would the same speech be successful, or even appropriate, if given in your public speaking class? Probably not. As a speaker, you may think your topic is great, but you always need to make sure you think about your audience when selecting your specific purpose. For this reason, when writing your specific purpose, start off your sentence by including the words "my audience" or actually listing the name of your audience: a group of journalism students, the people in my congregation, my peers in class, and so on. When you place your audience first, you're a lot more likely to have a successful speech.

Matching the Rhetorical Situation

After your audience, the second most important consideration about your specific purpose pertains to the rhetorical situation of your speech. The rhetorical situation is the set of circumstances surrounding your speech (e.g., speaker, audience, text, and context). When thinking about your specific purpose, you want to ensure that all these components go together. You want to make sure that you are the appropriate speaker for a topic, the topic is appropriate for your audience, the text of your speech is appropriate, and the speech is appropriate for the context. For example, speeches that you give in a classroom may not be appropriate in a religious context and vice versa.

Make It Clear

The specific purpose statement for any speech should be direct and not too broad, general, or vague. Consider the lack of clarity in the following specific purpose: "To persuade the students in my class to drink more." Obviously, we have no idea what the speaker wants the audience to drink: water, milk, orange juice? Alcoholic beverages? Furthermore, we have no way to quantify or make sense of the word "more." "More" assumes that the students are already drinking a certain amount, and the speaker wants them to increase their intake. If you want to persuade your listeners to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day, you need to say so clearly in your specific purpose.

Another way in which purpose statements are sometimes unclear comes from the use of colloquial language. While we often use colloquialisms in everyday life, they are often understood only by a limited number of people. It may sound like fun to have a specific purpose like, "To persuade my audience to get jiggy," but if you state this as your purpose, many people probably won't know what you're talking about at all.

Don't Double Up

You cannot hope to solve the entire world's problems in one speech, so don't even try. At the same time, you also want to make sure that you stick to one specific purpose. Chances are it will be challenging enough to inform your audience about one topic or persuade them to change one behavior or opinion. Don't put extra stress on yourself by adding topics. If you find yourself using the word "and" in your specific topic statement, you're probably doubling up on topics.

Can I Really Do This in Five to Seven Minutes?

When choosing your specific purpose, it's important to determine whether it can be realistically covered in the amount of time you have. Time limits are among the most common constraints for students in a public speaking course. Usually speeches early in the term have shorter time limits (three to five minutes), and speeches later in the term have longer time limits (five to eight minutes). While eight minutes may sound like an eternity to be standing up in front of the class, it's actually a very short period of time in which to cover a topic. To determine whether you think you can accomplish your speech's purpose in the time slot, ask yourself how long it would take to make you an informed person on your chosen topic or to persuade you to change your behavior or attitudes.

If you cannot reasonably see yourself becoming informed or persuaded during the allotted amount of time, chances are you aren't going to inform or persuade your audience either. The solution, of course, is to make your topic narrower so that you can fully cover a limited aspect of it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Moving from a general to specific purpose requires you to identify the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* of your speech.
- State your specific purpose in a sentence that includes the general purpose, a description of the intended audience, and a prepositional phrase summarizing the topic.
- When creating a specific purpose for your speech, first, consider your audience. Second, consider the rhetorical situation. Make sure your specific purpose statement uses clear language, and that it does not try to cover more than one topic.
- Make sure you can realistically accomplish your specific purpose within the allotted time.

EXERCISES

1. You've been asked to give a series of speeches on the importance of health care in poverty-stricken countries. One audience will consist of business men and women, one audience will consist of religious leaders, and another audience will consist of high school students. How would you need to adjust your speech's purpose for each of these different audiences? How do these different audiences alter the rhetorical situation?
2. For the following list of topics, think about how you could take the same topic and adjust it for each of the different general purposes (inform, persuade, and entertain). Write out the specific purpose for each of your new speech topics. Here are the three general topic areas to work with: the First Amendment to the US Constitution, iPods, and literacy in the twenty-first century.

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH STRATEGY

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between research time and speech preparation time.
- Understand how to establish research needs before beginning research.
- Explain the difference between academic and nonacademic sources.
- Identify appropriate nonacademic sources (e.g., books, special-interest periodicals, newspapers and blogs, and websites).
- Identify appropriate academic sources (e.g., scholarly books, scholarly articles, computerized databases, and scholarly information on the web).
- Evaluate George's (2008) six questions to analyze sources.

In the previous section we discussed what research was and the difference between primary and secondary research. In this section, we are going to explore how to develop a research strategy. Think of a research strategy as your personal map. The end destination is the actual speech, and along the way, there are various steps you need to complete to reach your destination: the speech. From the day you receive your speech assignment, the more clearly you map out the steps you need to take leading up to the date when you will give the speech, the easier your speech development process will be. In the rest of this section, we are going to discuss time management, determining your research needs, finding your sources, and evaluating your sources.

Allotting Time

First and foremost, when starting a new project, no matter how big or small, it is important to seriously consider how much time that project is going to take. To help us discuss the issue of time with regard to preparing your speech, we're going to examine what the Project Management Institute refers to as the project life cycle, or "the phases that connect the beginning of a project to its end." (((Note: Project Management Institute. (2004). *A guide to the project management body of knowledge: PMBOK® guide* (3rd ed.). Newton Square, PA: Author, p. 19.))) Often in a public speaking class, the time you have is fairly concrete. You may have two or three weeks between speeches in a semester course or one to two weeks in a quarter course. In either case, from the moment your instructor gives you the assigned speech, the proverbial clock is ticking. With each passing day, you are losing precious time in your speech preparation process. Now, we realize that as a college student you probably have many things vying for your time in life: school, family, jobs, friends, or dating partners. For this reason, you need to really think through how much time it's going to take you to complete your preparation in terms of both research and speech preparation.

Research Time

The first step that takes a good chunk of your time is researching your speech. Whether you are conducting primary research or relying on secondary research sources, you're going to be spending a significant amount of time researching.

As Howard and Taggart point out in their book *Research Matters*, research is not just a one-and-done task. (((Note: Howard, R. M., & Taggart, A. R. (2010). *Research matters*. New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 102–103.))) As you develop your speech, you may realize that you want to address a question or issue that didn't occur to you during your first round of research, or that you're missing a key piece of information to support one of your points. For these reasons, it's always wise to allow extra time for targeted research later in your schedule.

You also need to take into account the possibility of meeting with a research librarian. Although research librarians have many useful tips and tricks, they have schedules just like anyone else. If you know you are going to need to speak with a librarian, try to set up an appointment ahead of time for the date when you think you'll have your questions organized, and be ready to meet.

A good rule of thumb is to devote no more than one-third of your speech preparation time to research (e.g., if you have three weeks before your speech date, your research should be done by the end of the first week). If you are not careful, you could easily end up spending all your time on research and waiting until the last minute to actually prepare your speech, which is highly inadvisable.

Speech Preparation Time

The second task in speech preparation is to sit down and actually develop your speech. During this time period, you will use the information you collected during your research to fully flesh out your ideas into a complete speech. You may be making arguments using the research or creating visual aids. Whatever you need to complete during this time period, you need to give yourself ample time to actually prepare your speech. One common rule of thumb is one day of speech preparation per one minute of actual speaking time.

By allowing yourself enough time to prepare your speech, you're also buffering yourself against a variety of things that can go wrong both in life and with your speech. Let's face it, life happens. Often events completely outside our control happen, and these events could negatively impact our ability to prepare a good speech. When you give yourself a little time buffer, you're already insulated from the possible negative effects on your speech if something goes wrong.

The last part of speech preparation is practice. Although some try to say that practice makes perfect, we realize that perfection is never realistic because no one is perfect. We prefer this mantra: "Practice makes permanent."

And by "practice," we mean actual rehearsals in which you deliver your speech out loud. Speakers who only script out their speeches or only think through them often forget their thoughts when they stand in front of an audience. Research has shown that when individuals practice, their speech performance in front of an audience is more closely aligned with their practice than people who just think about their speeches. In essence, you need to allow yourself to become comfortable not only with the text of the speech but also with the nonverbal delivery of the speech, so giving yourself plenty of speech preparation time also gives you more practice time. We will discuss speech development and practice further in other chapters.

Determining Your Needs

When starting your research, you want to start by asking yourself what you think you need. Obviously, you'll need to have a good idea about what your topic is before just randomly looking at information in a library or online. Your instructor may provide some very specific guidance for the type of information he or she wants to see in your speech, so that's a good place to start determining your basic needs.

Once you have a general idea of your basic needs, you can start to ask yourself the following series of simple questions:

1. What do I, personally, know about my topic?
2. Do I have any clear gaps in my knowledge of my topic?
3. Do I need to conduct primary research for my speech?
4. What type of secondary research do I need?
    1. Do I need research related to facts?
    2. Do I need research related to theories?
    3. Do I need research related to applications?

The clearer you are about the type of research you need at the onset of the research process, the easier it will be to locate specific information.

Finding Resources

Once you have a general idea about the basic needs you have for your research, it's time to start tracking down your secondary sources. Thankfully, we live in a world that is swimming with information. Back in the decades when the authors of this textbook first started researching, we all had to go to a library and search through a physical card catalog to find books. If you wanted to research a topic in magazine or journal articles, you had to look up key terms in a giant book, printed annually, known as an index of periodicals. Researchers could literally spend hours in the library and find just one or two sources that were applicable to their topic.

Today, on the other hand, information is quite literally at our fingertips. Not only is information generally more accessible, it is also considerably easier to access. In fact, we have the opposite problem from a couple of decades ago—we have too much information at our fingertips. In addition, we now have to be more skeptical about where that information is coming from. In this section we're going to discuss how to find information in both nonacademic and academic sources.

Nonacademic Information Sources

Nonacademic information sources are sometimes also called popular press information sources; their primary purpose is to be read by the general public. Most nonacademic information sources are written at a sixth- to eighth-grade reading level, so they are very accessible. Although the information often contained in these sources is often quite limited, the advantage of using nonacademic sources is that they appeal to a broad, general audience.

Books

The first source we have for finding secondary information is books. Now, the authors of your text are admitted bibliophiles—we love books. Fiction, nonfiction, it doesn't really matter, we just love books. And, thankfully, we live in a world where books abound and reading has never been easier. Unless your topic is very cutting-edge, chances are someone has written a book about your topic at some point in history.

Historically, the original purpose of libraries was to house manuscripts that were copied by hand and stored in library collections. After Gutenberg created the printing press, we had the ability to mass produce writing, and the handwritten manuscript gave way to the printed manuscript. In today's modern era, we are seeing another change where printed manuscript is now giving way, to some extent, to the electronic manuscript. Amazon.com's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook, Apple's iPad, and Sony's e-Ink-based readers are examples of the new hardware enabling people to take entire libraries of information with them wherever they go. We now can carry the amount of information that used to be housed in the greatest historic libraries in the palms of our hands. When you sit back and really think about it, that's pretty darn cool!

In today's world, there are three basic types of libraries you should be aware of: physical library, physical/electronic library, and e-online library. The physical library is a library that exists only in the physical world. Many small community or county library collections are available only if you physically go into the library and check out a book. We highly recommend doing this at some point. Libraries today generally model the US Library of Congress's card catalog system. As such, most library layouts are similar. This familiar layout makes it much easier to find information if you are using multiple libraries. Furthermore, because the Library of Congress catalogs information by type, if you find one book that is useful for you, it's very likely that surrounding books on the same shelf will also be useful. When people don't take the time to physically browse in a library, they often miss out on some great information.

The second type of library is the library that has both physical and electronic components. Most college and university libraries have both the physical stacks (where the books are located) and electronic databases containing e-books. The two largest e-book databases are ebrary and NetLibrary. Although these library collections are generally cost-prohibitive for an individual, more and more academic institutions are subscribing to them. Some libraries are also making portions of their collections available online for free: Harvard University's Digital Collections, New York Public Library's E-book Collection, The British Library's Online Gallery, and the US Library of Congress.

One of the greatest advantages to using libraries for finding books is that you can search not only their books, but often a wide network of other academic institutions' books as well. Furthermore, in today's world, we have one of the greatest online card catalogs ever created—and it wasn't created for libraries at all! Retail bookseller sites like Amazon.com can be a great source for finding books that may be applicable to your topic, and the best part is, you don't actually need to purchase the book if you use your library, because your library may actually own a copy of a book you find on a bookseller site. You can pick a topic and then search for that topic on a bookseller site. If you find a book that you think may be appropriate, plug that book's title into your school's electronic library catalog. If your library owns the book, you can go to the library and pick it up today.

If your library doesn't own it, do you still have an option other than buying the book? Yes: interlibrary loans. An interlibrary loan is a process where librarians are able to search other libraries to locate the book a researcher is trying to find. If another library has that book, then the library asks to borrow it for a short period of time. Depending on how easy a book is to find, your library could receive it in a couple of days or a couple of weeks. Keep in mind that interlibrary loans take time, so do not expect to get a book at the last minute. The more lead time you provide a librarian to find a book you are looking for, the greater the likelihood that the book will be sent through the mail to your library on time.

The final type of library is a relatively new one, the library that exists only online. With the influx of computer technology, we have started to create vast stores of digitized content from around the world. These online libraries contain full-text documents free of charge to everyone. Some online libraries we recommend are Project Gutenberg, Google Books, Read Print, Open Library, and Get Free e-Books. This is a short list of just a handful of the libraries that are now offering free e-content.

General-Interest Periodicals

The second category of information you may seek out includes general-interest periodicals. These are magazines and newsletters published on a fairly systematic basis. Some popular magazines in this category include *The New Yorker*, *People*, *Reader's Digest*, *Parade*, *Smithsonian*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. These magazines are considered "general interest" because most people in the United States could pick up a copy of these magazines and find them interesting and topical.

Special-Interest Periodicals

Special-interest periodicals are magazines and newsletters that are published for a narrower audience. In a 2005 article, *Business Wire* noted that in the United States there are over ten thousand different magazines published annually, but only two thousand of those magazines have significant circulation. Total number of magazines published in the US is greater than 10,000 but only about 2,000 have significant circulation. (((Note: (2005, September 21). *Business Wire*. Retrieved from http://findarticles.com.))) Some more widely known special-interest periodicals are *Sports Illustrated*, *Bloomberg's Business Week*, *Gentleman's Quarterly*, *Vogue*, *Popular Science*, and *House and Garden*. But for every major magazine, there are a great many other lesser-known magazines like *American Coin Op Magazine*, *Varmint Hunter*, *Shark Diver Magazine*, *Pet Product News International*, *Water Garden News*, to name just a few.

Newspapers and Blogs

Another major source of nonacademic information is newspapers and blogs. Thankfully, we live in a society that has a free press. We've opted to include both newspapers and blogs in this category. A few blogs (e.g., *The Huffington Post*, *Talkingpoints Memo*, *News Max*, *The Daily Beast*, *Salon*) function similarly to traditional newspapers. Furthermore, in the past few years we've lost many traditional newspapers around the United States; cities that used to have four or five daily papers may now only have one or two.

According to newspapers.com, the top ten newspapers in the United States are *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Post*, *Long Island Newsday*, and the *Houston Chronicle*. Most colleges and universities subscribe to a number of these newspapers in paper form or have access to them electronically. Furthermore, LexisNexis, a database many colleges and universities subscribe to, has access to full text newspaper articles from these newspapers and many more around the world.

In addition to traditional newspapers, blogs are becoming a mainstay of information in today's society. In fact, since the dawn of the twenty-first century many major news stories have been broken by professional bloggers rather than traditional newspaper reporters. (((Note: Ochman, B. L. (2007, June 29). The top 10 news stories broken by bloggers. *TechNewsWorld.* [Web log post]. Retrieved July 14, 2011, from http://www.mpdailyfix.com/technewsworld-the-top-10-news-stories-broken-by-bloggers.))) Although anyone can create a blog, there are many reputable blog sites that are run by professional journalists. As such, blogs can be a great source of information. However, as with all information on the Internet, you often have to wade through a lot of junk to find useful, accurate information.

We do not personally endorse any blogs, but according to Technorati.com, the top ten most commonly read blogs in the world are as follows:

1. *The Huffington Post*
2. *Gizmodo*
3. *TechCrunch*
4. *The Corner*
5. *Mashable!*
6. *Engadget*
7. *Boing Boing*
8. *Gawker*
9. *The Daily Beast*
10. *TMZ*

Encyclopedias

Another type of source that you may encounter is the encyclopedia. Encyclopedias are information sources that provide short, very general information about a topic. Encyclopedias are available in both print and electronic formats, and their content can range from eclectic and general (e.g., *Encyclopædia Britannica*) to the very specific (e.g., *Encyclopedia of 20th Century Architecture*, or *Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena*). It is important to keep in mind that encyclopedias are designed to give only brief, fairly superficial summaries of a topic area. Thus they may be useful for finding out what something is if it is referenced in another source, but they are generally not a useful source for your actual speech. In fact, many instructors do not allow students to use encyclopedias as sources for their speeches for this very reason.

One of the most popular online encyclopedic sources is Wikipedia. Like other encyclopedias, it can be useful for finding out basic information (e.g., what baseball teams did Catfish Hunter play for?) but will not give you the depth of information you need for a speech. Also keep in mind that Wikipedia, unlike the general and specialized encyclopedias available through your library, can be edited by anyone and therefore often contains content errors and biased information. If you are a fan of *The Colbert Report*, you probably know that host Stephen Colbert has, on several occasions, asked viewers to change Wikipedia content to reflect his views of the world. This is just one example of why one should always be careful of information on the web, but this advice is even more important when considering group-edited sites such as Wikipedia.

Websites

Websites are the last major source of nonacademic information. In the twenty-first century we live in a world where there is a considerable amount of information readily available at our fingertips. Unfortunately, you can spend hours and hours searching for information and never quite find what you're looking for if you don't devise an Internet search strategy. First, you need to select a good search engine to help you find appropriate information. Table 1 "Search Engines" contains a list of common search engines and the types of information they are useful for finding.

Table 1. Search Engines

http://www.google.com	General search engines
http://www.yahoo.com	
http://www.bing.com	
http://www.ask.com	
http://www.about.com	
http://www.usa.gov	Searches US government websites
http://www.hon.ch/MedHunt	Searches only trustworthy medical websites
http://medlineplus.gov	Largest search engine for medical related research
http://www.bizrate.com	Comparison shopping search engine
http://www.ameristat.org	Provides statistics about the US population
http://artcyclopedia.com	Searches for art-related information
http://www.flipdog.com	Searches for job postings across job search websites

Academic Information Sources

After nonacademic sources, the second major source for finding information comes from academics. The main difference between academic or scholarly information and the information you get from the popular press is oversight. In the nonacademic world, the primary gatekeeper of information is the editor, who may or may not be a content expert. In academia, we have established a way to perform a series of checks to ensure that the information is accurate and follows agreed-upon academic standards. For example, this book, or portions of this book, were read by dozens of academics who provided feedback. Having this extra step in the writing process is time consuming, but it provides an extra level of confidence in the relevance and accuracy of the information. In this section, we will discuss scholarly books and articles, computerized databases, and finding scholarly information on the web.

Scholarly Books

College and university libraries are filled with books written by academics. According to the Text and Academic Authors Association there are two types of scholarly books: textbooks and academic books. Textbooks are books that are written about a segment of content within a field of academic study and are written for undergraduate or graduate student audiences. These books tend to be very specifically focused. Take this book, for instance. We are not trying to introduce you to the entire world of human communication, just one small aspect of it: public speaking. Textbooks tend to be written at a fairly easy reading level and are designed to transfer information in a manner that mirrors classroom teaching to some extent. Also, textbooks are secondary sources of information. They are designed to survey the research available in a particular field rather than to present new research.

Academic books are books that are primarily written for other academics for informational and research purposes. Generally speaking, when instructors ask for you to find scholarly books, they are referring to academic books. Thankfully, there are hundreds of thousands of academic books published on almost every topic you can imagine. In the field of communication, there are a handful of major publishers who publish academic books: SAGE, Routledge, Jossey-Bass, Pfeiffer, the American Psychological Association, and the National Communication Association, among others. In addition to the major publishers who publish academic books, there are also many university presses who publish academic books: SUNY Press, Oxford University Press, University of South Carolina Press, Baylor University Press, University of Illinois Press, and the University of Alabama Press are just a few of them.

Scholarly Articles

Because most academic writing comes in the form of scholarly articles or journal articles, that is the best place for finding academic research on a given topic. Every academic subfield has its own journals, so you should never have a problem finding the best and most recent research on a topic. However, scholarly articles are written for a scholarly audience, so reading scholarly articles takes more time than if you were to read a magazine article in the popular press. It's also helpful to realize that there may be parts of the article you simply do not have the background knowledge to understand, and there is nothing wrong with that. Many research studies are conducted by quantitative researchers who rely on statistics to examine phenomena. Unless you have training in understanding the statistics, it is difficult to interpret the statistical information that appears in these articles. Instead, focus on the beginning part of the article where the author(s) will discuss previous research (secondary research), and then focus at the end of the article, where the author(s) explain what was found in their research (primary research).

Computerized Databases

Finding academic research is easier today than it ever has been in the past because of large computer databases containing research. Here's how these databases work. A database company signs contracts with publishers to gain the right to store the publishers' content electronically. The database companies then create thematic databases containing publications related to general areas of knowledge (business, communication, psychology, medicine, etc.). The database companies then sell subscriptions to these databases to libraries.

The largest of these database companies is a group called EBSCO Publishing, which runs both EBSCO Host (an e-journal provider) and NetLibrary (a large e-book library). Some of the more popular databases that EBSCO provides to colleges and universities are: Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Communication and Mass Media Complete, Education Research Complete, Humanities International Complete, Philosopher's Index, Political Science Complete, PsycArticles, and Vocational and Career Collection. Academic Search Complete is the broadest of all the databases and casts a fairly wide net across numerous fields. Information that you find using databases can contain both nonacademic and academic information, so EBSCO Host has built in a number of filtering options to help you limit the types of information available.

We strongly recommend checking out your library's website to see what databases they have available and if they have any online tutorials for finding sources using the databases to which your library subscribes.

Scholarly Information on the Web

In addition to the subscription databases that exist on the web, there are also a number of great sources for scholarly information on the web. As mentioned earlier, however, finding scholarly information on the web poses a problem because anyone can post information on the web. Fortunately, there are a number of great websites that attempt to help filter this information for us.

Table 2. Scholarly Information on the Web

Website	Type of Information
http://www.doaj.org	The Directory of Open Access Journals is an online database of all freely available academic journals online.
http://scholar.google.com	Google Scholar attempts to filter out nonacademic information. Unfortunately, it tends to return a large number of for-pay site results.
http://www.cios.org	Communication Institute for Online Scholarship is a clearinghouse for online communication scholarship. This site contains full-text journals and books.
http://xxx.lanl.gov	This is an open access site devoted to making physical science research accessible.
http://www.biomedcentral.com	BioMed Central provides open-access medical research.
http://www.osti.gov/eprints	The E-print Network provides access to a range of scholarly research that interests people working for the Department of Energy.
http://www.freemedicaljournals.com	This site provides the public with free access to medical journals.
http://highwire.stanford.edu	This is the link to Stanford University's free, full-text science archives.
http://www.plosbiology.org	This is the Public Library of Science's journal for biology.
http://www.scirus.com	Scrius is a search engine designed to allow researchers to search for journal content, scientists' homepages, courseware, and preprint material.
http://www.ipl.org	The Internet Public Library provides subject guides, reference works, and a number of databases.
http://vlib.org	The WWW Virtual Library provides annotated lists of websites compiled by scholars in specific areas.

Tips for Finding Information Sources

Now that we've given you plenty of different places to start looking for research, we need to help you sort through the research. In this section, we're going to provide a series of tips that should make this process easier and help you find appropriate information quickly. And here is our first tip: We cannot recommend Mary George's book *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know* more highly. Honestly, we wish this book had been around when we were just learning how to research.

Create a Research Log

Nothing is more disheartening than when you find yourself at 1:00 a.m. asking, "Haven't I already read this?" We've all learned the tough lessons of research, and this is one that keeps coming back to bite us in the backside if we're not careful. According to a very useful book called *The Elements of Library Research* by M. W. George, a research log is a "step-by-step account of the process of identifying, obtaining, and evaluating sources for a specific project, similar to a lab note-book in an experimental setting." (((Note: George, M. W. (2008). *The elements of library research: What every student needs to know*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 183.))) In essence, George believes that keeping a log of what you've done is very helpful because it can help you keep track of what you've read thus far. You can use a good old-fashioned notebook, or if you carry around your laptop or netbook with you, you can always keep it digitally. While there are expensive programs like Microsoft Office OneNote that can be used for note keeping, there are also a number of free tools that could be adapted as well. The websites in Table 3 "Note-Taking Help" will help you find templates and tools for electronic note taking.

Table 3. Note-Taking Help

Website	Type of Information
Templates	
University of Lethbridge	Word Document template created by the University of Lethbridge
University of Massachusetts at Amherst	RTF file template created by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst
Tarleton State University	Word Document template created by Tarleton State University
University of Vermont	Word Document template created by the University of Vermont
University of Nevada	Word Document template created by the University of Nevada
Software Packages	
Microsoft Office OneNote	Microsoft Office OneNote comes with MS Office Professional or is free to try for thirty days. It is also available for forty-five dollars for students through an academic discount program. There is a free app version available for the iPhone or iPad.
Evernote	Evernote has both a free version and a subscription version and is similar to MS OneNote. You can also get this one for your smart phone, iPad, or home computer (PC or MAC) and easily sync files between all of your electronic devices.
Note-taking system	This is an online, web-based note-taking system that has no cost.
Note-taking software	This is good note-taking software, but it currently costs $34.95 for a single-user subscription.
The Brain	If you're more of a visual organizer, The Brain offers a free program for visually organizing information. You can also purchase more expensive packages as necessary.

Start with Background Information

It's not unusual for students to try to jump right into the meat of a topic, only to find out that there is a lot of technical language they just don't understand. For this reason, you may want to start your research with sources written for the general public. Generally, these lower-level sources are great for background information on a topic and are helpful when trying to learn the basic vocabulary of a subject area.

Search Your Library's Computers

Once you've started getting a general grasp of the broad content area you want to investigate, it's time to sit down and see what your school's library has to offer. If you do not have much experience in using your library's website, see if the website contains an online tutorial. Most schools offer online tutorials to show students the resources that students can access. If your school doesn't have an online tutorial, you may want to call your library and schedule an appointment with a research librarian to learn how to use the school's computers. Also, if you tell your librarian that you want to learn how to use the library, he or she may be able to direct you to online resources that you may have missed.

Try to search as many different databases as possible. Look for relevant books, e-books, newspaper articles, magazine articles, journal articles, and media files. Modern college and university libraries have a ton of sources, and one search may not find everything you are looking for on the first pass. Furthermore, don't forget to think about synonyms for topics. The more synonyms you can generate for your topic, the better you'll be at finding information.

Learn to Skim

If you sit down and try to completely read every article or book you find, it will take you a very long time to get through all the information. Start by reading the introductory paragraphs. Generally, the first few paragraphs will give you a good idea about the overall topic. If you're reading a research article, start by reading the abstract. If the first few paragraphs or abstract don't sound like they're applicable, there's a good chance the source won't be useful for you. Second, look for highlighted, italicized, or bulleted information. Generally, authors use highlighting, italics, and bullets to separate information to make it jump out for readers. Third, look for tables, charts, graphs, and figures. All these forms are separated from the text to make the information more easily understandable for a reader, so seeing if the content is relevant is a way to see if it helps you. Fourth, look at headings and subheadings. Headings and subheadings show you how an author has grouped information into meaningful segments. If you read the headings and subheadings and nothing jumps out as relevant, that's another indication that there may not be anything useful in that source. Lastly, take good notes while you're skimming. One way to take good notes is to attach a sticky note to each source. If you find relevant information, write that information on the sticky note along with the page number. If you don't find useful information in a source, just write "nothing" on the sticky note and move on to the next source. This way when you need to sort through your information, you'll be able to quickly see what information was useful and locate the information. Other people prefer to create a series of note cards to help them organize their information. Whatever works best for you is what you should use.

Read Bibliographies/Reference Pages

After you've finished reading useful sources, see who those sources cited on their bibliographies or reference pages. We call this method backtracking. Often the sources cited by others can lead us to even better sources than the ones we found initially.

Ask for Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help. As we said earlier in this chapter, reference librarians are your friends. They won't do your work for you, but they are more than willing to help if you ask.

Evaluating Resources

The final step in research occurs once you've found resources relevant to your topic: evaluating the quality of those resources. Below is a list of six questions to ask yourself about the sources you've collected; these are drawn from the book *The Elements of Library Research* by M. W. George. (((Note: George, M. W. (2008). *The elements of library research: What every student needs to know*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.)))

What Is the Date of Publication?

The first question you need to ask yourself is the date of the source's publication. Although there may be classic studies that you want to cite in your speech, generally, the more recent the information, the better your presentation will be. As an example, if you want to talk about the current state of women's education in the United States, relying on information from the 1950s that debated whether "coeds" should attend class along with male students is clearly not appropriate. Instead you'd want to use information published within the past five to ten years.

Who Is the Author?

The next question you want to ask yourself is about the author. Who is the author? What are her or his credentials? Does he or she work for a corporation, college, or university? Is a political or commercial agenda apparent in the writing? The more information we can learn about an author, the better our understanding and treatment of that author's work will be. Furthermore, if we know that an author is clearly biased in a specific manner, ethically we must tell our audience members. If we pretend an author is unbiased when we know better, we are essentially lying to our audience.

Who Is the Publisher?

In addition to knowing who the author is, we also want to know who the publisher is. While there are many mainstream publishers and academic press publishers, there are also many fringe publishers. For example, maybe you're reading a research report published by the Cato Institute. While the Cato Institute may sound like a regular publisher, it is actually a libertarian think tank. As such, you can be sure that the information in its publications will have a specific political bias. While the person writing the research report may be an upstanding author with numerous credits, the Cato Institute only publishes reports that adhere to its political philosophy. Generally, a cursory examination of a publisher's website is a good indication of the specific political bias. Most websites will have an "About" section or an "FAQ" section that will explain who the publisher is.

Is It Academic or Nonacademic?

The next question you want to ask yourself is whether the information comes from an academic or a nonacademic source. Because of the enhanced scrutiny academic sources go through, we argue that you can generally rely more on the information contained in academic sources than nonacademic sources. One very notorious example of the difference between academic versus nonacademic information can be seen in the problem of popular-culture author John Gray, author of *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*. Gray, who received a PhD via a correspondence program from Columbia Pacific University in 1982, has written numerous books on the topic of men and women. Unfortunately, the academic research on the subject of sex and gender differences is often very much at odds with Gray's writing. For a great critique of Gray's writings, check out Julia Wood's article in the *Southern Communication Journal*. (((Note: Wood, J. T. (2002). A critical response to John Gray's Mars and Venus portrayals of men and women. *Southern Communication Journal, 67*, 201–210.))) Ultimately, we strongly believe that using academic publications is always in your best interest because they generally contain the most reliable information.

What Is the Quality of the Bibliography/Reference Page?

Another great indicator of a well-thought-out and researched source is the quality of its bibliography or reference page. If you look at a source's bibliography or reference page and it has only a couple of citations, then you can assume that either the information was not properly cited or it was largely made up by someone. Even popular-press books can contain great bibliographies and reference pages, so checking them out is a great way to see if an author has done her or his homework prior to writing a text. As noted above, it is also an excellent way to find additional resources on a topic.

Do People Cite the Work?

The last question to ask about a source is, "Are other people actively citing the work?" One way to find out whether a given source is widely accepted is to see if numerous people are citing it. If you find an article that has been cited by many other authors, then clearly the work has been viewed as credible and useful. If you're doing research and you keep running across the same source over and over again, that is an indication that it's an important study that you should probably take a look at. Many colleges and universities also subscribe to Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), or the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), which are run through Institute for Scientific Information's Web of Knowledge database service. All these databases help you find out where information has been cited by other researchers.

Key Takeaways

- In conducting research for a speech, commit adequate time and plan your schedule. Consider both the research time, or time spent gathering information, and the preparation time needed to organize and practice your speech.
- Get a general idea of your research needs even before going to the library so that you can take the most advantage of the library's resources and librarians' help.
- We live in a world dominated by information, but some information is filtered and some is not. It's important to know the difference between academic and nonacademic sources.
- Nonacademic sources are a good place to gain general knowledge of a topic; these include books, general or special-interest periodicals, newspapers and blogs, and websites.
- Academic sources offer more specialized, higher-level information; they include books, articles, computer databases, and web resources.
- A fundamental responsibility is to evaluate the sources you choose to use in order to ensure that you are presenting accurate and up-to-date information in your speech.

Exercises

1. Find an academic and a nonacademic source about the same topic. How is the writing style different? How useful is the content in each source? Which source has more authority? Why?
2. Download one of the freeware software packages for creating a research log for one of your speech preparations. Do you like using the software? Is the software cumbersome or helpful? Would you use the software for organizing other speeches or other research projects? Why?
3. Find a politically oriented website and analyze the material using George's six questions for evaluating sources.George, M. W. (2008). *The elements of library research: What every student needs to know*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. What does your analysis say about the material on the website?

CITING SOURCES

Learning Objectives

- Understand what style is.
- Know which academic disciplines you are more likely to use, American Psychological Association (APA) versus Modern Language Association (MLA) style.
- Cite sources using the sixth edition of the American Psychological Association's Style Manual.
- Cite sources using the seventh edition of the Modern Language Association's Style Manual.
- Explain the steps for citing sources within a speech.
- Differentiate between direct quotations and paraphrases of information within a speech.
- Understand how to use sources ethically in a speech.
- Explain twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism.

By this point you're probably exhausted after looking at countless sources, but there's still a lot of work that needs to be done. Most public speaking teachers will require you to turn in either a bibliography or a reference page with your speeches. In this section, we're going to explore how to properly cite your sources for a Modern Language Association (MLA) list of works cited or an American Psychological Association (APA) reference list. We're also going to discuss plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Why Citing Is Important

Citing is important because it enables readers to see where you found information cited within a speech, article, or book. Furthermore, not citing information properly is considered plagiarism, so ethically we want to make sure that we give credit to the authors we use in a speech. While there are numerous citation styles to choose from, the two most common style choices for public speaking are APA and MLA.

APA versus MLA Source Citations

Style refers to those components or features of a literary composition or oral presentation that have to do with the form of expression rather than the content expressed (e.g., language, punctuation, parenthetical citations, and endnotes). The APA and the MLA have created the two most commonly used style guides in academia today. Generally speaking, scholars in the various social science fields (e.g., psychology, human communication, business) are more likely to use APA style, and scholars in the various humanities fields (e.g., English, philosophy, rhetoric) are more likely to use MLA style. The two styles are quite different from each other, so learning them does take time.

APA Citations

The first common reference style your teacher may ask for is APA. As of July 2009, the American Psychological Association published the sixth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (((Note: American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. See also American Psychological Association. (2010). *Concise rules of APA Style: The official pocket style guide from the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.))) The sixth edition provides considerable guidance on working with and citing Internet sources. Table 1 "APA Sixth Edition Citations" provides a list of common citation examples that you may need for your speech.

Table 1. APA Sixth Edition Citations

Research Article in a Journal—One Author	Harmon, M. D. (2006). Affluenza: A world values test. *The International Communication Gazette, 68*, 119–130. doi: 10.1177/1748048506062228
Research Article in a Journal—Two to Five Authors	Hoffner, C., & Levine, K. J. (2005). Enjoyment of mediated fright and violence: A meta-analysis. *Media Psychology, 7*, 207–237. doi: 10.1207/S1532785XMEP0702_5
Book	Eysenck, H. J. (1982). *Personality, genetics, and behavior: Selected papers.* New York, NY: Praeger Publishers.
Book with 6 or More Authors	Huston, A. C., Donnerstein, E., Fairchild, H., Feshbach, N. D., Katz, P. A., Murray, J. P.,…Zuckerman, D. (1992). *Big world, small screen: The role of television in American society*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
Chapter in an Edited Book	Tamobrini, R. (1991). Responding to horror: Determinants of exposure and appeal. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Responding to the screen: Reception and reaction processes* (pp. 305–329). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Newspaper Article	Thomason, D. (2010, March 31). Dry weather leads to burn ban. *The Sentinel Record*, p. A1.
Magazine Article	Finney, J. (2010, March–April). The new "new deal": How to communicate a changed employee value proposition to a skeptical audience—and realign employees within the organization. *Communication World, 27* (2), 27–30.
Preprint Version of an Article	Laudel, G., & Gläser, J. (in press). Tensions between evaluations and communication practices. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management.* Retrieved from http://www.laudel.info/pdf/Journal%20articles/06%20Tensions.pdf
Blog	Wrench, J. S. (2009, June 3). AMA's managerial competency model [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://workplacelearning.info/blog/?p=182
Wikipedia	Organizational Communication. (2009, July 11). [Wiki entry]. Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_communication
Vlog	Wrench, J. S. (2009, May 15). Instructional communication [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.learningjournal.com/Learning-Journal-Videos/instructional-communication.htm
Discussion Board	Wrench, J. S. (2009, May 21). NCA's i-tunes project [Online forum comment]. Retrieved from http://www.linkedin.com/groupAnswers?viewQuestionAndAnswers
E-mail List	McAllister, M. (2009, June 19). New listserv: Critical approaches to ads/consumer culture & media studies [Electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from http://lists.psu.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0906&L=CRTNET&T=0&F=&S=&P=20514
Podcast	Wrench, J. S. (Producer). (2009, July 9). *Workplace bullying* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from http://www.communicast.info
Electronic-Only Book	Richmond, V. P., Wrench, J. S., & Gorham, J. (2009). *Communication, affect, and learning in the classroom* (3rd ed.). Retrieved from http://www.jasonswrench.com/affect
Electronic-Only Journal Article	Molyneaux, H., O'Donnell, S., Gibson, K., & Singer, J. (2008). Exploring the gender divide on YouTube: An analysis of the creation and reception of vlogs. *American Communication Journal, 10*(1). Retrieved from http://www.acjournal.org

Electronic Version of a Printed Book	Wood, A. F., & Smith, M. J. (2004). *Online communication: Linking technology, identity & culture* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books
Online Magazine	Levine, T. (2009, June). To catch a liar. *Communication Currents, 4*(3). Retrieved from http://www.communicationcurrents.com
Online Newspaper	Clifford, S. (2009, June 1). Online, "a reason to keep going." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com
Entry in an Online Reference Work	Viswanth, K. (2008). Health communication. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of communication*. Retrieved from http://www.communicationencyclopedia.com. doi: 10.1111/b.9781405131995.2008.x
Entry in an Online Reference Work, No Author	Communication. (n.d.). In *Random House dictionary* (9th ed.). Retrieved from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/communication
E-Reader Device	Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Davenport Sypher, B. (2009). *Destructive organizational communication: Processes, consequences, & constructive ways of organizing*. [Kindle version]. Retrieved from http://www.amazon.com

MLA Citations

The second common reference style your teacher may ask for is MLA. In March 2009, the Modern Language Association published the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.* (((Note: Modern Language Association. (2009). *MLA handbook for writers of research papers* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Modern Language Association.))) The seventh edition provides considerable guidance for citing online sources and new media such as graphic narratives. Table 2 "MLA Seventh Edition Citations" provides a list of common citations you may need for your speech.

Table 2. MLA Seventh Edition Citations

Research Article in a Journal—One Author	Harmon, Mark D. "Affluenza: A World Values Test." *The International Communication Gazette* 68 (2006): 119–130. Print.
Research Article in a Journal—Two to Four Authors	Hoffner, Cynthia A., and Kenneth J. Levine, "Enjoyment of Mediated Fright and Violence: A Meta-analysis." *Media Psychology* 7 (2005): 207–237. Print.
Book	Eysenck, Hans J. *Personality, Genetics, and Behavior: Selected Papers.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982. Print.
Book with Four or More Authors	Huston, Aletha C., et al., *Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society*. Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1992. Print.
Chapter in an Edited Book	Tamobrini, Ron. "Responding to Horror: Determinants of Exposure and Appeal." *Responding to the Screen: Reception and Reaction Processes.* Eds. Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillman. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1991. 305–329. Print.
Newspaper Article	Thomason, Dan. "Dry Weather Leads to Burn Ban." *The Sentinel Record* 31 Mar. 2010: A1. Print.

Magazine Article	Finney, John. "The New 'New Deal': How to Communicate a Changed Employee Value Proposition to a Skeptical Audience—And Realign Employees Within the Organization." *Communication World* Mar.–Apr. 2010: 27–30. Print.
Preprint Version of an Article	*Grit Laudel's* Website. 15 July 2009. Pre-print version of Laudel, Grit and Gläser, Joken. "Tensions Between Evaluations and Communication Practices." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management.*
Blog	Wrench, Jason S. " AMA's Managerial Competency Model." *Workplace Learning and Performance Network Blog*. workplacelearning.info/blog, 3 Jun. 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Wikipedia	"Organizational Communication." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Vlog	Wrench, Jason S. "Instructional Communication." *The Learning Journal Videos*. LearningJournal.com, 15 May 2009. Web. 1 Aug. 2009.
Discussion Board	Wrench, Jason S. "NCA's i-Tunes Project." *National Communication Association LinkedIn Group*. Web. 1 August 2009.
E-mail List	McAllister, Matt. "New Listerv: Critical Approaches to Ads/Consumer Culture & Media Studies." Online posting. 19 June 2009. CRTNet. Web. 1 August 2009. 〈mattmc@psu.edu〉
Podcast	"Workplace Bullying." Narr. Wrench, Jason S. and P. Lutgen-Sandvik. CommuniCast.info, 9 July 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Electronic-Only Book	Richmond, Virginia P., Jason S. Wrench, and Joan Gorham. *Communication, Affect, and Learning in the Classroom*. 3rd ed. http://www.jasonswrench.com/affect/. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Electronic-Only Journal Article	Molyneaux, Heather, Susan O'Donnell, Kerri Gibson, and Janice Singer. "Exploring the Gender Divide on YouTube: An Analysis of the Creation and Reception of Vlogs." *American Communication Journal* 10.1 (2008): n.pag. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Electronic Version of a Printed Book	Wood, Andrew F., and Matthew. J. Smith. *Online Communication: Linking Technology, Identity & Culture.* 2nd ed. 2005. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Online Magazine	Levine, Timothy. "To Catch a Liar." *Communication Currents*. N.p. June 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Online Newspaper	Clifford, Stephanie. "Online, 'A Reason to Keep Going.'" *The New York Times*. 1 Jun. 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Entry in an Online Reference Work	Viswanth, K. "Health Communication." *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*. 2008. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
Entry in an Online Reference Work, No Author	"Communication." *Random House Dictionary Online*. 9th ed. 2009. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.
E-Reader Device	Lutgen-Sandvik, Pamela, and Beverly Davenport Sypher. *Destructive Organizational Communication: Processes, Consequences, & Constructive Ways of Organizing*. New York: Routledge, 2009. Kindle.

Citing Sources in a Speech

Once you have decided what sources best help you explain important terms and ideas in your speech or help you build your arguments, it's time to place them into your speech. In this section, we're going to quickly talk about using your research effectively within your speeches. Citing sources within a speech is a three-step process: set up the citation, give the citation, and explain the citation.

First, you want to set up your audience for the citation. The setup is one or two sentences that are general statements that lead to the specific information you are going to discuss from your source. Here's an example: "Workplace bullying is becoming an increasing problem for US organizations." Notice that this statement doesn't provide a specific citation yet, but the statement introduces the basic topic.

Second, you want to deliver the source; whether it is a direct quotation or a paraphrase of information from a source doesn't matter at this point. A direct quotation is when you cite the actual words from a source with no changes. To paraphrase is to take a source's basic idea and condense it using your own words. The following is an example of both:

Direct Quotation	In a 2009 report titled *Bullying: Getting Away With It*, the Workplace Bullying Institute wrote, "Doing nothing to the bully (ensuring impunity) was the most common employer tactic (54%)."
Paraphrase	According to a 2009 study by the Workplace Bullying Institute titled *Bullying: Getting Away With It*, when employees reported bullying, 54 percent of employers did nothing at all.

You'll notice that in both of these cases, we started by citing the author of the study—in this case, the Workplace Bullying Institute. We then provided the title of the study. You could also provide the name of the article, book, podcast, movie, or other source. In the direct quotation example, we took information right from the report. In the second example, we summarized the same information. (((Note: Workplace Bullying Institute. (2009). Bullying: Getting away with it WBI Labor Day Study—September, 2009. Retrieved July 14, 2011, from http://www.workplacebullying.org/res/WBI2009-B-Survey.html)))

Let's look at another example of direct quotations and paraphrases, this time using a person, rather than an institution, as the author.

Direct Quotation	In her book *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, defines insight as something that "occurs at an unpredictable point in the research process and leads to the formulation of a thesis statement and argument. Also called an 'Aha' moment or focus."
Paraphrase	In her book *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*, Mary George, senior reference librarian at Princeton University's library, tells us that insight is likely to come unexpectedly during the research process; it will be an "aha!" moment when we suddenly have a clear vision of the point we want to make.

Notice that the same basic pattern for citing sources was followed in both cases.

The final step in correct source citation within a speech is the explanation. One of the biggest mistakes of novice public speakers (and research writers) is that they include a source citation and then do nothing with the citation at all. Instead, take the time to explain the quotation or paraphrase to put into the context of your speech. Do not let your audience draw their own conclusions about the quotation or paraphrase. Instead, help them make the connections you want them to make. Here are two examples using the examples above:

Bullying Example	Clearly, organizations need to be held accountable for investigating bullying allegations. If organizations will not voluntarily improve their handling of this problem, the legal system may be required to step in and enforce sanctions for bullying, much as it has done with sexual harassment.

Aha! Example	As many of us know, reaching that “aha!” moment does not always come quickly, but there are definitely some strategies one can take to help speed up this process.

Notice how in both of our explanations we took the source’s information and then added to the information to direct it for our specific purpose. In the case of the bullying citation, we then propose that businesses should either adopt workplace bullying guidelines or face legal intervention. In the case of the “aha!” example, we turn the quotation into a section on helping people find their thesis or topic. In both cases, we were able to use the information to further our speech.

Using Sources Ethically

The last section of this chapter is about using sources in an ethical manner. Whether you are using primary or secondary research, there are five basic ethical issues you need to consider.

Avoid Plagiarism

First, and foremost, if the idea isn’t yours, you need to cite where the information came from during your speech. Having the citation listed on a bibliography or reference page is only half of the correct citation. You must provide correct citations for all your sources within the speech as well. In a very helpful book called *Avoiding Plagiarism: A Student Guide to Writing Your Own Work*, Menager-Beeley and Paulos provide a list of twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism: (((Note: Menager-Beeley, R., & Paulos, L. (2009). *Understanding plagiarism: A student guide to writing your own work*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pp. 5–8.)))

1. *Do your own work, and use your own words.* One of the goals of a public speaking class is to develop skills that you’ll use in the world outside academia. When you are in the workplace and the “real world,” you’ll be expected to think for yourself, so you might as well start learning this skill now.
2. *Allow yourself enough time to research the assignment.* One of the most commonly cited excuses students give for plagiarism is that they didn’t have enough time to do the research. In this chapter, we’ve stressed the necessity of giving yourself plenty of time. The more complete your research strategy is from the very beginning, the more successful your research endeavors will be in the long run. Remember, not having adequate time to prepare is no excuse for plagiarism.
3. *Keep careful track of your sources.* A common mistake that people can make is that they forget where information came from when they start creating the speech itself. Chances are you’re going to look at dozens of sources when preparing your speech, and it is very easy to suddenly find yourself believing that a piece of information is “common knowledge” and not citing that information within a speech. When you keep track of your sources, you’re less likely to inadvertently lose sources and not cite them correctly.
4. *Take careful notes.* However you decide to keep track of the information you collect (old-fashioned pen and notebook or a computer software program), the more careful your note-taking is, the less likely you’ll find yourself inadvertently not citing information or citing the information incorrectly. It doesn’t matter what method you choose for taking research notes, but whatever you do, you need to be systematic to avoid plagiarizing.
5. *Assemble your thoughts, and make it clear who is speaking.* When creating your speech, you need to make sure that you clearly differentiate your voice in the speech from the voice of specific authors of the sources you quote. The easiest way to do this is to set up a direct quotation or a paraphrase, as we’ve described in the preceding sections. Remember, audience members cannot see where the quotation marks are located within your speech text, so you need to clearly articulate with words and vocal tone when you are using someone else’s ideas within your speech.
6. *If you use an idea, a quotation, paraphrase, or summary, then credit the source.* We can’t reiterate it enough: if it is not your idea, you need to tell your audience where the information came from. Giving credit is especially important when your speech includes a statistic, an original theory, or a fact that is not common knowledge.
7. *Learn how to cite sources correctly both in the body of your paper and in your List of Works Cited* (*Reference Page*). Most public speaking teachers will require that you turn in either a bibliography or reference page on the day you deliver a speech. Many students make the mistake of thinking that the bibliography or reference page is all they need to cite information, and then they don’t cite any of the material within the speech itself. A bibliography or reference page enables a reader or listener to find

those sources after the fact, but you must also correctly cite those sources within the speech itself; otherwise, you are plagiarizing.

8. *Quote accurately and sparingly.* A public speech should be based on factual information and references, but it shouldn't be a string of direct quotations strung together. Experts recommend that no more than 10 percent of a paper or speech be direct quotations. (((Note: Menager-Beeley, R., & Paulos, L. (2009). *Understanding plagiarism: A student guide to writing your own work*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.))) When selecting direct quotations, always ask yourself if the material could be paraphrased in a manner that would make it clearer for your audience. If the author wrote a sentence in a way that is just perfect, and you don't want to tamper with it, then by all means directly quote the sentence. But if you're just quoting because it's easier than putting the ideas into your own words, this is not a legitimate reason for including direct quotations.
9. *Paraphrase carefully.* Modifying an author's words in this way is not simply a matter of replacing some of the words with synonyms. Instead, as Howard and Taggart explain in *Research Matters*, "paraphrasing force[s] you to understand your sources and to capture their meaning accurately in original words and sentences." (((Note: Howard, R. M., & Taggart, A. R. (2010). *Research matters*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, p. 131.))) Incorrect paraphrasing is one of the most common forms of inadvertent plagiarism by students. First and foremost, paraphrasing is putting the author's argument, intent, or ideas into *your* own words.
10. *Do not patchwrite* (*patchspeak*). Menager-Beeley and Paulos define patchwriting as consisting "of mixing several references together and arranging paraphrases and quotations to constitute much of the paper. In essence, the student has assembled others' work with a bit of embroidery here and there but with little original thinking or expression." (((Note: Menager-Beeley, R., & Paulos, L. (2009). *Understanding plagiarism: A student guide to writing your own work*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pp. 7–8.))) Just as students can patchwrite, they can also engage in patchspeaking. In patchspeaking, students rely completely on taking quotations and paraphrases and weaving them together in a manner that is devoid of the student's original thinking.
11. *Summarize, don't auto-summarize.* Some students have learned that most word processing features have an auto-summary function. The auto-summary function will take a ten-page document and summarize the information into a short paragraph. When someone uses the auto-summary function, the words that remain in the summary are still those of the original author, so this is not an ethical form of paraphrasing.
12. *Do not rework another student's paper* (*speech*) *or buy paper mill papers* (*speech mill speeches*). In today's Internet environment, there are a number of storehouses of student speeches on the Internet. Some of these speeches are freely available, while other websites charge money for getting access to one of their canned speeches. Whether you use a speech that is freely available or pay money for a speech, you are engaging in plagiarism. This is also true if the main substance of your speech was copied from a web page. Any time you try to present someone else's ideas as your own during a speech, you are plagiarizing.

Avoid Academic Fraud

While there are numerous websites where you can download free speeches for your class, this is tantamount to fraud. If you didn't do the research and write your own speech, then you are fraudulently trying to pass off someone else's work as your own. In addition to being unethical, many institutions have student codes that forbid such activity. Penalties for academic fraud can be as severe as suspension or expulsion from your institution.

Don't Mislead Your Audience

If you know a source is clearly biased, and you don't spell this out for your audience, then you are purposefully trying to mislead or manipulate your audience. Instead, if the information may be biased, tell your audience that the information may be biased and allow your audience to decide whether to accept or disregard the information.

Give Author Credentials

You should always provide the author's credentials. In a world where anyone can say anything and have it published on the Internet or even publish it in a book, we have to be skeptical of the information we see and hear.

For this reason, it's very important to provide your audience with background about the credentials of the authors you cite.

Use Primary Research Ethically

Lastly, if you are using primary research within your speech, you need to use it ethically as well. For example, if you tell your survey participants that the research is anonymous or confidential, then you need to make sure that you maintain their anonymity or confidentiality when you present those results. Furthermore, you also need to be respectful if someone says something is "off the record" during an interview. We must always maintain the privacy and confidentiality of participants during primary research, unless we have their express permission to reveal their names or other identifying information.

Key Takeaways

- Style focuses on the components of your speech that make up the form of your expression rather than your content.
- Social science disciplines, such as psychology, human communication, and business, typically use APA style, while humanities disciplines, such as English, philosophy, and rhetoric, typically use MLA style.
- The APA sixth edition and the MLA seventh edition are the most current style guides and the tables presented in this chapter provide specific examples of common citations for each of these styles.
- Citing sources within your speech is a three-step process: set up the citation, provide the cited information, and interpret the information within the context of your speech.
- A direct quotation is any time you utilize another individual's words in a format that resembles the way they were originally said or written. On the other hand, a paraphrase is when you take someone's ideas and restate them using your own words to convey the intended meaning.
- Ethically using sources means avoiding plagiarism, not engaging in academic fraud, making sure not to mislead your audience, providing credentials for your sources so the audience can make judgments about the material, and using primary research in ways that protect the identity of participants.
- Plagiarism is a huge problem and creeps its way into student writing and oral presentations. As ethical communicators, we must always give credit for the information we convey in our writing and our speeches.

Exercises

1. List what you think are the benefits of APA style and the benefits of MLA style. Why do you think some people prefer APA style over MLA style or vice versa?
2. Find a direct quotation within a magazine article. Paraphrase that direct quotation. Then attempt to paraphrase the entire article as well. How would you cite each of these orally within the body of your speech?
3. Which of Menager-Beeley and Paulos (2009) twelve strategies for avoiding plagiarism do you think you need the most help with right now? Why? What can you do to overcome and avoid that pitfall?

INTRODUCTIONS MATTER

One of the most common complaints novice public speakers have is that they simply don't know how to start a speech. Many times speakers get ideas for how to begin their speeches as they go through the process of researching and organizing ideas. In this chapter, we will explore why introductions are important and various ways speakers can create memorable introductions. There may not be any one "best" way to start a speech, but we can provide some helpful guidelines that will make starting a speech much easier.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

- Explain the general length of an introduction.
- List and explain the five basic functions of an introduction.
- Understand how to use three factors of credibility in an introduction.

The introduction for a speech is generally only 10 to 15 percent of the entire time the speaker will spend speaking. This means that if your speech is to be five minutes long, your introduction should be no more than forty-five seconds. If your speech is to be ten minutes long, then your introduction should be no more than a minute and a half. Unfortunately, that 10 to 15 percent of your speech can either make your audience interested in what you have to say or cause them to tune out before you've really gotten started. Overall, a good introduction should serve five functions. Let's examine each of these.

Gain Audience Attention and Interest

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. One of the biggest mistakes that novice speakers make is to assume that people will naturally listen because the speaker is speaking. While many audiences may be polite and not talk while you're speaking, actually getting them to listen to what you are saying is a completely different challenge. Let's face it—we've all tuned someone out at some point because we weren't interested in what they had to say. If you do not get the audience's attention at the outset, it will only become more difficult to do so as you continue speaking. We'll talk about some strategies for grabbing an audience's attention later on in this chapter.

State the Purpose of Your Speech

The second major function of an introduction is to reveal the purpose of your speech to your audience. Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the basic point was? Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction is important because it forces the speaker to be mindfully aware of explaining the topic of the speech to the audience. If the speaker doesn't know what her or his topic is and cannot convey that topic to the audience, then we've got really big problems! Robert Cavett, the founder of the National Speaker's Association, used the analogy of a preacher giving a sermon when he noted, "When it's foggy in the pulpit, it's cloudy in the pews."

As we discussed in Chapter 6 "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic", the specific purpose is the one idea you want your audience to remember when you are finished with your speech. Your specific purpose is the rudder that guides your research, organization, and development of main points. The more clearly focused your purpose is, the easier your task will be in developing your speech. In addition, a clear purpose provides the audience with a single, simple idea to remember even if they daydream during the body of your speech. To develop a specific purpose, you should complete the following sentence: "I want my audience to understand that…" Notice that your specific speech purpose is phrased in terms of expected audience responses, not in terms of your own perspective.

Establish Credibility

One of the most researched areas within the field of communication has been Aristotle's concept of *ethos* or credibility. First, and foremost, the concept of credibility must be understood as a perception of receivers. You may be the most competent, caring, and trustworthy speaker in the world on a given topic, but if your audience does not perceive you as credible, then your expertise and passion will not matter. As public speakers, we need to make sure that we explain to our audiences why we are credible speakers on a given topic.

James C. McCroskey and Jason J. Teven have conducted extensive research on credibility and have determined that an individual's credibility is composed of three factors: competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill. (((Note: McCroskey, J. C., & Teven, J. J. (1999). Goodwill: A reexamination of the construct and its measurement. *Communication Monographs, 66*, 90–103.))) Competence is the degree to which a speaker is perceived to be knowledgeable or expert in a given subject by an audience member. Some individuals are given expert status because of positions they hold in society. For example, Dr. Regina Benjamin, the US Surgeon General, is expected to be competent in matters related to health and wellness as a result of being the United States' top physician.

Figure 1. Regina Benjamin.

But what if you do not possess a fancy title that lends itself to established competence? You need to explain to the audience why you are competent to speak on your topic. Keep in mind that even well-known speakers are not perceived as universally credible. US Surgeon General Regina Benjamin may be seen as competent on health and wellness issues, but may not be seen as a competent speaker on trends in Latin American music or different ways to cook summer squash. Like well-known speakers, you will need to establish your credibility on each topic you address, so establishing your competence about the energy efficiency of furnace systems during your informative speech does not automatically mean you will be seen as competent on the topic of organ donation for your persuasive speech.

The second factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven is trustworthiness, or the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as honest. Nothing will turn an audience against a speaker faster than if the audience believes the speaker is lying. When an audience does not perceive a speaker as trustworthy, the information coming out of the speaker's mouth is automatically perceived as deceitful. The speaker could be 100 percent honest, but the audience will still find the information suspect. For example, in the summer of 2009, many Democratic members of Congress attempted to hold public town-hall meetings about health care. For a range of reasons, many of the people who attended these town-hall meetings refused to let their elected officials actually speak because the audiences were convinced that the Congressmen and Congresswomen were lying.

In these situations, where a speaker is in front of a very hostile audience, there is little a speaker can do to reestablish that sense of trustworthiness. These public town-hall meetings became screaming matches between the riled-up audiences and the congressional representatives. Some police departments actually ended up having to escort the representatives from the buildings because they feared for their safety. Check out this video from CNN.com to see what some of these events actually looked like. We hope that you will not be in physical danger when you speak to your classmates or in other settings, but these incidents serve to underscore how important speaker trustworthiness is across speaking contexts.

Caring/goodwill is the final factor of credibility noted by McCroskey and Teven. Caring/goodwill refers to the degree to which an audience member perceives a speaker as caring about the audience member. As noted by Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond, "If a receiver does not believe that a source has the best intentions in mind for the receiver, the receiver will not see the source as credible. Simply put, we are going to listen to people who we think truly care for us and are looking out for our welfare." (((Note: Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, pp. 33–34.))) As a speaker, then, you need to establish that your information is being presented because you care about your audience and are not just trying to manipulate them. We should note that research has indicated that caring/goodwill is the most important factor of credibility. This means that if an audience believes that a speaker truly cares about the audience's best interests, the audience may overlook some competence and trust issues.

Provide Reasons to Listen

The fourth major function of an introduction is to establish a connection between the speaker and the audience, and one of the most effective means of establishing a connection with your audience is to provide them with reasons why they should listen to your speech. The idea of establishing a connection is an extension of the notion of caring/goodwill. In the chapters on Language and Speech Delivery, we'll spend a lot more time talking about how you can establish a good relationship with your audience. However, this relationship starts the moment you step to the front of the room to start speaking.

Instead of assuming the audience will make their own connections to your material, you should explicitly state how your information might be useful to your audience. Tell them directly how they might use your information themselves. It is not enough for you alone to be interested in your topic. You need to build a bridge to the audience by explicitly connecting your topic to their possible needs.

Preview Main Ideas

The last major function of an introduction is to preview the main ideas that your speech will discuss. A preview establishes the direction your speech will take. We sometimes call this process signposting because you're establishing signs for audience members to look for while you're speaking. In the most basic speech format, speakers generally have three to five major points they plan on making. During the preview, a speaker outlines what these points will be, which demonstrates to the audience that the speaker is organized.

A study by Baker found that individuals who were unorganized while speaking were perceived as less credible than those individuals who were organized. (((Note: Baker, E. E. (1965). The immediate effects of perceived speaker disorganization on speaker credibility and audience attitude change in persuasive speaking. *Western*

Speech, 29, 148–161.))) Having a solid preview of the information contained within one's speech and then following that preview will definitely help a speaker's credibility. It also helps your audience keep track of where you are if they momentarily daydream or get distracted.

Key Takeaways

- Introductions are only 10–15 percent of one's speech, so speakers need to make sure they think through the entire introduction to ensure that they will capture an audience. During an introduction, speakers attempt to impart the general and specific purpose of a speech while making their audience members interested in the speech topic, establishing their own credibility, and providing the audience with a preview of the speech structure.
- A speaker's perceived credibility is a combination of competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill. Research has shown that caring/goodwill is probably the most important factor of credibility because audiences want to know that a speaker has their best interests at heart. At the same time, speakers should strive to be both competent and honest while speaking.

Exercises

1. What are the five basic functions of an introduction? Discuss with your classmates which purpose you think is the most important. Why?
2. Why is establishing a relationship with one's audience important? How do you plan on establishing a relationship with your audience during your next speech?
3. Of the three factors of credibility, which do you think is going to be hardest to establish with your peers during your next speech? Why? What can you do to enhance your peers' perception of your credibility?

THE ATTENTION-GETTER

Learning Objectives

- Understand the different tools speakers can use to gain their audience's attention.
- Name some common mistakes speakers make in trying to gain attention.

As you know by now, a good introduction will capture an audience's attention, while a bad introduction can turn an audience against a speaker. An attention-getter is the device a speaker uses at the beginning of a speech to capture an audience's interest and make them interested in the speech's topic. Typically, there are four things to consider in choosing a specific attention-getting device:

1. Appropriateness or relevance to audience
2. Purpose of speech
3. Topic
4. Occasion

First, when selecting an attention-getting device, you want to make sure that the option you choose is actually appropriate and relevant to your specific audience. Different audiences will have different backgrounds and knowledge, so you should use your audience analysis to determine whether specific information you plan on using would be appropriate for a specific audience. For example, if you're giving a speech on family units to a group of individuals over the age of sixty-five, starting your speech with a reference to the television show *Gossip Girl* may not be the best idea because the television show may not be relevant to that audience.

Second, you need to consider the basic purpose of your speech. As discussed earlier in this text, there are three basic purposes you can have for giving a speech: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. When selecting an attention-getter, you want to make sure that you select one that corresponds with your basic purpose. If your goal is to entertain an audience, then starting a speech with a quotation about how many people are dying in Africa each day from malnutrition may not be the best way to get your audience's attention. Remember, one of the basic goals of an introduction is to prepare your audience for your speech. If your attention-getter differs drastically in tone from the rest of your speech (e.g., dying in Africa when you want your audience to laugh), the disjointedness may cause your audience to become confused or tune you out completely.

Your third basic consideration when picking an attention-getting device is your speech topic. Ideally, your attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to your speech. Imagine if a speaker pulled condoms out of his pocket, yelled "Free sex!" and threw the condoms at the audience in the beginning of a speech about the economy. While this may clearly get the audience's attention, this isn't really a good way to prepare an audience for a speech about bull and bear markets. Not every attention-getter is appropriate for a given topic. Instead, a speaker could start this speech by explaining that "according to a 2004 episode of 60 Minutes, adults in the United States spend approximately $10 billion annually on adult entertainment, which is roughly the equivalent to the amounts they spend attending professional sporting events, buying music, or going out to the movies." (((Note: Leung, R. (2004, September 5). Porn in the U.S.A.: Steve Kroft reports on a $10 billion industry. Retrieved from http://www.cbsnews.com))) Notice how effective the shocking statistic is in clearly introducing the monetary value of the adult entertainment industry.

The last consideration when picking an attention-getting device involves the speech occasion. Different occasions will necessitate different tones, or particular styles or manners of speaking. For example, a persuasive speech about death and dying shouldn't be happy and hilarious. An informative speech on the benefits of laughing shouldn't be dull, dreary, and depressing. When selecting an attention-getter, you want to make sure that the attention-getter sets the tone for the speech.

Now that we've explored the four major considerations you must think of when selecting an attention-getter, let's look at a range of different attention-getters you may employ. Miller (1946) (((Note: Miller, E. (1946). Speech introductions and conclusions. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 32*, 181–183.))) discovered that speakers tend to use one of eleven attention-getting devices when starting a speech. The rest of this section is going to examine these eleven attention-getting devices.

Reference to Subject

The first attention-getting method to consider is to tell your audience the subject of your speech. This device is probably the most direct, but it may also be the least interesting of the possible attention-getters. Here's an example:

> We are surrounded by statistical information in today's world, so understanding statistics is becoming paramount to citizenship in the twenty-first century.

This sentence explicitly tells an audience that the speech they are about to hear is about the importance of understanding statistics. While this isn't the most entertaining or interesting attention-getter, it is very clear and direct.

Reference to Audience

The second attention-getting device to consider is a direct reference to the audience. In this case, the speaker has a clear understanding of the audience and points out that there is something unique about the audience that should make them interested in the speech's content. Here's an example:

> As human resource professionals, you and I know the importance of talent management. In today's competitive world, we need to invest in getting and keeping the best talent for our organizations to succeed.

In this example, the speaker reminds the audience of their shared status as human resource professionals and uses the common ground to acknowledge the importance of talent management in human resources.

Quotation

Another way to capture your listeners' attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Maybe you've found a really great quotation in one of the articles or books you read while researching your speech. If not, you can also use a number of sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Probably the most famous quotation book of all time is *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, now in its seventeenth edition. Here are some other websites that contain useful databases of quotations for almost any topic:

- http://www.quotationspage.com
- http://www.bartleby.com/quotations
- http://www.quotationreference.com
- http://www.moviequotes.com
- http://www.quotesandsayings.com
- http://www.quoteland.com

Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used for a speech on deception:

> Oliver Goldsmith, a sixteenth-century writer, poet, and physician, once noted that "the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them."

Reference to Current Events

Referring to a current news event that relates to your topic is often an effective way to capture attention, as it immediately makes the audience aware of how relevant the topic is in today's world. For example, consider this attention-getter for a persuasive speech on frivolous lawsuits:

> On January 10, 2007, Scott Anthony Gomez Jr. and a fellow inmate escaped from a Pueblo, Colorado, jail. During their escape the duo attempted to rappel from the roof of the jail using a makeshift ladder of bed sheets. During Gomez's attempt to scale the building, he slipped, fell forty feet, and injured his back. After being quickly apprehended, Gomez filed a lawsuit against the jail for making it too easy for him to escape.

In this case, the speaker is highlighting a news event that illustrates what a frivolous lawsuit is, setting up the speech topic of a need for change in how such lawsuits are handled.

Historical Reference

You may also capture your listeners' attention by referring to a historical event related to your topic. Obviously, this strategy is closely related to the previous one, except that instead of a recent news event you are reaching further back in history to find a relevant reference. For example, if you are giving a speech on the Iraq War that began in 2003, you could refer back to the Vietnam War as way of making a comparison:

> During the 1960s and '70s, the United States intervened in the civil strife between North and South Vietnam. The result was a long-running war of attrition in which many American lives were lost and the country of Vietnam suffered tremendous damage and destruction. Today, we see a similar war being waged in Iraq. American lives are being lost, and stability has not yet returned to the region.

In this example, the speaker is evoking the audience's memories of the Vietnam War to raise awareness of similarities to the war in Iraq.

Anecdote

Another device you can use to start a speech is to tell an anecdote related to the speech's topic. An anecdote is a brief account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." A common mistake speakers make when telling an anecdote is to make the anecdote too long. Remember, your entire introduction should only be 10 to 15 percent of your speech, so your attention-getter must be very short.

One type of anecdote is a real story that emphasizes a speech's basic message. For example, here is an anecdote a speaker could use to begin a speech on how disconnected people are from the real world because of technology:

> In July 2009, a high school girl named Alexa Longueira was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open manhole. (((Note: Whitney, L. (2009, July 13). Don't text while walking? Girl learns the hard way. *CNET News Wireless*. Retrieved from http://news.cnet.com/8301-1035_3-10285466-94.html)))

A second type of anecdote is a parable or fable. A parable or fable is an allegorical anecdote designed to teach general life lessons. The most widely known parables for most Americans are those given in the Bible and the best-known fables are Aesop's Fables. For the same speech on how disconnected people are with the real world because of technology, the speaker could have used the Fable of The Boy and the Filberts:

> The ancient Greek writer Aesop told a fable about a boy who put his hand into a pitcher of filberts. The boy grabbed as many of the delicious nuts as he possibly could. But when he tried to pull them out, his hand wouldn't fit through the neck of the pitcher because he was grasping so many filberts. Instead of dropping some of them so that his hand would fit, he burst into tears and cried about his predicament. The moral of the story? "Don't try to do too much at once." (((Note: Aesop (1881). *Aesop's fables*. New York, NY: Wm. L. Allison. Retrieved from http://www.litscape.com/author/Aesop/The_Boy_and_the_Filberts.html)))

After recounting this anecdote, the speaker could easily relate the fable to the notion that the technology in our society leads us to try to do too many things at once.

While parables and fables are short and entertaining, their application to your speech topic should be clear. We'll talk about this idea in more detail later in this chapter when we discuss how to link your attention-getter explicitly to your topic.

Startling Statement

The eighth device you can use to start a speech is to surprise your audience with startling information about your topic. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. The goal of a good startling statistic is that it surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying, "A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel." You could start a speech on the psychology of dreams by noting, "The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year." A strange fact, on the other hand, is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying, "There are no clocks in any casinos in Las Vegas." You could start a speech on the Harlem Globetrotters by saying, "In 2000, Pope John Paul II became the most famous honorary member of the Harlem Globetrotters." All four of these examples came from a great website for strange facts.

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. The Internet is full of startling statements and claims that are simply not factual, so when you find a statement you'd like to use, you have an ethical duty to ascertain its truth before you use it. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value. We've all heard startling claims made in the media that are clearly made for purposes of shock or fear mongering. As speakers, we have an ethical obligation to avoid playing on people's emotions in this way.

Question

Another strategy for getting your audience's attention is to ask them a question. There are two types of questions commonly used as attention-getters: response questions and rhetorical questions. A response question is a question that the audience is expected to answer in some manner. For example, you could ask your audience, "Please raise your hand if you have ever thought about backpacking in Europe" or "Have you ever voted for the Electoral College? If so, stand up." In both of these cases, the speaker wants her or his audience to respond. A rhetorical question, on the other hand, is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the importance of HIV testing could start by asking the audience, "I have two questions that I'd like you to think about. How many students on this campus have had sexual intercourse? Of those who have had sex, how many have been tested for HIV?" In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to give an estimate of the numbers of students that fit into each category but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

Humor

Humor is another effective method for gaining an audience's attention. Humor is an amazing tool when used properly. We cannot begin to explain all the amazing facets of humor within this text, but we can say that humor is a great way of focusing an audience on what you are saying. However, humor is a double-edged sword. If you do not wield the sword carefully, you can turn your audience against you very quickly. When using humor, you really need to know your audience and understand what they will find humorous. One of the biggest mistakes a speaker can make is to use some form of humor that the audience either doesn't find funny or finds offensive. Think about how incompetent the character of Michael Scott seems on the television program *The Office*, in large part because of his ineffective use of humor. We always recommend that you test out humor of any kind on a sample of potential audience members prior to actually using it during a speech.

Now that we've warned you about the perils of using humor, let's talk about how to use humor as an attention-getter. Humor can be incorporated into several of the attention-getting devices mentioned. You could use a humorous anecdote, quotation, or current event. As with other attention-getting devices, you need to make sure your humor is relevant to your topic, as one of the biggest mistakes some novices make when using humor is to add humor that really doesn't support the overall goal of the speech. So when looking for humorous attention-getters you want to make sure that the humor is nonoffensive to your audiences and relevant to your speech. For example, here's a humorous quotation from Nicolas Chamfort, a French author during the sixteenth century, "The only thing that stops God from sending another flood is that the first one was useless." While this quotation could be great for some audiences, other audiences may find this humorous quotation offensive (e.g., religious audiences). The Chamfort quotation could be great for a speech on the ills of modern society, but probably not for a speech on the state of modern religious conflict. You want to make sure that the leap from your attention-getter to your topic isn't too complicated for your audience, or the attention-getter will backfire.

Personal Reference

The tenth device you may consider to start a speech is to refer to a story about yourself that is relevant for your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with the audience is a great way to show that you are credible during your attention-getter. For example, if you had a gastric bypass surgery and you wanted to give an informative speech about the procedure, you could introduce your speech in this way:

> In the fall of 2008, I decided that it was time that I took my life into my own hands. After suffering for years with the disease of obesity, I decided to take a leap of faith and get a gastric bypass in an attempt to finally beat the disease.

If you use a personal example, don't get carried away with the focus on yourself and your own life. Your speech topic is the purpose of the attention-getter, not the other way around. Another pitfall in using a personal example is that it may be too personal for you to maintain your composure. For example, a student once started a speech about her grandmother by stating, "My grandmother died of cancer at 3:30 this morning." The student then proceeded to cry nonstop for ten minutes. While this is an extreme example, we strongly recommend that you avoid any material that could get you overly choked up while speaking. When speakers have an emotional breakdown during their speech, audience members stop listening to the message and become very uncomfortable.

Reference to Occasion

The last device we mention for starting a speech is to refer directly to the speaking occasion. This attention-getter is only useful if the speech is being delivered for a specific occasion. Many toasts, for example, start with the following statement: "Today we are here to honor X." In this case, the "X" could be a retirement, a marriage, a graduation, or any number of other special occasions. Because of its specific nature, this attention-getter is the least likely to be used for speeches being delivered for college courses.

Key Takeaways

- In developing the introduction to your speech, begin by deciding upon a statement to capture the audience's attention.
- Attention-getters can include references to the audience, quotations, references to current events, historical references, anecdotes, startling statements, questions, humor, personal references, and references to the occasion.

Exercises

1. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
2. You've been asked to deliver a speech on the use of advertising in children's media. Out of the list of ten different possible attention-getting devices discussed in the chapter, how could you use four of them to start your speech?

PUTTING IT TOGETHER: STEPS TO COMPLETE YOUR INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

- Clearly identify why an audience should listen to a speaker.
- Discuss how you can build your credibility during a speech.
- Understand how to write a clear thesis statement.
- Design an effective preview of your speech's content for your audience.

Once you have captured your audience's attention, it's important to make the rest of your introduction interesting, and use it to lay out the rest of the speech. In this section, we are going to explore the five remaining parts of an effective introduction: linking to your topic, reasons to listen, stating credibility, thesis statement, and preview.

Link to Topic

After the attention-getter, the second major part of an introduction is called the link to topic. The link to topic is the shortest part of an introduction and occurs when a speaker demonstrates how an attention-getting device relates to the topic of a speech. Often the attention-getter and the link to topic are very clear. For example, if you look at the attention-getting device example under historical reference above, you'll see that the first sentence brings up the history of the Vietnam War and then shows us how that war can help us understand the Iraq War. In this case, the attention-getter clearly flows directly to the topic. However, some attention-getters need further explanation to get to the topic of the speech. For example, both of the anecdote examples (the girl falling into the manhole while texting and the boy and the filberts) need further explanation to connect clearly to the speech topic (i.e., problems of multitasking in today's society).

Let's look at the first anecdote example to demonstrate how we could go from the attention-getter to the topic.

> In July 2009, a high school girl named Alexa Longueira was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open manhole. This anecdote illustrates the problem that many people are facing in today's world. We are so wired into our technology that we forget to see what's going on around us—like a big hole in front of us.

In this example, the third sentence here explains that the attention-getter was an anecdote that illustrates a real issue. The fourth sentence then introduces the actual topic of the speech.

Let's now examine how we can make the transition from the parable or fable attention-getter to the topic:

> The ancient Greek writer Aesop told a fable about a boy who put his hand into a pitcher of filberts. The boy grabbed as many of the delicious nuts as he possibly could. But when he tried to pull them out, his hand wouldn't fit through the neck of the pitcher because he was grasping so many filberts. Instead of dropping some of them so that his hand would fit, he burst into tears and cried about his predicament. The moral of the story? "Don't try to do too much at once." In today's world, many of us are us are just like the boy putting his hand into the pitcher. We are constantly trying to grab so much or do so much that it prevents us from accomplishing our goals. I would like to show you three simple techniques to manage your time so that you don't try to pull too many filberts from your pitcher.

In this example, we added three new sentences to the attention-getter to connect it to the speech topic.

Reasons to Listen

Once you have linked an attention-getter to the topic of your speech, you need to explain to your audience why your topic is important. We call this the "why should I care?" part of your speech because it tells your audience why the topic is directly important to them. Sometimes you can include the significance of your topic in the same sentence as your link to the topic, but other times you may need to spell out in one or two sentences why your specific topic is important.

People in today's world are very busy, and they do not like their time wasted. Nothing is worse than having to sit through a speech that has nothing to do with you. Imagine sitting through a speech about a new software package you don't own and you will never hear of again. How would you react to the speaker? Most of us would be pretty annoyed at having had our time wasted in this way. Obviously, this particular speaker didn't do a great job of analyzing her or his audience if the audience isn't going to use the software package—but even when speaking on a topic that is highly relevant to the audience, speakers often totally forget to explain how and why it is important.

Appearing Credible

The next part of a speech is not so much a specific "part" as an important characteristic that needs to be pervasive throughout your introduction and your entire speech. As a speaker, you want to be seen as credible (competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, credibility is ultimately a perception that is made by your audience. While your audience determines whether they perceive you as competent, trustworthy, and caring/having goodwill, there are some strategies you can employ to make yourself appear more credible.

First, to make yourself appear competent, you can either clearly explain to your audience why you are competent about a given subject or demonstrate your competence by showing that you have thoroughly researched a topic by including relevant references within your introduction. The first method of demonstrating competence—saying it directly—is only effective if you are actually a competent person on a given subject. If you are an undergraduate student and you are delivering a speech about the importance of string theory in physics, unless you are a prodigy of some kind, you are probably not a recognized expert on the subject. Conversely, if your number one hobby in life is collecting memorabilia about the Three Stooges, then you may be an expert about the Three Stooges. However, you would need to explain to your audience your passion for collecting Three Stooges memorabilia and how this has made you an expert on the topic.

If, on the other hand, you are not actually a recognized expert on a topic, you need to demonstrate that you have done your homework to become more knowledgeable than your audience about your topic. The easiest way to demonstrate your competence is through the use of appropriate references from leading thinkers and researchers on your topic. When you demonstrate to your audience that you have done your homework, they are more likely to view you as competent.

The second characteristic of credibility, trustworthiness, is a little more complicated than competence, for it ultimately relies on audience perceptions. One way to increase the likelihood that a speaker will be perceived as trustworthy is to use reputable sources. If you're quoting Dr. John Smith, you need to explain who Dr. John Smith is so your audience will see the quotation as being more trustworthy. As speakers we can easily manipulate our sources into appearing more credible than they actually are, which would be unethical. When you are honest about your sources with your audience, they will trust you and your information more so than when you are ambiguous. The worst thing you can do is to out-and-out lie about information during your speech. Not only is lying highly unethical, but if you are caught lying, your audience will deem you untrustworthy and perceive everything you are saying as untrustworthy. Many speakers have attempted to lie to an audience because it will serve their own purposes or even because they believe their message is in their audience's best interest, but lying is one of the fastest ways to turn off an audience and get them to distrust both the speaker and the message.

The third characteristic of credibility to establish during the introduction is the sense of caring/goodwill. While some unethical speakers can attempt to manipulate an audience's perception that the speaker cares, ethical speakers truly do care about their audiences and have their audience's best interests in mind while speaking. Often speakers must speak in front of audiences that may be hostile toward the speaker's message. In these cases, it is very important for the speaker to explain that he or she really does believe her or his message is in the audience's best interest. One way to show that you have your audience's best interests in mind is to acknowledge disagreement from the start:

> Today I'm going to talk about why I believe we should enforce stricter immigration laws in the United States. I realize that many of you will disagree with me on this topic. I used to believe that open immigration was a necessity for the United States to survive and thrive, but after researching this topic, I've changed my mind. While I may not change all of your minds today, I do ask that you listen with an open mind, set your personal feelings on this topic aside, and judge my arguments on their merits.

While clearly not all audience members will be open or receptive to opening their minds and listening to your arguments, by establishing that there is known disagreement, you are telling the audience that you understand their possible views and are not trying to attack their intellect or their opinions.

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. A strong, clear thesis statement is very valuable within an introduction because it lays out the basic goal of the entire speech. We strongly believe that it is worthwhile to invest some time in framing and writing a good thesis statement. You may even want to write your thesis statement before you even begin conducting research for your speech. While you may end up rewriting your thesis statement later, having a clear idea of your purpose, intent, or main idea before you start searching for research will help you focus on the most appropriate material. To help us understand thesis statements, we will first explore their basic functions and then discuss how to write a thesis statement.

Basic Functions of a Thesis Statement

A thesis statement helps your audience by letting them know "in a nutshell" what you are going to talk about. With a good thesis statement you will fulfill four basic functions: you express your specific purpose, provide a way to organize your main points, make your research more effective, and enhance your delivery.

Express Your Specific Purpose

To orient your audience, you need to be as clear as possible about your meaning. A strong thesis will prepare your audience effectively for the points that will follow. Here are two examples:

1. "Today, I want to discuss academic cheating." (weak example)
2. "Today, I will clarify exactly what plagiarism is and give examples of its different types so that you can see how it leads to a loss of creative learning interaction." (strong example)

The weak statement will probably give the impression that you have no clear position about your topic because you haven't said what that position is. Additionally, the term "academic cheating" can refer to many behaviors—acquiring test questions ahead of time, copying answers, changing grades, or allowing others to do your coursework—so the specific topic of the speech is still not clear to the audience.

The strong statement not only specifies plagiarism but also states your specific concern (loss of creative learning interaction).

Provide a Way to Organize Your Main Points

A thesis statement should appear, almost verbatim, toward the end of the introduction to a speech. A thesis statement helps the audience get ready to listen to the arrangement of points that follow. Many speakers say that if they can create a strong thesis sentence, the rest of the speech tends to develop with relative ease. On the other hand, when the thesis statement is not very clear, creating a speech is an uphill battle.

When your thesis statement is sufficiently clear and decisive, you will know where you stand about your topic and where you intend to go with your speech. Having a clear thesis statement is especially important if you know a great deal about your topic or you have strong feelings about it. If this is the case for you, you need to know exactly what you are planning on talking about in order to fit within specified time limitations. Knowing where you are and where you are going is the entire point in establishing a thesis statement; it makes your speech much easier to prepare and to present.

Let's say you have a fairly strong thesis statement, and that you've already brainstormed a list of information that you know about the topic. Chances are your list is too long and has no focus. Using your thesis statement, you can select only the information that (1) is directly related to the thesis and (2) can be arranged in a sequence that will make sense to the audience and will support the thesis. In essence, a strong thesis statement helps you keep useful information and weed out less useful information.

Make Your Research More Effective

If you begin your research with only a general topic in mind, you run the risk of spending hours reading mountains of excellent literature about your topic. However, mountains of literature do not always make coherent speeches. You may have little or no idea of how to tie your research all together, or even whether you should tie it together. If, on the other hand, you conduct your research with a clear thesis statement in mind, you will be better able to zero in only on material that directly relates to your chosen thesis statement. Let's look at an example that illustrates this point:

> Many traffic accidents involve drivers older than fifty-five.

While this statement may be true, you could find industrial, medical, insurance literature that can drone on *ad infinitum* about the details of all such accidents in just one year. Instead, focusing your thesis statement will help you narrow the scope of information you will be searching for while gathering information. Here's an example of a more focused thesis statement:

> Three factors contribute to most accidents involving drivers over fifty-five years of age: failing eyesight, slower reflexes, and rapidly changing traffic conditions.

This framing is somewhat better. This thesis statement at least provides three possible main points and some keywords for your electronic catalog search. However, if you want your audience to understand the context of older people at the wheel, consider something like:

> Mature drivers over fifty-five years of age must cope with more challenging driving conditions than existed only one generation ago: more traffic moving at higher speeds, the increased imperative for quick driving decisions, and rapidly changing ramp and cloverleaf systems. Because of these challenges, I want my audience to believe that drivers over the age of sixty-five should be required to pass a driving test every five years.

This framing of the thesis provides some interesting choices. First, several terms need to be defined, and these definitions might function surprisingly well in setting the tone of the speech. Your definitions of words like "generation," "quick driving decisions," and "cloverleaf systems" could jolt your audience out of assumptions they have taken for granted as truth.

Second, the framing of the thesis provides you with a way to describe the specific changes as they have occurred between, say, 1970 and 2010. How much, and in what ways, have the volume and speed of traffic changed? Why are quick decisions more critical now? What is a "cloverleaf," and how does any driver deal cognitively with exiting in the direction seemingly opposite to the desired one? Questions like this, suggested by your own thesis statement, can lead to a strong, memorable speech.

Enhance Your Delivery

When your thesis is not clear to you, your listeners will be even more clueless than you are—but if you have a good clear thesis statement, your speech becomes clear to your listeners. When you stand in front of your audience presenting your introduction, you can vocally emphasize the essence of your speech, expressed as your thesis statement. Many speakers pause for a half second, lower their vocal pitch slightly, slow down a little, and deliberately present the thesis statement, the one sentence that encapsulates its purpose. When this is done effectively, the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech is driven home for an audience.

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Now that we've looked at why a thesis statement is crucial in a speech, let's switch gears and talk about how we go about writing a solid thesis statement. A thesis statement is related to the general and specific purposes of a speech as we discussed them in Chapter 6 "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic".

Choose Your Topic

The first step in writing a good thesis statement was originally discussed in Chapter 6 "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic" when we discussed how to find topics. Once you have a general topic, you are ready to go to the second step of creating a thesis statement.

Narrow Your Topic

One of the hardest parts of writing a thesis statement is narrowing a speech from a broad topic to one that can be easily covered during a five- to ten-minute speech. While five to ten minutes may sound like a long time to new public speakers, the time flies by very quickly when you are speaking. You can easily run out of time if your topic is too broad. To ascertain if your topic is narrow enough for a specific time frame, ask yourself three questions.

First, is your thesis statement narrow or is it a broad overgeneralization of a topic? An overgeneralization occurs when we classify everyone in a specific group as having a specific characteristic. For example, a speaker's thesis statement that "all members of the National Council of La Raza are militant" is an overgeneralization of all members of the organization. Furthermore, a speaker would have to correctly demonstrate that all members of the organization are militant for the thesis statement to be proven, which is a very difficult task since the National Council of La Raza consists of millions of Hispanic Americans. A more appropriate thesis related to this topic could be, "Since the creation of the National Council of La Raza [NCLR] in 1968, the NCLR has become increasingly militant in addressing the causes of Hispanics in the United States."

The second question to ask yourself when narrowing a topic is whether your speech's topic is one clear topic or multiple topics. A strong thesis statement consists of only a single topic. The following is an example of a thesis statement that contains too many topics: "Medical marijuana, prostitution, and gay marriage should all be legalized in the United States." Not only are all three fairly broad, but you also have three completely unrelated topics thrown into a single thesis statement. Instead of a thesis statement that has multiple topics, limit yourself to only one topic. Here's an example of a thesis statement examining only one topic: "Today we're going to examine the legalization and regulation of the oldest profession in the state of Nevada." In this case, we're focusing our topic to how one state has handled the legalization and regulation of prostitution.

The last question a speaker should ask when making sure a topic is sufficiently narrow is whether the topic has direction. If your basic topic is too broad, you will never have a solid thesis statement or a coherent speech. For example, if you start off with the topic "Barack Obama is a role model for everyone," what do you mean by this statement? Do you think President Obama is a role model because of his dedication to civic service? Do you think he's a role model because he's a good basketball player? Do you think he's a good role model because he's an excellent public speaker? When your topic is too broad, almost anything can become part of the topic. This ultimately leads to a lack of direction and coherence within the speech itself. To make a cleaner topic, a speaker needs to narrow her or his topic to one specific area. For example, you may want to examine why President Obama is a good speaker.

Put Your Topic into a Sentence

Once you've narrowed your topic to something that is reasonably manageable given the constraints placed on your speech, you can then formalize that topic as a complete sentence. For example, you could turn the topic of President Obama's public speaking skills into the following sentence: "Because of his unique sense of lyricism and his well-developed presentational skills, President Barack Obama is a modern symbol of the power of public speaking." Once you have a clear topic sentence, you can start tweaking the thesis statement to help set up the purpose of your speech.

Add Your Argument, Viewpoint, or Opinion

This function only applies if you are giving a speech to persuade. If your topic is informative, your job is to make sure that the thesis statement is nonargumentative and focuses on facts. For example, in the preceding thesis statement we have a couple of opinion-oriented terms that should be avoided for informative speeches: "unique sense," "well-developed," and "power." All three of these terms are laced with an individual's opinion, which is fine for a persuasive speech but not for an informative speech. For informative speeches, the goal of a thesis statement is to explain what the speech will be informing the audience about, not attempting to add the speaker's opinion about the speech's topic. For an informative speech, you could rewrite the thesis statement to read, "This speech is going to analyze Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his speech, 'A World That Stands as One,' delivered July 2008 in Berlin."

On the other hand, if your topic is persuasive, you want to make sure that your argument, viewpoint, or opinion is clearly indicated within the thesis statement. If you are going to argue that Barack Obama is a great speaker, then you should set up this argument within your thesis statement.

Use the Thesis Checklist

Once you have written a first draft of your thesis statement, you're probably going to end up revising your thesis statement a number of times prior to delivering your actual speech. A thesis statement is something that is constantly tweaked until the speech is given. As your speech develops, often your thesis will need to be rewritten to whatever direction the speech itself has taken. We often start with a speech going in one direction, and find out through our research that we should have gone in a different direction. When you think you finally have a thesis statement that is good to go for your speech, take a second and make sure it adheres to the criteria shown in Table 1 "Thesis Checklist"

Table 1. Thesis Checklist

Instructions: For each of the following questions, check either "yes" or "no."		Yes	No
1.	Does your thesis clearly reflect the topic of your speech?		
2.	Can you adequately cover the topic indicated in your thesis within the time you have for your speech?		
3.	Is your thesis statement simple?		
4.	Is your thesis statement direct?		
5.	Does your thesis statement gain an audience's interest?		
6.	Is your thesis statement easy to understand?		
Persuasive Speeches			
7.	Does your thesis statement introduce a clear argument?		
8.	Does your thesis statement clearly indicate what your audience should do, how your audience should think, or how your audience should feel?		
Scoring: For a strong thesis statement, all your answers should have been "yes."			

Preview of Speech

The final part of an introduction contains a preview of the major points to be covered within your speech. I'm sure we've all seen signs that have three cities listed on them with the mileage to reach each city. This mileage sign is an indication of what is to come. A preview works the same way. A preview foreshadows what the main body points will be in the speech. For example, to preview a speech on bullying in the workplace, one could say, "To understand the nature of bullying in the modern workplace, I will first define what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying, I will then discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets, and lastly, I will explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying." In this case, each of the phrases mentioned in the preview would be a single distinct point made in the speech itself. In other words, the first major body point in this speech would examine what workplace bullying is and the types of bullying; the second major body point in this speech would discuss the common characteristics of both workplace bullies and their targets; and lastly, the third body point in this speech would explore some possible solutions to workplace bullying.

Key Takeaways

- Linking the attention-getter to the speech topic is essential so that you maintain audience attention and so that the relevance of the attention-getter is clear to your audience.
- Establishing how your speech topic is relevant and important shows the audience why they should listen to your speech.
- To be an effective speaker, you should convey all three components of credibility, competence, trustworthiness, and caring/goodwill, by the content and delivery of your introduction.
- A clear thesis statement is essential to provide structure for a speaker and clarity for an audience.
- An effective preview identifies the specific main points that will be present in the speech body.

Exercises

1. Make a list of the attention-getting devices you might use to give a speech on the importance of recycling. Which do you think would be most effective? Why?
2. Create a thesis statement for a speech related to the topic of collegiate athletics. Make sure that your thesis statement is narrow enough to be adequately covered in a five- to six-minute speech.
3. Discuss with a partner three possible body points you could utilize for the speech on the topic of volunteerism.
4. Fill out the introduction worksheet to help work through your introduction for your next speech. Please make sure that you answer all the questions clearly and concisely.

ANALYZING AN INTRODUCTION

Learning Objectives

- See what a full introduction section looks like.
- Distinguish among the six parts of an introduction.

Thus far, this chapter has focused on how to create a clear introduction. We discussed why introductions are important and the six important functions of effective introductions. In this section we're going to examine an actual introduction to a speech. Before we start analyzing the introduction, please read the introduction paragraph that follows.

Smart Dust Introduction

In 2002, the famed science fiction writer Michael Crichton released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar-powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it overtook and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS: sensors, robots, or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed “smart dust” as the first in their “Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On.” Thus far researchers have hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism. Today I’m going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works, we will then examine some military applications of smart dust, and we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

Now that you’ve had a chance to read the introduction to the speech on smart dust, read it over a second time and look for the six parts of the speech introduction as discussed earlier in this chapter. Once you’re done analyzing this introduction, Table 1 “Smart Dust Introduction” shows you how the speech was broken down into the various parts of an introduction.

Table 1. Smart Dust Introduction

Part of Introduction	Analysis
In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar-powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it over took and killed its prey in its need for new resources.	Attention-Getter This attention-getter is using an anecdote derived from a best-selling novel.
The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS: sensors, robots, or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration.	Link to Topic This link to topic shows how the book *Prey* is actually very close to what scientists are attempting to accomplish.
By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed “smart dust” as the first in their “Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On.” Thus far researchers have hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.	Reasons to Listen In this section, the speaker indicates that business professionals have already recognized smart dust as a good economic investment with various applications.
“Professors Kahn, Katz, and Pister hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks*” “By 2004 *Fortune Magazine* listed”	Espousal of Credibility Notice the inclusion of research from both the *Journal of Communications and Networks* and *Fortune Magazine*. This is an attempt to indicate that the speaker has conducted research on the subject.
Today I’m going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future.	Thesis Statement This thesis statement clearly indicates that this is an informative speech because it does not attempt to build an argument or share a specific opinion.

Part of Introduction	Analysis
To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works, we will then examine some military applications of smart dust, and we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.	**Preview** This preview clearly indicates three body points that will be discussed in the speech.

Need More Speech Examples?

The following YouTube videos will show you a wide range of different speeches. While watching these videos, ask yourself the following questions: How have they utilized various attention-getting devices? Have they clearly used all aspects of an introduction? Do they have a strong thesis and preview? How could you have made the introduction stronger?

Animal Experimentation

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/c4yYDt4di0o

Life after Having a Child

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/e7-DhSLsk1U

Pros and Cons of Cholesterol

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/k7VIOs6aiAc

On Being a Hero

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/KYtm8uEo5vU

LASIK Eye Surgery

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/Z0YWy8CXoYk

CONCLUDING WITH POWER

Almost to the Finish Line

When reading a great novel, many people just can't wait to get to the end of the book. Some people will actually jump ahead hundreds of pages and read the last chapter just to see what happens. Humans have an innate desire to "get to the end." Imagine reading a novel and finding that the author just stopped writing five or six chapters from the end—how satisfied would you be with that author? In the same way, when a speaker doesn't think through her or his conclusion properly, audience members are often left just as dissatisfied. In other words, conclusions are really important!

WHY CONCLUSIONS MATTER

Learning Objectives

- Understand the basic benefits of a strong conclusion.
- Explain the serial position effect and its importance on public speaking.

As public speaking professors and authors, we have seen many students give otherwise good speeches that seem to fall apart at the end. We've seen students end their three main points by saying things such as "OK, I'm done"; "Thank God that's over!"; or "Thanks. Now what? Do I just sit down?" It's understandable to feel relief at the end of a speech, but remember that as a speaker, your conclusion is the last chance you have to drive home your ideas. When a speaker opts to end the speech with an ineffective conclusion—or no conclusion at all—the speech loses the energy that's been created, and the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead of falling prey to emotional exhaustion, remind yourself to keep your energy up as you approach the end of your speech, and plan ahead so that your conclusion will be an effective one.

Of course, a good conclusion will not rescue a poorly prepared speech. Thinking again of the chapters in a novel, if one bypasses all the content in the middle, the ending often isn't very meaningful or helpful. So to take advantage of the advice in this chapter, you need to keep in mind the importance of developing a speech with an effective introduction and an effective body; if you have these elements, you will have the foundation you need to be able to conclude effectively. Just as a good introduction helps bring an audience member into the world of your speech, and a good speech body holds the audience in that world, a good conclusion helps bring that audience member back to the reality outside of your speech.

In this section, we're going to examine the functions fulfilled by the conclusion of a speech. A strong conclusion serves to signal the end of the speech and to help your listeners remember your speech.

Signals the End

The first thing a good conclusion can do is to signal the end of a speech. You may be thinking that showing an audience that you're about to stop speaking is a "no brainer," but many speakers really don't prepare their audience for the end. When a speaker just suddenly stops speaking, the audience is left confused and disappointed. Instead, we want to make sure that audiences are left knowledgeable and satisfied with our speeches. In Section 11.2 “Steps of a Conclusion”, we'll explain in great detail about how to ensure that you signal the end of your speech in a manner that is both effective and powerful.

Aids Audience's Memory of Your Speech

The second reason for a good conclusion stems out of some very interesting research reported by the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus back in 1885 in his book *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology*. (((Note: Ebbinghaus, H. (1885). *Memory: A contribution to experimental psychology* [Online version]. Retrieved from http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Ebbinghaus/index.htm))) Ebbinghaus proposed that humans remember information in a linear fashion, which he called the serial position effect. He found an individual's ability to remember information in a list (e.g., a grocery list, a chores list, or a to-do list) depends on the location of an item on the list. Specifically, he found that items toward the top of the list and items toward the bottom of the list tended to have the highest recall rates. The serial position effect basically finds that information at the beginning of a list (primacy) and information at the end of the list (recency) are easier to recall than information in the middle of the list.

So what does this have to do with conclusions? A lot! Ray Ehrensberger wanted to test Ebbinghaus' serial position effect in public speaking. Ehrensberger created an experiment that rearranged the ordering of a speech to determine the recall of information. (((Note: Ehrensberger, R. (1945). An experimental study of the relative effectiveness of certain forms of emphasis in public speaking. *Speech Monographs, 12*, 94–111. doi: 10.1080/03637754509390108))) Ehrensberger's study reaffirmed the importance of primacy and recency when listening to speeches. In fact, Ehrensberger found that the information delivered during the conclusion (recency) had the highest level of recall overall.

Key Takeaways

- A strong conclusion is very important because it's a speaker's final chance to really explain the importance of her or his message and allows the speaker to both signal the end of the speech and help the audience to remember the main ideas. As such, speakers need to thoroughly examine how they will conclude their speeches with power.
- The serial position effect is the idea that people remember ideas that are stated either first (primacy) or last (recency) in a list the most. It is important to speech conclusions because restating your main ideas helps you to take advantage of the recency effect and helps your audience remember your ideas.

Exercises

1. Think about a recent speech you heard either in class or elsewhere. Did the speaker have a strong conclusion? List the elements of the conclusion that were particularly effective and ineffective. Identify two ways you could have made the speaker's conclusion stronger.
2. After listening to a speech or class lecture, close your eyes and say aloud the main points you remember from the presentation. Does your memory follow what you would expect according to the serial position effect?

STEPS OF A CONCLUSION

Learning Objectives
• Examine the three steps of an effective conclusion: restatement of the thesis, review of the main points, and concluding device. • Differentiate among Miller's (1946) ten concluding devices.

In Section 11.1 "Why Conclusions Matter", we discussed the importance a conclusion has on a speech. In this section, we're going to examine the three steps in building an effective conclusion.

Restatement of the Thesis

Restating a thesis statement is the first step in a powerful conclusion. As we explained in Chapter 9 "Introductions Matter: How to Begin a Speech Effectively", a thesis statement is a short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea of a speech. When we restate the thesis statement at the conclusion of our speech, we're attempting to reemphasize what the overarching main idea of the speech has been. Suppose your thesis statement was, "I will analyze Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" You could restate the thesis in this fashion at the conclusion of your speech: "In the past few minutes, I have analyzed Barack Obama's use of lyricism in his July 2008 speech, 'A World That Stands as One.'" Notice the shift in tense: the statement has gone from the future tense (this is what I will speak about) to the past tense (this is what I have spoken about). Restating the thesis in your conclusion reminds the audience of the major purpose or goal of your speech, helping them remember it better.

Review of Main Points

After restating the speech's thesis, the second step in a powerful conclusion is to review the main points from your speech. One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication. When we preview our main points in the introduction, effectively discuss and make transitions to our main points during the body of the speech, and finally, review the main points in the conclusion, we increase the likelihood that the audience will retain our main points after the speech is over.

In the introduction of a speech, we deliver a *preview* of our main body points, and in the conclusion we deliver a *review*. Let's look at a sample preview:

> In order to understand the field of gender and communication, I will first differentiate between the terms biological sex and gender. I will then explain the history of gender research in communication. Lastly, I will examine a series of important findings related to gender and communication.

In this preview, we have three clear main points. Let's see how we can review them at the conclusion of our speech:

> Today, we have differentiated between the terms biological sex and gender, examined the history of gender research in communication, and analyzed a series of research findings on the topic.
>
> In the past few minutes, I have explained the difference between the terms "biological sex" and "gender," discussed the rise of gender research in the field of communication, and examined a series of groundbreaking studies in the field.

Notice that both of these conclusions review the main points originally set forth. Both variations are equally effective reviews of the main points, but you might like the linguistic turn of one over the other. Remember, while there is a lot of science to help us understand public speaking, there's also a lot of art as well, so you are always encouraged to choose the wording that you think will be most effective for your audience.

Concluding Device

The final part of a powerful conclusion is the concluding device. A concluding device is essentially the final thought you want your audience members to have when you stop speaking. It also provides a definitive sense of closure to your speech. One of the authors of this text often makes an analogy between a gymnastics dismount and the concluding device in a speech. Just as a gymnast dismounting the parallel bars or balance beam wants to stick the landing and avoid taking two or three steps, a speaker wants to "stick" the ending of the presentation by ending with a concluding device instead of with, "Well, umm, I guess I'm done." Miller observed that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices when ending a speech. (((Note: Miller, E. (1946). Speech introductions and conclusions. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 32*, 181–183.))) The rest of this section is going to examine these ten concluding devices.

Conclude with a Challenge

The first way that Miller found that some speakers end their speeches is with a challenge. A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires a contest or special effort. In a speech on the necessity of fund-raising, a speaker could conclude by challenging the audience to raise 10 percent more than their original projections. In a speech on eating more vegetables, you could challenge your audience to increase their current intake of vegetables by two portions daily. In both of these challenges, audience members are being asked to go out of their way to do something different that involves effort on their part.

Conclude with a Quotation

A second way you can conclude a speech is by reciting a quotation relevant to the speech topic. When using a quotation, you need to think about whether your goal is to end on a persuasive note or an informative note. Some quotations will have a clear call to action, while other quotations summarize or provoke thought. For example, let's say you are delivering an informative speech about dissident writers in the former Soviet Union. You could end by citing this quotation from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "A great writer is, so to speak, a second government in his country. And for that reason no regime has ever loved great writers." (((Note: Solzhenitsyn, A. (1964). *The first circle.* New York: Harper & Row. Cited in Bartlett, J., & Kaplan, J. (Eds.), *Bartlett's familiar quotations* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., p. 746.))) Notice that this quotation underscores the idea of writers as dissidents, but it doesn't ask listeners to put forth effort to engage in any specific thought process or behavior. If, on the other hand, you were delivering a persuasive speech urging your audience to participate in a very risky political demonstration, you might use this quotation from Martin Luther King Jr.: "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." (((Note: King, M. L. (1963, June 23). Speech in Detroit. Cited in Bartlett, J., & Kaplan, J. (Eds.), *Bartlett's familiar quotations* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., p. 760.))) In this case, the quotation leaves the audience with the message that great risks are worth taking, that they make our lives worthwhile, and that the right thing to do is to go ahead and take that great risk.

Conclude with a Summary

When a speaker ends with a summary, he or she is simply elongating the review of the main points. While this may not be the most exciting concluding device, it can be useful for information that was highly technical or complex or for speeches lasting longer than thirty minutes. Typically, for short speeches (like those in your class), this summary device should be avoided.

Conclude by Visualizing the Future

The purpose of a conclusion that refers to the future is to help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur. If you are giving a speech on the development of video games for learning, you could conclude by depicting the classroom of the future where video games are perceived as true learning tools and how those tools could be utilized. More often, speakers use visualization of the future to depict how society would be, or how individual listeners' lives would be different, if the speaker's persuasive attempt worked. For example, if a speaker proposes that a solution to illiteracy is hiring more reading specialists in public schools, the speaker could ask her or his audience to imagine a world without illiteracy. In this use of visualization, the goal is to persuade people to adopt the speaker's point of view. By showing that the speaker's vision of the future is a positive one, the conclusion should help to persuade the audience to help create this future.

Conclude with an Appeal for Action

Probably the most common persuasive concluding device is the appeal for action or the call to action. In essence, the appeal for action occurs when a speaker asks her or his audience to engage in a specific behavior or change in thinking. When a speaker concludes by asking the audience "to do" or "to think" in a specific manner, the speaker wants to see an actual change. Whether the speaker appeals for people to eat more fruit, buy a car, vote for a candidate, oppose the death penalty, or sing more in the shower, the speaker is asking the audience to engage in action.

One specific type of appeal for action is the immediate call to action. Whereas some appeals ask for people to engage in behavior in the future, the immediate call to action asks people to engage in behavior right now. If a speaker wants to see a new traffic light placed at a dangerous intersection, he or she may conclude by asking all the audience members to sign a digital petition right then and there, using a computer the speaker has made available. Here are some more examples of immediate calls to action:

- In a speech on eating more vegetables, pass out raw veggies and dip at the conclusion of the speech.
- In a speech on petitioning a lawmaker for a new law, provide audience members with a prewritten e-mail they can send to the lawmaker.
- In a speech on the importance of using hand sanitizer, hand out little bottles of hand sanitizer and show audience members how to correctly apply the sanitizer.
- In a speech asking for donations for a charity, send a box around the room asking for donations.

These are just a handful of different examples we've actually seen students use in our classrooms to elicit an immediate change in behavior. These immediate calls to action may not lead to long-term change, but they can be very effective at increasing the likelihood that an audience will change behavior in the short term.

Conclude by Inspiration

By definition, the word inspire means to affect or arouse someone. Both affect and arouse have strong emotional connotations. The ultimate goal of an inspiration concluding device is similar to an "appeal for action" but the ultimate goal is more lofty or ambiguous; the goal is to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner. Maybe a speaker is giving an informative speech on the prevalence of domestic violence in our society today. That speaker could end the speech by reading Paulette Kelly's powerful poem "I Got Flowers Today." "I Got Flowers Today" is a poem that evokes strong emotions because it's about an abuse victim who received flowers from her abuser every time she was victimized. The poem ends by saying, "I got flowers today… / Today was a special day—it was the day of my funeral / Last night he killed me." (((Note: Kelly, P. (1994). I got flowers today. In C. J. Palmer & J. Palmer, *Fire from within*. Painted Post, NY: Creative Arts & Science Enterprises.)))

Conclude with Advice

The next concluding device is one that should be used primarily by speakers who are recognized as expert authorities on a given subject. Advice is essentially a speaker's opinion about what should or should not be done. The problem with opinions is that everyone has one, and one person's opinion is not necessarily any more correct than another's. There needs to be a really good reason your opinion—and therefore your advice—should matter to your audience. If, for example, you are an expert in nuclear physics, you might conclude a speech on energy by giving advice about the benefits of nuclear energy.

Conclude by Proposing a Solution

Another way a speaker can conclude a speech powerfully is to offer a solution to the problem discussed within a speech. For example, perhaps a speaker has been discussing the problems associated with the disappearance of art education in the United States. The speaker could then propose a solution of creating more community-based art experiences for school children as a way to fill this gap. Although this can be an effective conclusion, a speaker must ask herself or himself whether the solution should be discussed in more depth as a stand-alone main point within the body of the speech so that audience concerns about the proposed solution may be addressed.

Conclude with a Question

Another way you can end a speech is to ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea. Maybe you are giving a speech on the importance of the environment, so you end the speech by saying, “Think about your children’s future. What kind of world do you want them raised in? A world that is clean, vibrant, and beautiful—or one that is filled with smog, pollution, filth, and disease?” Notice that you aren’t actually asking the audience to verbally or nonverbally answer the question; the goal of this question is to force the audience into thinking about what kind of world they want for their children.

Conclude with a Reference to Audience

The last concluding device discussed by Miller (1946) was a reference to one’s audience. This concluding device is when a speaker attempts to answer the basic audience question, “What’s in it for me?” The goal of this concluding device is to spell out the direct benefits a behavior or thought change has for audience members. For example, a speaker talking about stress reduction techniques could conclude by clearly listing all the physical health benefits stress reduction offers (e.g., improved reflexes, improved immune system, improved hearing, reduction in blood pressure). In this case, the speaker is clearly spelling out why audience members should care—what’s in it for them!

Informative versus Persuasive Conclusions

As you read through the ten possible ways to conclude a speech, hopefully you noticed that some of the methods are more appropriate for persuasive speeches and others are more appropriate for informative speeches. To help you choose appropriate conclusions for informative, persuasive, or entertaining speeches, we’ve created a table (Table 1 “Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices”) to help you quickly identify appropriate concluding devices.

Table 1. Your Speech Purpose and Concluding Devices

Types of Concluding Devices	**General Purposes of Speeches**		
	Informative	*Persuasive*	
Challenge		x	x
Quotation	x	x	x
Summary	x	x	x
Visualizing the Future	x	x	x
Appeal		x	x

Types of Concluding Devices	General Purposes of Speeches		
Inspirational	x	x	x
Advice		x	x
Proposal of Solution		x	x
Question	x	x	x
Reference to Audience		x	x

Key Takeaways

- An effective conclusion contains three basic parts: a restatement of the speech's thesis; a review of the main points discussed within the speech; and a concluding device that helps create a lasting image in audiences' minds.
- Miller (1946) found that speakers tend to use one of ten concluding devices. All of these devices are not appropriate for all speeches, so speakers need to determine which concluding device would have the strongest, most powerful effect for a given audience, purpose, and occasion.

Exercises

1. Take the last speech you gave in class and rework the speech's conclusion to reflect the three parts of a conclusion. Now do the same thing with the speech you are currently working on for class.
2. Think about the speech you are currently working on in class. Write out concluding statements using three of the devices discussed in this chapter. Which of the devices would be most useful for your speech? Why?

ANALYZING A CONCLUSION

Learning Objectives

- See what a full conclusion section looks like.
- Distinguish among the three parts of a conclusion.

So far this chapter has focused on how to go about creating a clear conclusion. We discussed why conclusions are important, the three steps of effective conclusions, and ten different ways to conclude a speech. In this section, we're going to examine an actual conclusion to a speech. Please read the sample conclusion paragraph for the smart dust speech.

Sample Conclusion: Smart Dust

> Today, we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives sooner rather than later. While smart dust is quickly transforming from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. While smart dust is definitely coming, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, aren't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy.

Now that you've had a chance to read the conclusion to the speech on smart dust, read it a second time and try to find the three parts of an introduction as discussed earlier in this chapter. Once you're finished analyzing this conclusion, take a look at Table 1 "Smart Dust Conclusion", which shows you how the speech was broken down into the various parts of a conclusion.

Table 1. Smart Dust Conclusion
Smart Dust Conclusion

Parts of a Conclusion	Analysis
Today we've explored how smart dust may impact all of our lives in the near future by	*Restate Thesis* The first part of the conclusion is a restatement of the thesis statement.
examining what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.	*Review Main Points* Following the thesis statement, the speech briefly reiterates the three main points discussed in the speech.
While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. While smart dust is definitely in our near future, swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries to consider. Even Dr. Kris Pister's Smart Dust Project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."	*Concluding Device* In this concluding device, we see not only a referral to the attention getter (Michael Crichton's book *Prey*), we also see a visualizing of some future oriented factors people need to consider related to smart dust, which is

Parts of a Conclusion	Analysis
	then followed by a direct quotation.
Notice that in an informative speech this type of conclusion is appropriate because we are trying to inform people about smart dust, but would you want to end a persuasive speech in this fashion? Definitely not!	
However, you could create an entire persuasive speech advocating for smart dust (its many applications are more important than the loss of privacy) or against smart dust (privacy is more important than its many applications).	

Your Turn

Now that you have seen the above analysis of a speech conclusion, we encourage you to do a similar analysis of the conclusions of other speeches. Listen to a speech in your class or online. Does it end with a restatement of the thesis, a review of the main points, and a concluding device? Can you suggest ways to improve the conclusion?

Here is another exercise to try. Consider the specific purpose and three main points of a hypothetical speech. Based on those components, develop a conclusion for that speech.

PRESENTATIONAL AIDS

TYPES OF VISUAL AIDS

In the past, transparencies displayed with overhead projectors, posters, and flip charts were common visual aids, but these have mostly been replaced with computer technology. For many people, the term "visual aids" for presentations or speeches is synonymous with PowerPoint (often long, dry, painful PowerPoint at that), but this is just one type of visual aid. You should consider all the available options to determine what will be most effective and appropriate for your presentation.

> If you wear clothes that don't suit you, you're a fashion victim. You have to wear clothes that make you look better. – Vivienne Westwood

Personal Appearance

Some people chose to dress up as part of their presentation, and this can help set the tone of the speech or reinforce a specific point. A speaker may choose to wear a handmade sweater in a talk about knitting in order to inspire others to begin the hobby. Another speaker may opt for a firefighter's uniform in a speech about joining the local volunteer fire department in an effort to appeal to the respect most people have for people in uniform.

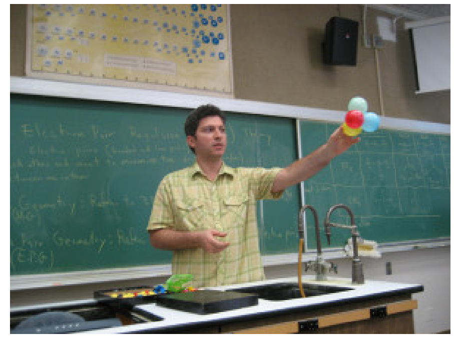
If you aren't dressing in relation to your topic, you should dress appropriately for your audience and venue. A presentation to a professional audience or at a professional conference would lend itself to appropriate business attire. If you are giving a presentation to your local Girl Scout troop, more casual clothing may be the best choice. Any time you are doing a demonstration, make sure you are dressed appropriately to give the demonstration. It is difficult for a speaker to show how to correctly put on a rock climbing harness if she is wearing a skirt the day of the presentation.

"Firefighters Onboard Royal Navy Destroyer HMS Edinburgh" by UK Ministry of Defence. *CC-BY-NC.*

Beyond dressing appropriately for your audience and topic, the audience will make judgments about you even before your presentation begins. Your dress, mannerisms, the way you greet the audience when they are arriving, how you are introduced, and the first words out of your mouth all impact your credibility and ability to connect with your audience. Make sure you are calm and welcoming to your audience when they arrive and greet them in a professional manner. Your credibility and professionalism suffer when the audience arrives and you are busy scrambling around attempting to finish your preparations. (((Note: Duarte, N. (2010). *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.)))

Objects and Props

Objects and props, such as a bicycle helmet for a speech on bike safety or an actual sample of the product you are trying to sell, can greatly enhance your presentation. Seeing the actual item will often make it easier for your audience to understand your meaning and will help you connect with your audience on an emotional level. Props can be used as part of demonstrations (discussed below) or as a stand-alone item that you refer to in your speech.



"Honestly I Don't Remember Much from This Lecture" by Daniel Lu. *CC-BY-NC-ND.*

There are several important considerations for using props in your presentation. If you have a large audience, showing the prop at the front of the venue may mean that audience members can't see the item. The alternative to this is to pass the item around, though Young and Travis (((Note: Young, K. S., & Travis, H. P. (2008). *Oral communication: Skills, choices, and consequences* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.))) advise caution in passing objects around during your speech, as most people will be seeing the object after you have moved on with your talk. Having your prop out of sync with your presentation, either as it is passed around disrupting your audience's attention or by having your prop visible when you aren't talking about it, is distracting to your audience and message. To make the most effective use of props in your presentation, carefully consider how the object will be visible to your entire audience when you are speaking about it, and make sure it is out of sight when you are not.

Demonstration

A demonstration can serve two different purposes in a speech. First, it can be used to "wow" the audience. Showing off the features of your new product, illustrating the catastrophic failure of a poorly tied climbing knot, or launching a cork across the room during a chemistry experiment are all ways of capturing the audience's attention. Demonstration should not be gimmicky, but should add value to your presentation. When done well, it can be the memorable moment from your speech, so make sure it reinforces the central message of your talk.

"A dad teaches his daughter the hula hoop at the 2011 Downton Cuckoo Fair" by *Anguskirk. CC-BY-NC-ND.*

Demonstration can also be used to show how something is done. People have different learning styles, and a process demonstration can help visual learners better understand the concept being taught. Consider for a moment the difference between reading the instructions on how to perform CPR, watching someone perform CPR, and trying CPR on the training dummy. As evidenced by the huge number of online videos illustrating how to do something, there is great value in watching while you learn a new task.

If your presentation includes a process where seeing will improve understanding, consider including a demonstration.

Because you have a limited time to present, make sure your demonstrations are succinct, well rehearsed, and visible to the entire audience. Be prepared for the demonstration to fail and have a back-up plan in place. It is better to move forward with your presentation than to fret with trying to get your demonstration perfect or fixed. However, if you are providing a demonstration of your new product, make sure it is as error free as possible. If you can't be positive the product will perform as expected, it is better to skip the demonstration.

Posters and Flip Charts

If you are presenting to a small audience, around a dozen people, you may choose to use a poster rather than PowerPoint. The focus of your poster should be to support your core message and can be left behind to remind those in attendance of your presentation after you have left. Posters should look professional (e.g., not handwritten), be visible to everyone in the room, and follow design rules covered later in this chapter. Before your presentation, you should ask whether posters must be hung or be free standing. For posters that will be hung from a wall, sturdy poster or matte boards will suffice. If your poster is going to be free standing or if you are going to use the same poster for multiple presentations, you should consider using a tri-fold display board.

Other text-based visual aids include white boards and flip charts. Both can be used to write or draw on during the presentation and should be used with several caveats. Writing during your presentation actually takes away from your speaking time, so make sure to factor this into your speaking time. Speaking and writing at the same time can be tricky because the audience will have a difficult time processing what they are hearing when they are also trying to read what you write. Additionally, if you are writing, you need to be careful not to turn your back on your audience, which is makes it harder for them to hear you and for you to connect with your audience. Legible handwriting that can be seen at a distance is of prime importance, so using these kinds of visual aids should be limited to small audiences. While some speakers write and draw to highlight important points, this takes an enormous amount of skill and practice. For those with less developed skills, flip charts are best limited to situations where audience input is necessary for the direction or continuation of the presentation. (((Note: Duarte, N. (2008). *Slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations.* Sebastopol, CA : O'Reilly Media.)))

"Dad's Jr. Year Science Fair Project" by Rev. Xanatos Satanicos Bombasticos. CC-BY-NC-SA.

> The soul never thinks without a picture. – Aristotle

Audio and Video

A large amount of digitized audio and video is now available to be included and embedded in your presentation. Select short clips; Young and Travis (((Note: Young, K. S., & Travis, H. P. (2008). *Oral communication: Skills, choices, and consequences* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.))) recommend only 10–20 seconds, but this will depend in part on the length of the presentation, the purpose of the presentation, and clip content and relevance. You should not have a presentation primarily composed of audio/video clips. Select only clips that reinforce the message or serve as an appropriate segue into your next topic.

When including audio or video in your speech, there are several technical considerations. It is important that the clip be properly cued to start at exactly where you want it to begin playing. It distracts from both your audience's attention and your credibility when you are fumbling with technology during a speech. It is also important that your file format can be played on the computer you are using. Since not all computers will play all file formats, be sure to test playability and audio volume before your presentation. Again, going back to providing a professional appearance from your first interaction with your audience, you should iron out the technical details before they enter the room. As with a demonstration, if your clip isn't playing properly, move on rather than attempt to correct the issue. Fumbling with technology is a waste of your audience's valuable time.

Handouts

There are many schools of thought on the use of handouts during a presentation. The most common current practice is that the presenters provide a copy of their PowerPoint slides to the participants before or after the presentation. This is so common that some academic and professional conferences require presenters to submit their slides prior to the event, so copies of the slides can be made for each attendee. Despite this prevailing trend, you should avoid using your slides as handouts because they serve different purposes. Using your presentation slides as the handout both shortchanges your slides and fails as a handout.

Handouts are best used to supplement the content of your talk. If you are providing statistical data, your slide may only show the relevant statistic focusing on the conclusion you want your audience to draw. Your handout, on the other hand, can contain the full table of data. If you need to show a complex diagram or chart, a handout will be more legible than trying to cram all that information on a slide. Since you need to simplify the data to make it understandable on a slide, the handout can contain the evidence for your message in a way that is legible, detailed, complex, and shows respect for the audience's time and intelligence. (((Note: Tufte, E. R. (2003). *The cognitive style of PowerPoint*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.)))

"Lt. Lydia Battey distributes handouts" by Kerryl Cacho. Public domain.

You don't need to include everything in your talk, and you don't need to pack all your information into your slides. Write a handout document with as much detail as you want and keep the slides simple. Presenters often feel the need to display all the data and information they have so they will appear knowledgeable, informed, and thoroughly prepared. You can help ease this feeling by creating a handout with all of the detailed data you wish, which leaves your slides open to focus on your key message. (((Note: Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders.)))

> There are many true statements about complex topics that are too long to fit on a PowerPoint slide. – Edward Tufte

Crafting an appropriate handout will take additional time for the presenter, but doing so will result in a take-away document that will stand on its own and a slide show that focuses on effective visual content. Duarte (2008) and Tufte (2003) recommend handouts only for dense, detailed information. Reynolds (((Note: Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders.))) expands on this idea, noting that your handout needs to be complete enough to stand in your place since you won't be there to present the information or answer questions.

When to distribute handouts is also heavily debated. So common is the practice of providing handouts at the beginning of a presentation that it may seem wrong to break the convention. It is important to understand, however, that if people have paper in front of them while you are speaking, their attention will be split between the handout, your other visual aids, and your words. To counter this, you might consider distributing handouts as they are needed during the presentation and allowing time for people to review them before continuing on. (((Note: Vasile, A. J. (2004). *Speak with confidence: A practical guide* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.))) This may not be a viable option for shorter presentations, and the interruption in the flow of the presentation may be hard to recover from. Unless having the documents in front of your audience is absolutely critical to the success of the presentation, handouts should be distributed at the end of the presentation.

Slideware

Slideware is a generic term for the software used create and display slide shows such as *Microsoft PowerPoint*, *Apple iWorks Keynote*, *Google Drive Presentation*, *Zoho Show* and others. Composed of individual slides, collectively known as the **slide deck**, slideware is a de facto standard for presentation visual aids despite criticisms and complaints about the format. In truth, the problem is not with the software but in the use of the program. The focus of much of the remainder of this chapter will be suggestions and best practices for creating effective slide decks that will be high impact and avoid many of the complaints of slideware detractors. Before this discussion, there are two distinct slideware presentation styles that should be mentioned.

"Steve Jobs Presentation" by Ken.gz. *CC-BY.*

> A picture is a poem without words. – Horace

Pecha Kucha

Pecha Kucha is a method of presenting using a slide deck of 20 slides that display for 20 seconds per slide, advance automatically, and generally contain no text. (((Note: Duarte, N. (2008). *Slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations*. Sebastopol, CA : O'Reilly Media.))) This method began in 2003 as a way to contain the length of presentations of architects and continues to grow in popularity, but is still reserved mostly for people in creative industries. (((Note: Lehtonen, M. (2011). Communicating competence through PechaKucha presentations. *Journal of Business Communication*, *48*(4), 464–))481.) Because of the restrictive format, Pecha Kucha-style presentations help the speaker practice editing, pacing, connecting with the audience, focusing on the message, and using images in place of words. (((Note: Beyer, A. (2011). Improving student presentations: Pecha Kucha and just plain PowerPoint. *Teaching of Psychology*, *38*(2), 122–))126.)

Prezi

While not quite slideware, **Prezi** is digital presentation software that breaks away from the standard slide deck presentation. It requires users to plot out their themes before adding primarily image-focused content. (((Note: Panag, S. (2010). A Web 2.0 Toolkit for Educators. *Youth Media Reporter*, 489–))91.) Instead of flipping through the slide deck, the presenter zooms in and out of the presentation to visually demonstrate connections not available in other slideware. The design of the software lends itself toward more rapidly changing visuals. This helps to keep the viewer engaged but also lends itself to over-populating the blank canvas with images. (((Note: Yee, K., & Hargis, J. (2010). PREZI: A different way to present. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education (TOJDE)*, *11*(4), 9–11.)))

Prezi's fast moving images and, at times, unusual movement can make users dizzy or disoriented. Careful work is needed during planning and practice so that the point of the talk isn't the wow factor of the Prezi software, but that your visuals enhance your presentation. The best way to learn more about this emerging tool is to visit the Prezi website to view examples.

If opting to use Prezi in a corporate environment, you should strongly consider one of the paid options for the sole purpose of removing the Prezi logo from the presentation.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Slide and slide show design have a major impact on your ability to get your message across to your audience. Numerous books address various design fundamentals and slide design, but there isn't always consensus on what is "best." What research has shown, though, is that people have trouble grasping information when it comes at them simultaneously. "They will either listen to you or read your slides; they cannot do both." (((Note: Duarte, N. (2008). *Slide:ology: The art and science of creating great presentations.* Sebastopol, CA : O'Reilly Media.))) This leaves you, the presenter, with a lot of power to direct or scatter your audience's attention. This section will serve as an overview of basic design considerations that even novices can use to improve their slides.

First and foremost, design with your audience in mind. Your slide show is not your outline. The show is also not your handout. As discussed earlier, you can make a significantly more meaningful, content-rich handout that complements your presentation if you do not try to save time by making a slide show that serves as both. Keep your slides short, create a separate handout if needed, and write as many notes for yourself as you need.

Figure 13.1

All decisions, from the images you use to their placement, should be done with a focus on your message, your medium, and your audience. Each slide should reinforce or enhance your message, so make conscious decisions about each element and concept you include (((Note: Reynolds, G. (2008). *Presentation Zen: Simple ideas on presentation design and delivery.* Berkeley, CA: New Riders.))) and edit mercilessly. Taken a step further, graphic designer Robin Williams (((Note: Williams, R. (2004). *The nondesigner's design book: Design and typographic principles for the visual novice* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press.))) suggests each element be placed on the slide deliberately in relation to every other element on the slide.

Providing the right amount of information, neither too much nor too little, is one of the key aspects in effective communication. (((Note: Kosslyn, S. M. (2007). *Clear and to the point: 8 psychological principles for compelling PowerPoint presentations.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.))) See Figure 13.1 as an example of slides with too little or too much information. The foundation of this idea is that if the viewers have too little information, they must struggle to put the pieces of the presentation together. Most people, however, include too much information (e.g., slides full of text, meaningless images, overly complicated charts), which taxes the audience's ability to process the message. "There is simply a limit to a person's ability to process new information efficiently and effectively." (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) As a presenter, reducing the amount of information directed at your audience (words, images, sounds, etc.) will help them to better remember your message. (((Note: Mayer, R. E. (2001). *Multimedia learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.))) In this case, less is actually more.

Figure 13.1 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

The first strategy to keeping it simple is to include only one concept or idea per slide. If you need more than one slide, use it, but don't cram more than one idea on a slide. While many have tried to proscribe the number of slides you need based on the length of your talk, there is no formula that works for every presentation. Use only the number of slides necessary to communicate your message, and make sure the number of slides corresponds to the amount of time allotted for your speech. Practice with more and fewer slides and more and less content on each slide to find the balance between too much information and too little.

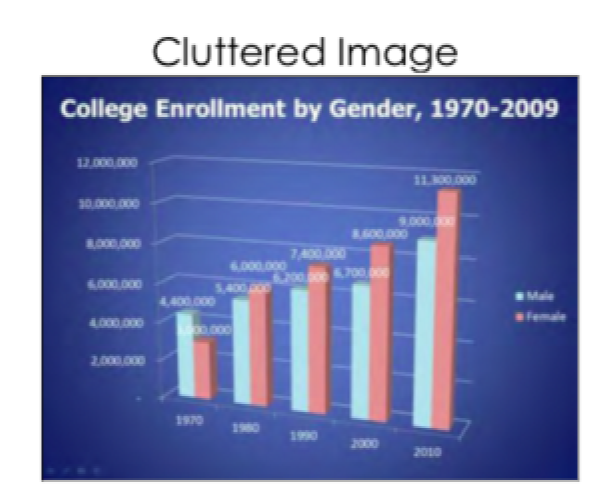
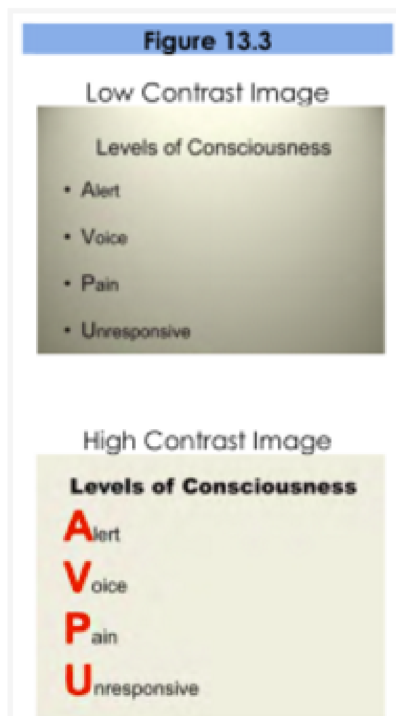


Figure 13.2 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

With simplicity in mind, the goal is to have a slide that can be understood in 3 seconds. Think of it like a billboard you are passing on the highway. (((Note: Duarte, N. (2010). *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.))) You can achieve this by reducing the amount of irrelevant information, also known as **noise**, in your slide as much as possible. This might include eliminating background images, using clear icons and images, or creating simplified graphs. Your approach should be to remove as much from your slide as possible until it no longer makes any sense if you remove more. (((Note: Reynolds 2008)))

Slide Layout

It is easy to simply open up your slideware and start typing in the bullet points that outline your talk. If you do this, you will likely fall into the traps for which PowerPoint is infamous. Presentation design experts Reynolds (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) and Duarte (((Note: Duarte 2010))) both recommend starting with paper and pen. This will help you break away from the text-based, bullet-filled slide shows we all dread. Instead, consider how you can turn your words and concepts into images. Don't let the software lead you into making a mediocre slide show.



Regarding slide design, focus on simplicity. Don't over-crowd your slide with text and images. Cluttered slides are hard to understand (see Figure 13.2). Leaving empty space, also known as **white space**, gives breathing room to your design. The white space actually draws attention to your focus point and makes your slide appear more elegant and professional. Using repetition of color, font, images, and layout throughout your presentation will help tie all of your slides together. This is especially important if a group is putting visuals together collaboratively. If you have handouts, they should also match this formatting in order to convey a more professional look and tie all your pieces together. (((Note: Reynolds 2008)))

Another general principle is to use contrast to highlight your message. Contrast should not be subtle. Make type sizes significantly different. Make contrasting image placements, such as horizontal and vertical, glaringly obvious. A general principle to follow: if things are not the same, then make them very, very different, (((Note: Williams 2004))) as in Figure 13.3.

A common layout design is called the **rule of thirds**. If you divide the screen using two imaginary lines horizontally and two vertically, you end up with nine sections. The most visually interesting and pleasing portions of the screen will be at the points where the lines intersect.

Figure 13.3 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Figure 13.4

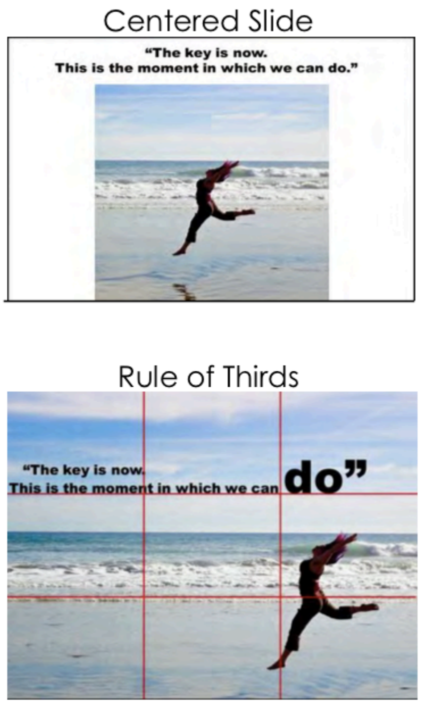


Figure 13.4 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Figure 13.5

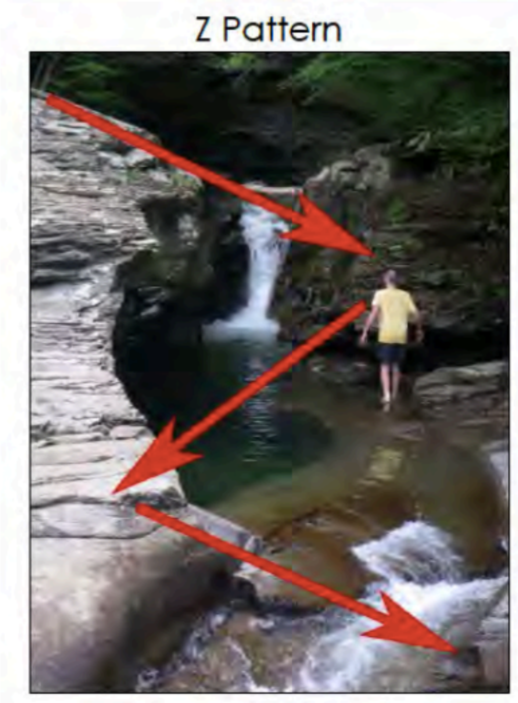


Figure 13.5 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

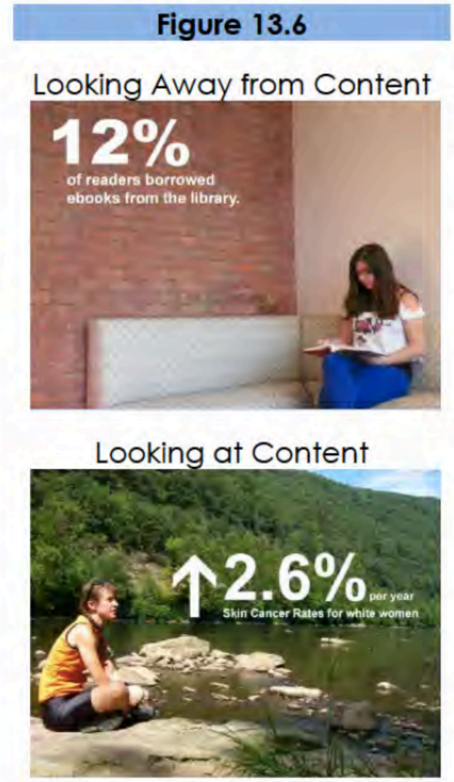


Figure 13.6 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Aligning your text and images with these points is preferred to centering everything on the screen. (((Note: Kadavy, D. (2011). *Design for hackers: Reverse-engineering beauty.* West Sussex, UK : John Wiley & Sons))) (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) See Figure 13.4. Feel free to experiment with the right and left aligned content for contrast and interest. Sticking with a centered layout means more work trying to make the slide interesting. (((Note: Williams 2004)))

Understanding how people view images (and thus slides) can help you direct the viewer's attention to the main point of your slide. In countries that read text from left to right and top to bottom, like English-speaking countries, people tend to also read images and slides the same way. Starting in the upper left of the screen, they read in a **Z pattern**, exiting the page in the bottom right corner unless their vision is side-tracked by the objects they are looking at (as in Figure 13.5).

Viewers' eyes are scanning from focus point to focus point in an image, so you need to consciously create visual cues to direct them to the relevant information. Cues can be created subtly by the placement of objects in the slide, by showing movement, or more obviously by using a simple arrow. (((Note: Malamed, C. (2009). *Visual language for designers: Principles for creating graphics that people understand.* Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.))) Make sure all people and pets are facing into your slide and preferably at your main point, as in Figure 13.6. If your slide contains a road, path, car, plane, etc., have them also facing into your slide. When the natural motion or gaze of your images points away from your slide, your viewers look that way too. Being aware of this and addressing the natural tendencies of people when viewing images can help you select images and design slides that keep the viewer engaged in your message. (((Note: Duarte 2008)))

Backgrounds and Effects

PowerPoint and other slideware has a variety of templates containing backgrounds that are easy to implement for a consistent slide show. Most of them, however, contain distracting graphics that are counter to the simplicity you are aiming for in order to produce a clear message. It is best to use solid colors, if you even need a background at all. For some slide shows, you can make the slides with full-screen images, thus eliminating the need for a background color.

> Graphic design is the paradise of individuality, eccentricity, heresy, abnormality, hobbies and humors. – George Santayana

Should you choose to use a background color, make sure you are consistent throughout your presentation. Different colors portray different meanings, but much of this is cultural and contextual, so there are few hard and fast rules about the meaning of colors. One universal recommendation is to avoid the color red because it has been shown to reduce your ability to think clearly. Bright colors, such as yellow, pink, and orange, should also be avoided as background colors, as they are too distracting. Black, on the other hand, is generally associated with sophistication and can be a very effective background as long as there is sufficient contrast with the other elements on your slide. (((Note: Kadavy 2011)))

When designing your presentation, it is tempting to show off your tech skills with glitzy transitions, wipes, fades, moving text, sounds, and a variety of other actions. These are distracting to your audience and should be avoided. They draw attention away from you and your message, instead focusing the audience's attention on the screen. Since people naturally look at what is moving and expect it to mean something, meaningless effects, no matter how subtle, distract your audience, and affect their ability to grasp the content. Make sure that all your changes are meaningful and reinforce your message (((Note: Duarte 2008; Kosslyn 2007))).

Colors

There are complicated and fascinating biological and psychological processes associated with color and color perception that are beyond the scope of this chapter. Because color can have such a huge impact on the ability to see and understand your visuals, this section will explore basic rules and recommendations for working with color.

> Color does not add a pleasant quality to design—it reinforces it. – Pierre Bonnard

Much of what we perceive in terms of a color is based on what color is next to it. Be sure to use colors that contrast so they can be easily distinguished from each other (think yellow and dark blue for high contrast, not dark blue and purple).High contrast improves visibility, particularly at a distance. To ensure you have sufficient contrast, you can view your presentation in **greyscale** either in the software if available or by printing out your slides on a black and white printer. (((Note: Bajaj, G. (2007). *Cutting edge PowerPoint 2007 for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing.)))

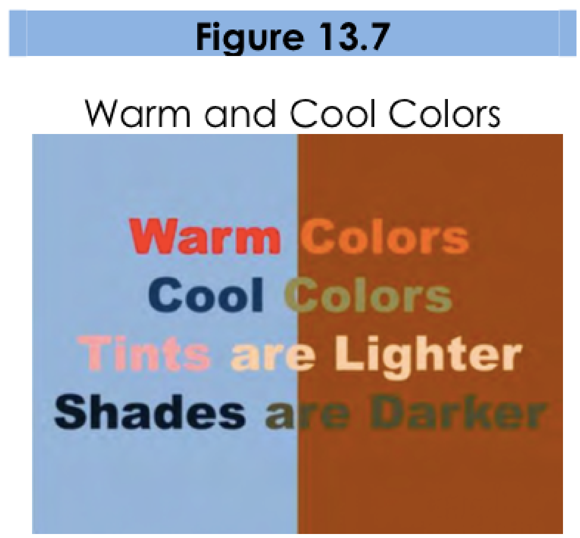


Figure 13.7 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

As seen in Figure 13.7, warm colors (reds, oranges, yellows) appear to come to the foreground when set next to a cool color (blues, grays, purples) which recede into the background. Tints (pure color mixed with white, think pink) stand out against a darker background. Shades (pure color mixed with black, think maroon) recede into a light background. (((Note: Kadavy 2011))) If you want something to stand out, these color combination rules can act as a guide.

Avoid using red and green closely together. Red-green color blindness is the predominate form of color blindness, meaning that the person cannot distinguish between those two colors (Vorick, 2011). There are other forms of color blindness, and you can easily check to see if your visuals will be understandable to everyone using an online tool such as the Coblis Color Blindness Simulator to preview images as a color-blindperson would see it. Certain red-blue pairings can be difficult to look at for the non-color blind. These colors appear to vibrate when adjacent to each other and are distracting and sometimes unpleasant to view. (((Note: Kosslyn 2007)))

With all these rules in place, selecting a color palette, the group of colors to use throughout your presentation, can be daunting. Some color pairs, like complementary colors or analogous colors as in Figure 13.8, are naturally pleasing to the eye and can be easy options for the color novice. There are also online tools for selecting pleasing color palettes using standard color pairings including Kuler and Color Scheme Designer. You can also use websites like Colorbrewer to help identify an appropriate palette of colors that are visually distinct, appropriate for the colorblind, and that will photocopy well, should you decide to also include this information in a handout.

> I'm a visual thinker, not a language-based thinker. My brain is like Google Images. – Temple Grandin

Figure 13.8 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Fonts

There are thousands of fonts available today. One might even say there has been a renaissance in font design with the onset of the digital age. Despite many beautiful options, it is best to stick to standard fonts that are considered screen-friendly. These include the serif fonts Times New Roman, Georgia, and Palatino, and the sans serif fonts Ariel, Helvetica, Tahoma, and Veranda. (((Note: Kadavy 2011))) These fonts work well with the limitations of computer screens and are legible from a distance if sized appropriately. Other non-standard fonts, while attractive and eye-catching, may not display properly on all computers. If the font isn't installed on the computer you are presenting from, the default font will be used which alters the text and design of the slide.

Readability is a top concern with font use, particularly for those at the back of your audience, furthest from the screen. After you have selected a font (see previous paragraph), make sure that the font size is large enough for everyone to read clearly. If you have the opportunity to use the presentation room before the event, view your slides from the back of the room. They should be clearly visible. This is not always possible and should not be done immediately preceding your talk, as you won't have time to effectively edit your entire presentation. Presentation guru Duarte (((Note: Duarte 2008))) describes an ingenious way to test visibility from your own computer. Measure your monitor diagonally in inches, display your slides, then step back the same number of feet as you measured on your monitor in inches. If you have a 17 inch screen, step back 17 feet to see what is legible.

Figure 13.9 by the Public Speaking Project. *CC-BY-NC-ND.*

> Create your own visual style… let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others. – Orson Welles

In addition to font style and size, there are other font "rules" to improve your slides. Don't use decorative, script, or visually complex fonts. Never use the Comic Sans font if you want to retain any credibility with your audience. If you must use more than one font, use one serif font and one sansserif font. Use the same font(s) and size(s) consistently throughout your presentation. Don't use all upper case or all bold. Avoid small caps and all word art, shadows, outlines, stretching text, and other visual effects. Use italics and underlines only for their intended purposes, not for design. While there are many rules listed here, they can be summarized as" keep it as simple as possible." (((Note: Kadavy 2011; Kosslyn 2007))) See Figure 13.9 for examples of poor font choices.

Text

Nothing is more hotly debated in slide design than the amount of text that should be on a slide. Godin says "no more than six words on a slide. EVER." (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) Other common approaches include the 5×5 rule—5 lines of text, 5 words per line—and similar 6×6 and 7×7 rules. (((Note: Weaver, M. (1999). Reach out through technology: Make your point with effective A/V. *Computers in Libraries*, *19*(4), 62.))) Even with these recommendations, it is still painfully common to see slides with so much text on them that they can't be read by the audience. The type has to be so small to fit all the words on the slide that no one can read it. Duarte (((Note: Duarte 2008))) keenly points out that if you have too many words, you no longer have a visual aid. You have either a paper or a teleprompter, and she recommends opting for a small number of words.

Once you understand that the words on the screen are competing for your audience's attention, it will be easier to edit your slide text down to a minimum. The next time you are watching a presentation and the slide changes, notice how you aren't really grasping what the speaker is saying, and you also aren't really understanding what you are reading. Studies have proved this split-attention affects our ability to retain information; (((Note: Mayer 2001))) so when presenting, you need to give your audience silent reading time when you display a new slide. That is: talk, advance to your next slide, wait for them to read the slide, and resume talking. If you consider how much time your audience is reading rather than listening, hopefully you will decide to reduce the text on your slide and return the focus back to you, the speaker, and your message.

There are several ways to reduce the number of words on your page, but don't do it haphazardly. Tufte (((Note: Tufte, E. R. (2003). *The cognitive style of PowerPoint*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.))) warns against abbreviating your message just to make it fit. He says this dumbs down your message, which does a disservice to your purpose and insults your audience's intelligence. Instead, Duarte (((Note: Duarte 2008))) and Reynolds (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) recommend turning as many concepts as possible into images. Studies have shown that people retain more information when they see images that relate to the words they are hearing. (((Note: Mayer 2001))) And when people are presented information for a very short time, they remember images better than words. (((Note: Reynolds 2008)))

> ### Tip
>
> An easy way to judge how much time your audience needs to read your slide silently, is to read the slide text to yourself in reverse order.

The ubiquitous use of bulleted lists is also hotly debated. PowerPoint is practically designed around the bulleted-list format, even though is it regularly blamed for dull, tedious presentations with either overly dense or overly superficial content. (((Note: Tufte 2003))) Mostly this format is used (incorrectly) as a presenter's outline. "*No one can do a good presentation with slide after slide of bullet points. No One.*" (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) Reserve bulleted lists for specifications or explaining the order of processes. In all other cases, look for ways to use images, a short phrase, or even no visual at all.

Quotes, on the other hand, are not as offensive to design when they are short, legible, and infrequently used. They can be a very powerful way to hammer a point home or to launch into your next topic. (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) See Figure 13.10 for an example. If you do use a quote in your slide show, immediately stop and read it out loud or allow time for it to be read silently. If the quote is important enough for you to include it in the talk, the quote deserves the audience's time to read and think about it. Alternately, use a photo of the speaker or of the subject with a phrase from the quote you will be reading them, making the slide enhance the point of the quote.

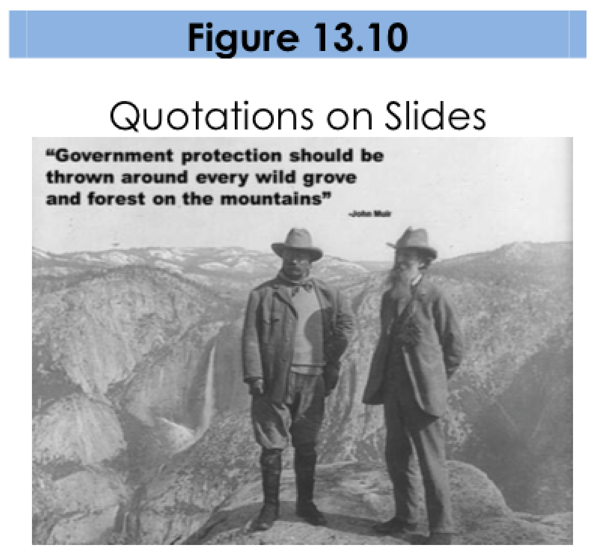


Figure 13.10 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Images

Images can be powerful and efficient ways to tap into your audience's emotions. Use photographs to introduce an abstract idea, to evoke emotion, to present evidence, or to direct the audience attention, just make sure it is compatible with your message. (((Note: Kosslyn 2007))) Photos aren't the only images available. You might consider using simplified images like silhouettes, line art, diagrams, enlargements, or exploded views, but these should be high quality and relevant. Simplified can be easier to understand, particularly if you are showing something that has a lot of detail. Simple images also translate better than words to a multicultural audience. (((Note: Malamad 2009))) In all cases, choose only images that enhance your spoken words and are professional-quality. This generally rules out the clip art that comes with slideware, whose use is a sign of amateurism. Select high-quality images and don't be afraid to use your entire slide to display the image. Boldness with images often adds impact.

When using images, do not enlarge them to the point that the image becomes blurry, also known as **pixelation**. Pixelation, (Figure 13.11) is caused when the resolution of your image is too low for your output device (e.g. printer, monitor, projector). When selecting images, look for clear ones that can be placed in your presentation without enlarging them. A good rule of thumb is to use images over 1,000 pixels wide for filling an entire slide. If your images begin to pixelate, either reduce the size of the image or select a different image.

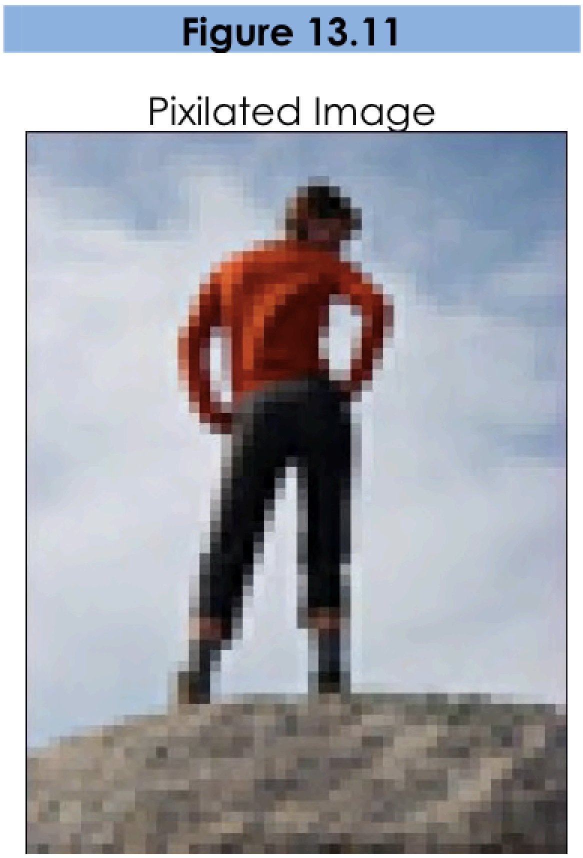


Figure 13.11 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Figure 13.12 by the Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

Never use an image that has a **watermark** on it, as in Figure 13.2. A watermark is text or a logo that is placed in a digital image to prevent people from re-using it. It is common for companies that sell images to have a preview available that has a watermark on it. This allows you, the potential customer, to see the image, but prevents you from using the image until you have paid for it. Using a watermarked image in your presentation is unprofessional. Select another image without a watermark, take a similar photo yourself, or pay to get the watermark-free version.

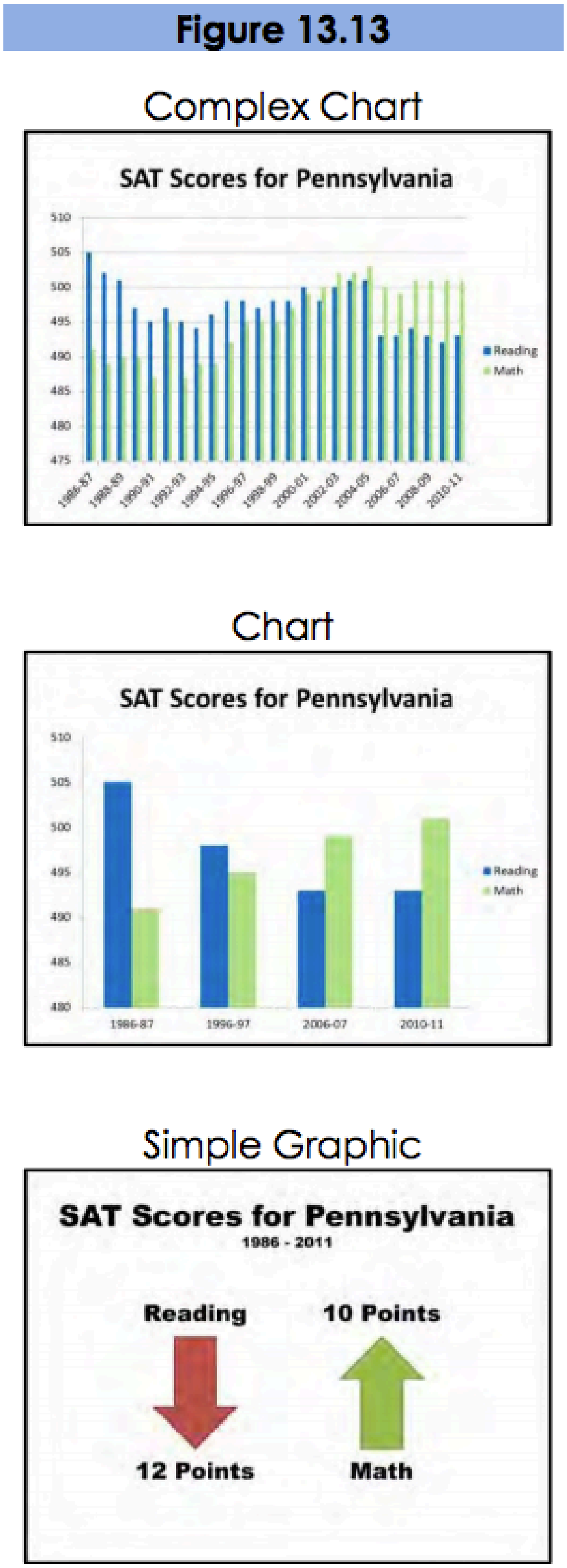
You can create images yourself, use free images, or pay for images from companies like iStockphoto for your presentations. Purchasing images can get expensive quickly, and searching for free images is time consuming. Be sure to only use images that you have permission or rights to use and give proper credit for their use. If you are looking for free images, try searching the Creative Commons database for images from places like Flickr, Google, and others. The creators of images with a **Creative Commons License** allow others to use their work, but with specific restrictions. What is and isn't allowed is described in the license for each image. Generally, images can be used in educational or non-commercial settings at no cost as long as you give the photographer credit. Also, images created by the U.S. government and its agencies are copyright free and can be used at no cost.

One final consideration with using images: having the same image on every page, be it part of the slide background or your company logo, can be distracting and should be removed or minimized. As mentioned earlier, the more you can simplify your slide, the easier it will be for your message to be understood.

Graphs and Charts

If you have numerical data that you want to present, consider using a graph or chart. You are trying to make a specific point with the data on the slide, so make sure that the point—the conclusion you want your audience to draw—is clear. This may mean that you reduce the amount of data you present, even though it is tempting to include all of your data on your slide.

It is best to minimize the amount of information and focus instead on the simple and clear conclusion. (((Note: Duarte 2008))) You can include the complete data set in your handout if you feel it is necessary. (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) Particularly when it comes to numerical data, identify the meaning in the numbers and exclude the rest. "Audiences are screaming 'make it clear,' not 'cram more in.' You won't often hear an audience member say, 'That presentation would have been so much better if it were longer." (((Note: Duarte 2008))) In some cases you can even ditch the graph altogether and display the one relevant fact that is your conclusion.



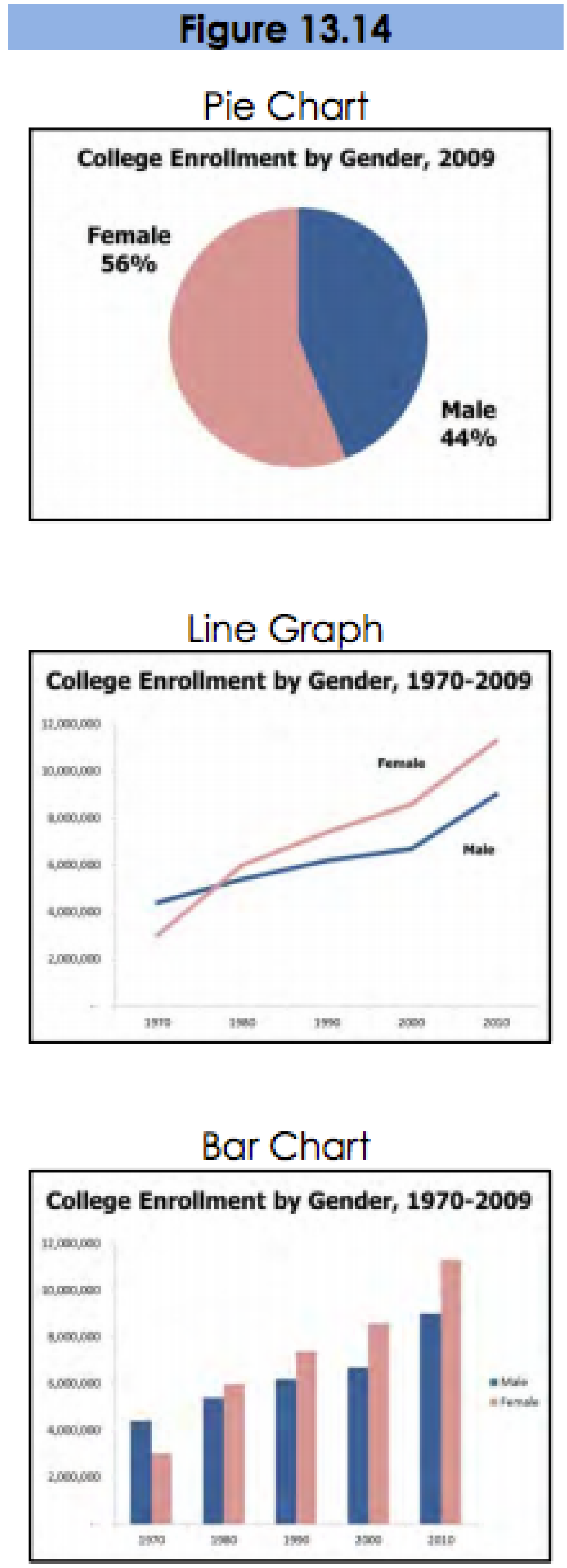


Figure 13.13 by the Public Speaking Project. *CC-BY-NC-ND.*

Different charts have different purposes, and it is important to select the one that puts your data in the appropriate context to be clearly understood. (((Note: Tufte 2003))) Pie charts show how the parts relate to the whole and are suitable for up to eight segments, as long as they remain visually distinct. (((Note: Duarte 2008))) Start your first slice of the pie at 12:00 with your smallest portion and continue around the circle clockwise as the sections increase in size. Usea line graph to show trends over time or how data relates or interacts. Bar charts are good for showing comparisons of size or magnitude (((Note: Kosslyn 2007))) and for showing precise comparisons. (((Note: Duarte 2008))) There are other types of charts and graphs available, but these are the most common.

When designing charts, one should use easily distinguishable colors with clear labels. Be consistent with your colors and data groupings. (((Note: Kosslyn 2007))) For clarity, avoid using 3-D graphs and charts, and remove as much of the background noise (lines, shading, etc.) as possible. (((Note: Reynolds 2008))) All components of your graph, once the clutter is removed, should be distinct from any background color. Finally, don't get too complex in any one graph, make sure your message is as clear as possible, and make sure to visually highlight the conclusion you want the audience to draw.

VISUAL AID TIPS

Table 13.1: Visual Aid Tips

Select only visual aids that enhance or clarify your message.
Select visual aids that will have the greatest impact on your audience.
Speak to your audience not to your visual aid or the screen.
Reveal your visuals only when they are relevant to your current point, and take them away when they are no longer being talked about.
Practice with your visual aids and make sure all demonstrations work smoothly.
Design visuals so they can be understood within three seconds.
Keep your visuals as simple as possible while still conveying your message.
When presenting text to your audience, give them time to read before you begin speaking again.
Be prepared to move on with your presentation should any of the visual aids falter or fail. No matter how great your visuals are, you need to be prepared to speak without them.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Conclusion

This chapter addresses both the role and value of using visual aids, including slideware, objects, audio and video clips, and demonstrations. They should be used only when they help to clarify or enhance your spoken words or will help your audience remember your message.

Be sure that any visual aid you use adds to what you are saying. Slides should be brief, easy to understand, and complement your message. Objects and slides should not be revealed before you begin talking about them, lest your audience become distracted from your point. Remember that people cannot read your slides or handouts at the same time as they are listening to you.

When designing slides make sure they are clear and visible to the entire audience. Contrasting colors with consideration for common color blindness should be used. Screen- friendly fonts of sufficient size to be read from the back of the room are extremely important. Avoid clutter on your slides and leverage the power of white space, aiming always for simplicity and impact.

Practice your presentation with your visual aids, remembering to allow time for your audience to read any new text you present. Be prepared to continue in a professional manner should your visuals falter or fail. The ease with which you implement your visuals and move past any problems demonstrates your professionalism and bolsters your credibility.

Effective selection, design, and implementation of visual aids will increase your audience's attention and help to vanquish "death by PowerPoint." It will make you and your message clearer and more memorable, which will help you to achieve your primary goal: an audience that understands and connects with your message.

Review Questions

1. Other than slides, list three types of visual aids that can be used in a presentation and give an example of each.
2. What are the ways that visual aids can benefit a presentation? Harm a presentation?
3. Describe the benefits of white space in design.
4. Explain the different purposes and content of handouts as compared to slide shows.
5. List and explain two considerations when using color in your slides.
6. Discuss the pros and cons of having a large amount of text on a slide.

Activities

1. Using the data below, design 3 different types of charts/graphs to effectively display data from this table. Which is most effective and why?

City	Median Home Cost	Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate

Richmond, Virginia	$218,900	$38,266	6.90%
Asheville, North Carolina	$201,300	$39,408	8.50%
Durango, Colorado	$302,400	$53,882	7.00%

2. Design 6 different slides that express the following "The USDA study indicated that in 2010, 17.2 million households in America had difficulty providing enough food due to a lack of resources." (From http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/pressreleases/2011/0391.htm)
   Which slide most clearly gets your point across and why?
3. Identify as many problems as you can in the slide on the right. Then re-design the slide to more effectively communicate the message.

"Slide for Question 3" by Public Speaking Project. CC-BY-NC-ND.

INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

Welcome to Informative Speaking

An informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that you've engaged in throughout your life. When you give driving directions, you convey knowledge. When you caution someone about crossing the street at a certain intersection, you are describing a dangerous situation. When you steer someone away from using the car pool lane, you are explaining what it's for.

When your professors greet you on the first day of a new academic term, they typically hand out a course syllabus, which informs you about the objectives and expectations of the course. Much of the information comes to have greater meaning as you actually encounter your coursework. Why doesn't the professor explain those meanings on the first day? He or she probably does, but in all likelihood, the explanation won't really make sense at the time because you don't yet have the supporting knowledge to put it in context.

However, it is still important that the orientation information be offered. It is likely to answer some specific questions, such as the following: Am I prepared to take this course? Is a textbook required? Will the course involve a great deal of writing? Does the professor have office hours? The answers to these questions should be of central importance to all the students. These orientations are informative because they give important information relevant to the course.

An informative speech does not attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another. It does not advocate a course of action. Let's say, for instance, that you have carefully followed the news about BP's Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Let's further say that you felt outraged by the sequence of events that led to the spill and, even more so, by its consequences. Consider carefully whether this is a good topic for your informative speech. If your speech describes the process of offshore oil exploration, it will be informative. However, if it expresses your views on what petroleum corporations *should* do to safeguard their personnel and the environment, save that topic for a persuasive speech.

Being honest about your private agenda in choosing a topic is important. It is not always easy to discern a clear line between informative and persuasive speech. Good information has a strong tendency to be persuasive, and persuasion relies on good information. Thus informative and persuasive speaking do overlap. It remains up to you to examine your real motives in choosing your topic. As we have said in various ways, ethical speaking means respecting the intelligence of your audience. If you try to circumvent the purpose of the informative speech in order to plant a persuasive seed, your listeners will notice. Such strategies often come across as dishonest.

INFORMATIVE SPEAKING GOALS

Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of accuracy, clarity, and listener interest in informative speaking.
- Discuss why speaking to inform is important. Identify strategies for making information clear and interesting to your speaking audience.

A good informative speech conveys accurate information to the audience in a way that is clear and that keeps the listener interested in the topic. Achieving all three of these goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest—is the key to your effectiveness as a speaker. If information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unclear, it will be of limited usefulness to the audience. There is no topic about which you can give complete information, and therefore, we strongly recommend careful narrowing. With a carefully narrowed topic and purpose, it is possible to give an accurate picture that isn't misleading.

Part of being accurate is making sure that your information is current. Even if you know a great deal about your topic or wrote a good paper on the topic in a high school course, you need to verify the accuracy and completeness of what you know. Most people understand that technology changes rapidly, so you need to update your information almost constantly, but the same is true for topics that, on the surface, may seem to require less updating. For example, the American Civil War occurred 150 years ago, but contemporary research still offers new and emerging theories about the causes of the war and its long-term effects. So even with a topic that seems to be unchanging, you need to carefully check your information to be sure it's accurate and up to date.

In order for your listeners to benefit from your speech, you must convey your ideas in a fashion that your audience can understand. The clarity of your speech relies on logical organization and understandable word choices. You should not assume that something that's obvious to you will also be obvious to the members of your audience. Formulate your work with the objective of being understood in all details, and rehearse your speech in front of peers who will tell you whether the information in your speech makes sense.

In addition to being clear, your speech should be interesting. Your listeners will benefit the most if they can give sustained attention to the speech, and this is unlikely to happen if they are bored. This often means you will decide against using some of the topics you know a great deal about. Suppose, for example, that you had a summer job as a veterinary assistant and learned a great deal about canine parasites. This topic might be very interesting to you, but how interesting will it be to others in your class? In order to make it interesting, you will need to find a way to connect it with their interests and curiosities. Perhaps there are certain canine parasites that also pose risks to humans—this might be a connection that would increase audience interest in your topic.

Why We Speak to Inform

Informative speaking is a means for the delivery of knowledge. In informative speaking, we avoid expressing opinion.

This doesn't mean you may not speak about controversial topics. However, if you do so, you must deliver a fair statement of each side of the issue in debate. If your speech is about standardized educational testing, you must honestly represent the views both of its proponents and of its critics. You must not take sides, and you must not slant your explanation of the debate in order to influence the opinions of the listeners. You are simply and clearly defining the debate. If you watch the evening news on a major network television (ABC, CBS, or NBC), you will see newscasters who undoubtedly have personal opinions about the news, but are trained to avoid expressing those opinions through the use of loaded words, gestures, facial expressions, or vocal tone. Like those newscasters, you are already educating your listeners simply by informing them. Let them make up their own minds. This is probably the most important reason for informative speaking.

Making Information Clear and Interesting for the Audience

A clear and interesting speech can make use of description, causal analysis, or categories. With description, you use words to create a picture in the minds of your audience. You can describe physical realities, social realities, emotional experiences, sequences, consequences, or contexts. For instance, you can describe the mindset of the Massachusetts town of Salem during the witch trials. You can also use causal analysis, which focuses on the connections between causes and consequences. For example, in speaking about health care costs, you could explain how a serious illness can put even a well-insured family into bankruptcy. You can also use categories to group things together. For instance, you could say that there are three categories of investment for the future: liquid savings, avoiding debt, and acquiring properties that will increase in value.

There are a number of principles to keep in mind as a speaker to make the information you present clear and interesting for your audience. Let's examine several of them.

Adjust Complexity to the Audience

If your speech is too complex or too simplistic, it will not hold the interest of your listeners. How can you determine the right level of complexity? Your audience analysis is one important way to do this. Will your listeners belong to a given age group, or are they more diverse? Did they all go to public schools in the United States, or are some of your listeners international students? Are they all students majoring in communication studies, or is there a mixture of majors in your audience? The answers to these and other audience analysis questions will help you to gauge what they know and what they are curious about.

Never assume that just because your audience is made up of students, they all share your knowledge set. If you base your speech on an assumption of similar knowledge, you might not make sense to everyone. If, for instance, you're an intercultural communication student discussing multiple identities, the psychology students in your audience will most likely reject your message. Similarly, the term "viral" has very different meanings depending on whether it is used with respect to human disease, popular response to a website, or population theory. In using the word "viral," you absolutely must explain specifically what you mean. You should not hurry your explanation of a term that's vulnerable to misinterpretation. Make certain your listeners know what you mean before continuing your speech. Stephen Lucas explains, "You cannot assume they will know what you mean. Rather, you must be sure to explain everything so thoroughly that they cannot help but understand." (((Note: Lucas, Stephen E. (2004). *The art of public speaking*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.))) Define terms to help listeners understand them the way you mean them to. Give explanations that are consistent with your definitions, and show how those ideas apply to your speech topic. In this way, you can avoid many misunderstandings.

Similarly, be very careful about assuming there is anything that "everybody knows." Suppose you've decided to present an informative speech on the survival of the early colonists of New England. You may have learned in elementary school that their survival was attributable, in part, to the assistance of Squanto. Many of your listeners will know which states are in New England, but if there are international students in the audience, they might never have heard of New England. You should clarify the term either by pointing out the region on a map or by stating that it's the six states in the American northeast. Other knowledge gaps can still confound the effectiveness of the speech. For instance, who or what was Squanto? What kind of assistance did the settlers get? Only a few listeners are likely to know that Squanto spoke English and that fact had greatly surprised the settlers when they landed. It was through his knowledge of English that Squanto was able to advise these settlers in survival strategies during that first harsh winter. If you neglect to provide that information, your speech will not be fully informative.

Beyond the opportunity to help improve your delivery, one important outcome of practicing your speech in front of a live audience of a couple of friends or classmates is that you can become aware of terms that are confusing or that you should define for your audience.

Avoid Unnecessary Jargon

If you decide to give an informative speech on a highly specialized topic, limit how much technical language or jargon you use. Loading a speech with specialized language has the potential to be taxing on the listeners. It can become too difficult to "translate" your meanings, and if that happens, you will not effectively deliver information.

Even if you define many technical terms, the audience may feel as if they are being bombarded with a set of definitions instead of useful information. Don't treat your speech as a crash course in an entire topic. If you must, introduce one specialized term and carefully define and explain it to the audience. Define it in words, and then use a concrete and relevant example to clarify the meaning.

Some topics, by their very nature, are too technical for a short speech. For example, in a five-minute speech you would be foolish to try to inform your audience about the causes of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear emergency that occurred in Japan in 2011. Other topics, while technical, can be presented in audience-friendly ways that minimize the use of technical terms. For instance, in a speech about Mount Vesuvius, the volcano that buried the ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, you can use the term "pyroclastic flow" as long as you take the time to either show or tell what it means.

Create Concrete Images

As a college student, you have had a significant amount of exposure to abstract terms. You have become comfortable using and hearing a variety of abstract ideas. However, abstract terms lend themselves to many interpretations. For instance, the abstract term "responsibility" can mean many things. Among other meanings, it can mean duty, task, authority, or blame. Because of the potential for misunderstanding, it is better to use a *concrete* word. For example, instead of saying, "Helen Worth was responsible for the project," you will convey clearer meaning when you say, "Helen Worth was in charge of the project," "Helen Kimes made the project a success," or "Helen Worth was to blame for the failure of the project."

To illustrate the differences between abstract and concrete language, let's look at a few pairs of terms:

Abstract	Concrete
transportation	air travel
success	completion of project
discrimination	exclusion of women
athletic	physically fit
profound	knowledgeable

By using an abstraction in a sentence and then comparing the concrete term in the sentence, you will notice the more precise meanings of the concrete terms. Those precise terms are less likely to be misunderstood. In the last pair of terms, "knowledgeable" is listed as a concrete term, but it can also be considered an abstract term. Still, it's likely to be much clearer and more precise than "profound."

Keep Information Limited

When you developed your speech, you carefully narrowed your topic in order to keep information limited yet complete and coherent. If you carefully adhere to your own narrowing, you can keep from going off on tangents or confusing your audience. If you overload your audience with information, they will be unable to follow your narrative. Use the definitions, descriptions, explanations, and examples you need in order to make your meanings clear, but resist the temptation to add tangential information merely because you find it interesting.

Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge

Certain sets of knowledge are common to many people in your classroom audience. For instance, most of them know what Wikipedia is. Many have found it a useful and convenient source of information about topics related to their coursework. Because many Wikipedia entries are lengthy, greatly annotated, and followed by substantial lists of authoritative sources, many students have relied on information acquired from Wikipedia in writing papers to fulfill course requirements. All this is information that virtually every classroom listener is likely to know. This is the current knowledge of your audience.

Because your listeners are already familiar with Wikipedia, you can link important new knowledge to their already-existing knowledge. Wikipedia is an "open source," meaning that anyone can supplement, edit, correct, distort, or otherwise alter the information in Wikipedia. In addition to your listeners' knowledge that a great deal of good information can be found in Wikipedia, they must now know that it isn't authoritative. Some of your listeners may not enjoy hearing this message, so you must find a way to make it acceptable.

One way to make the message acceptable to your listeners is to show what Wikipedia does well. For example, some Wikipedia entries contain many good references at the end. Most of those references are likely to be authoritative, having been written by scholars. In searching for information on a topic, a student can look up one or more of those references in full-text databases or in the library. In this way, Wikipedia can be helpful in steering a student toward the authoritative information they need. Explaining this to your audience will help them accept, rather than reject, the bad news about Wikipedia.

Make It Memorable

If you've already done the preliminary work in choosing a topic, finding an interesting narrowing of that topic, developing and using presentation aids, and working to maintain audience contact, your delivery is likely to be memorable. Now you can turn to your content and find opportunities to make it appropriately vivid. You can do this by using explanations, comparisons, examples, or language.

Let's say that you're preparing a speech on the United States' internment of Japanese American people from the San Francisco Bay area during World War II. Your goal is to paint a memorable image in your listeners' minds. You can do this through a dramatic contrast, before and after. You could say,

> In 1941, the Bay area had a vibrant and productive community of Japanese American citizens who went to work every day, opening their shops, typing reports in their offices, and teaching in their classrooms, just as they had been doing for years. But on December 7, 1941, everything changed. Within six months, Bay area residents of Japanese ancestry were gone, transported to internment camps located hundreds of miles from the Pacific coast.

This strategy rests on the ability of the audience to visualize the two contrasting situations. You have alluded to two sets of images that are familiar to most college students, images that they can easily visualize. Once the audience imagination is engaged in visualization, they are likely to remember the speech.

Your task of providing memorable imagery does not stop after the introduction. While maintaining an even-handed approach that does not seek to persuade, you must provide the audience with information about the circumstances that triggered the policy of internment, perhaps by describing the advice that was given to President Roosevelt by his top advisers. You might depict the conditions faced by Japanese Americans during their internment by describing a typical day one of the camps. To conclude your speech on a memorable note, you might name a notable individual—an actor, writer, or politician—who is a survivor of the internment.

Such a strategy might feel unnatural to you. After all, this is not how you talk to your friends or participate in a classroom discussion. Remember, though, that public speaking is not the same as talking. It's prepared and formal. It demands more of you. In a conversation, it might not be important to be memorable; your goal might merely be to maintain friendship. But in a speech, when you expect the audience to pay attention, you must make the speech memorable.

Make It Relevant and Useful

When thinking about your topic, it is always very important to keep your audience members center stage in your mind. For instance, if your speech is about air pollution, ask your audience to imagine feeling the burning of eyes and lungs caused by smog. This is a strategy for making the topic more real to them, since it may have happened to them on a number of occasions; and even if it hasn't, it easily could. If your speech is about Mark Twain, instead of simply saying that he was very famous during his lifetime, remind your audience that he was so prominent that their own great-grandparents likely knew of his work and had strong opinions about it. In so doing, you've connected your topic to their own forebears.

Personalize Your Content

Giving a human face to a topic helps the audience perceive it as interesting. If your topic is related to the Maasai rite of passage into manhood, the prevalence of drug addiction in a particular locale, the development of a professional filmmaker, or the treatment of a disease, putting a human face should not be difficult. To do it, find a case study you can describe within the speech, referring to the human subject by name. This conveys to the audience that these processes happen to real people.

Make sure you use a real case study, though—don't make one up. Using a fictional character without letting your audience know that the example is hypothetical is a betrayal of the listener's trust, and hence, is unethical.

Key Takeaways

- One important reason for informative speaking is to provide listeners with information so that they can make up their own minds about an issue.
- Informative speeches must be accurate, clear, and interesting for the listener.
- Strategies to make information clear and interesting to an audience include adjusting the complexity of your information to the audience, avoiding jargon, creating concrete images, limiting information only to what is most relevant, linking information to what the audience already knows, and making information memorable through language or personalization.

Exercises

1. Identify concrete terms with which to replace the following abstractions: motivational, development, fair, natural, and dangerous.
2. Make a list of the arguments both for and against gun control. Make them informative, not persuasive. Your goal is to describe the debate that currently exists without taking a clear position.
3. How might you go about personalizing a speech about water conservation for your classroom audience?

TYPES OF INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

Learning Objectives

- Identify several categories of topics that may be used in informative speaking.
- Describe several approaches to developing a topic.

For some speakers, deciding on a topic is one of the most difficult parts of informative speaking. The following subsections begin by discussing several categories of topics that you might use for an informative presentation.

Then we discuss how you might structure your speech to address potential audience difficulties in understanding your topic or information.

Objects

The term "objects" encompasses many topics we might not ordinarily consider to be "things." It's a category that includes people, institutions, places, substances, and inanimate things. The following are some of these topics:

- Mitochondria
- Dream catchers
- Sharks
- Hubble telescope
- Seattle's Space Needle
- Malta
- Silicon chip
- Spruce Goose
- Medieval armor
- DDT insecticide
- Soy inks
- NAACP

You will find it necessary to narrow your topic about an object because, like any topic, you can't say everything about it in a single speech. In most cases, there are choices about how to narrow the topic. Here are some specific purpose statements that reflect ways of narrowing a few of those topics:

- To inform the audience about the role of soy inks in reducing toxic pollution
- To inform the audience about the current uses of the banned insecticide DDT
- To inform the audience about what we've learned from the Hubble telescope
- To inform the audience about the role of the NAACP in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- To describe the significance of the gigantic Spruce Goose, the wooden airplane that launched an airline

These specific purposes reflect a narrow, but interesting, approach to each topic. These purposes are precise, and they should help you maintain your focus on a narrow but deep slice of knowledge.

People

This category applies both to specific individuals and also to roles. The following are some of these topics:

- Dalai Lamas
- Astronauts
- Tsar Nicholas II
- Modern midwives
- Mata Hari
- Catherine the Great
- Navajo code talkers
- Mahatma Gandhi
- Justice Thurgood Marshall
- Madame Curie
- Leopold Mozart
- Aristotle
- The Hemlock Society
- Sonia Sotomayor
- Jack the Ripper

There is a great deal of information about each one of these examples. In order to narrow the topic or write a thesis statement, it's important to recognize that your speech should not be a biography, or time line, of someone's life. If you attempt to deliver a comprehensive report of every important event and accomplishment related to your subject, then nothing will seem any more important than anything else. To capture and hold your audience's interest, you must narrow to a focus on a feature, event, achievement, or secret about your human topic.

Here are some purpose statements that reflect a process of narrowing:

- To inform the audience about the training program undergone by the first US astronauts to land on the moon
- To inform the audience about how a young Dalai Lama is identified
- To inform the audience about why Gandhi was regarded as a mahatma, or "great heart"
- To inform the audience about the extensive scientific qualifications of modern midwives

Without a limited purpose, you will find, with any of these topics, that there's simply too much to say. Your purpose statement will be a strong decision-making tool about what to include in your speech.

Events

An event can be something that occurred only once, or an event that is repeated:

- The murder of Emmett Till
- The Iditarod Dogsled Race
- The Industrial Revolution
- The discovery of the smallpox vaccine
- The Bikini Atoll atomic bomb tests
- The Bay of Pigs
- The Super Bowl
- The Academy Awards

Again, we find that any of these topics must be carefully narrowed in order to build a coherent speech. Failure to do so will result in a shallow speech. Here are a few ways to narrow the purpose:

- To explain how the murder of Emmett Till helped energize the civil rights movement
- To describe how the Industrial Revolution affected the lives of ordinary people
- To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race

There are many ways to approach any of these and other topics, but again, you must emphasize an important dimension of the event. Otherwise, you run the risk of producing a time line in which the main point gets lost. In a speech about an event, you may use a chronological order, but if you choose to do so, you can't include every detail. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the purpose of the Iditarod dogsled race.

Central Idea: The annual Iditarod commemorates the heroism of Balto, the sled dog that led a dog team carrying medicine 1150 miles to save Nome from an outbreak of diphtheria.

Main Points:

1. Diphtheria broke out in a remote Alaskan town.
2. Dogsleds were the only transportation for getting medicine.
3. The Iditarod Trail was long, rugged, and under siege of severe weather.
4. Balto the dog knew where he was going, even when the musher did not.
5. The annual race commemorates Balto's heroism in saving the lives of the people of Nome.

In this example, you must explain the event. However, another way to approach the same event would describe it. The following is an example:

Specific Purpose: To describe the annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Central Idea: It's a long and dangerous race.

Main Points:

1. The 1150-mile, ten- to seventeen-day race goes through wilderness with widely spaced checkpoints for rest, first aid, and getting fresh dogs.
2. A musher, or dogsled driver, must be at least fourteen years old to endure the rigors of severe weather, exhaustion, and loneliness.
3. A musher is responsible for his or her own food, food for twelve to sixteen dogs, and for making sure they don't get lost.
4. Reaching the end of the race without getting lost, even in last place, is considered honorable and heroic.
5. The expense of participation is greater than the prize awarded to the winner.

By now you can see that there are various ways to approach a topic while avoiding an uninspiring time line. In the example of the Iditarod race, you could alternatively frame it as an Alaskan tourism topic, or you could emphasize the enormous staff involved in first aid, search and rescue, dog care, trail maintenance, event coordination, financial management, and registration.

Concepts

Concepts are abstract ideas that exist independent of whether they are observed or practiced, such as the example of social equality that follows. Concepts can include hypotheses and theories.

- The glass ceiling
- Ethnocentrism
- Honor codes
- Autism
- Karma
- Wellness
- Fairness theory
- Bioethics
- The American Dream
- Social equality

Here are a few examples of specific purposes developed from the examples:

- To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric
- To describe the Hindu concept of karma
- To distinguish the differences between the concepts of wellness and health
- To show the resources available in our local school system for children with autism
- To explain three of Dr. Stephen Suranovic's seven categories of fairness

Here is one possible example of a way to develop one of these topics:

Specific Purpose: To explain why people in all cultures are ethnocentric.

Central Idea: There are benefits to being ethnocentric.

Main Points:

1. Ethnocentrism is the idea that one's own culture is superior to others.
2. Ethnocentrism strongly contributes to positive group identity.
3. Ethnocentrism facilitates the coordination of social activity.
4. Ethnocentrism contributes to a sense of safety within a group.
5. Ethnocentrism becomes harmful when it creates barriers.

In an example of a concept about which people disagree, you must represent multiple and conflicting views as fully and fairly as possible. For instance:

Specific Purpose: To expose the audience to three different views of the American Dream.

Central Idea: The American Dream is a shared dream, an impossible dream, or a dangerous dream, depending on the perspective of the individual.

Main Points:

1. The concept of the American Dream describes a state of abundant well-being in which an honest and productive American can own a home; bring up a family; work at a permanent, well-paying job with benefits; and retire in security and leisure.
2. Many capitalists support the social pattern of working hard to deserve and acquire the material comforts and security of a comfortable life.
3. Many sociologists argue that the American Dream is far out of reach for the 40 percent of Americans at the bottom of the economic scale.
4. Many environmentalists argue that the consumption patterns that accompany the American Dream have resulted in the depletion of resources and the pollution of air, water, and soil.

Processes

If your speech topic is a process, your goal should be to help your audience understand it, or be able to perform it. In either instance, processes involve a predictable series of changes, phases, or steps.

- Soil erosion
- Cell division
- Physical therapy
- Volcanic eruption
- Paper recycling
- Consumer credit evaluations
- Scholarship money searches
- Navy Seal training
- Portfolio building
- The development of Alzheimer's disease

For some topics, you will need presentation aids in order to make your meaning clear to your listeners. Even in cases where you don't absolutely need a presentation aid, one might be useful. For instance, if your topic is evaluating consumer credit, instead of just describing a comparison between two different interest rates applied to the same original amount of debt, it would be helpful to show a graph of the difference. This might also be the sort of topic that would strongly serve the needs of your audience before they find themselves in trouble. Since this will be an informative speech, you must resist the impulse to tell your listeners that one form of borrowing is good and another is bad; you must simply show them the difference in numbers. They can reach their own conclusions.

Organizing your facts is crucially important when discussing a process. Every stage of a process must be clear and understandable. When two or more things occur at the same time, as they might in the development of Alzheimer's disease, it is important to make it clear that several things are occurring at once. For example, as plaque is accumulating in the brain, the patient is likely to begin exhibiting various symptoms.

Here's an example of the initial steps of a speech about a process:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about how to build an academic portfolio.

Central Idea: A portfolio represents you and emphasizes your best skills.

Main Points:

1. A portfolio is an organized selection containing the best examples of the skills you can offer an employer.
2. A portfolio should contain samples of a substantial body of written work, print and electronically published pieces, photography, and DVDs of your media productions.
3. A portfolio should be customized for each prospective employer.
4. The material in your portfolio should be consistent with the skills and experience in your résumé.

In a speech about the process of building a portfolio, there will be many smaller steps to include within each of the main points. For instance, creating separate sections of the portfolio for different types of creative activities, writing a table of contents, labeling and dating your samples, making your samples look attractive and professional, and other steps should be inserted where it makes the most sense, in the most organized places, in order to give your audience the most coherent understanding possible.

You've probably noticed that there are topics that could be appropriate in more than one category. For instance, the 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helen's could be legitimately handled as an event or as a process. If you approach the eruption as an event, most of the information you include will focus on human responses and the consequences on humans and the landscape. If you approach the eruption as a process, you will be using visual aids and explanations to describe geological changes before and during the eruption. You might also approach this topic from the viewpoint of a person whose life was affected by the eruption. This should remind you that there are many ways to approach most topics, and because of that, your narrowing choices and your purpose will be the important foundation determining the structure of your informative speech.

Developing Your Topic for the Audience

One issue to consider when preparing an informative speech is how best to present the information to enhance audience learning. Katherine Rowan suggests focusing on areas where your audience may experience confusion and using the likely sources of confusion as a guide for developing the content of your speech. Rowan identifies three sources of audience confusion: difficult concepts or language, difficult-to-envision structures or processes, and ideas that are difficult to understand because they are hard to believe. (((Note: Rowan, K. E. (1995). A new pedagogy for explanatory public speaking: Why arrangement should not substitute for invention. *Communication Education, 44*, 236–249.))) The following subsections will discuss each of these and will provide strategies for dealing with each of these sources of confusion.

Difficult Concepts or Language

Sometimes audiences may have difficulty understanding information because of the concepts or language used. For example, they may not understand what the term “organic food” means or how it differs from “all-natural” foods. If an audience is likely to experience confusion over a basic concept or term, Rowan suggests using an elucidating explanation composed of four parts. The purpose of such an explanation is to clarify the meaning and use of the concept by focusing on essential features of the concept.

The first part of an elucidating explanation is to provide a typical exemplar, or example that includes all the central features of the concept. If you are talking about what is fruit, an apple or orange would be a typical exemplar.

The second step Rowan suggests is to follow up the typical exemplar with a definition. Fruits might be defined as edible plant structures that contain the seeds of the plant.

After providing a definition, you can move on to the third part of the elucidating explanation: providing a variety of examples and nonexamples. Here is where you might include less typical examples of fruit, such as avocados, squash, or tomatoes, and foods, such as rhubarb, which is often treated as a fruit but is not by definition.

Fourth, Rowan suggests concluding by having the audience practice distinguishing examples from nonexamples. In this way, the audience leaves the speech with a clear understanding of the concept.

Difficult-to-Envision Processes or Structures

A second source of audience difficulty in understanding, according to Rowan, is a process or structure that is complex and difficult to envision. The blood circulation system in the body might be an example of a difficult-to-envision process. To address this type of audience confusion, Rowan suggests a quasi-scientific explanation, which starts by giving a big-picture perspective on the process. Presentation aids or analogies might be helpful in giving an overview of the process. For the circulatory system, you could show a video or diagram of the entire system or make an analogy to a pump. Then you can move to explaining relationships among the components of the process. Be sure when you explain relationships among components that you include transition and linking words like “leads to” and “because” so that your audience understands relationships between concepts. You may remember the childhood song describing the bones in the body with lines such as, “the hip bone’s connected to the thigh bone; the thigh bone’s connected to the knee bone.” Making the connections between components helps the audience to remember and better understand the process.

Difficult to Understand because It's Hard to Believe

A third source of audience confusion, and perhaps the most difficult to address as a speaker, is an idea that's difficult to understand because it's hard to believe. This often happens when people have implicit, but erroneous, theories about how the world works. For example, the idea that science tries to disprove theories is difficult for some people to understand; after all, shouldn't the purpose of science be to prove things? In such a case, Rowan suggests using a transformative explanation. A transformative explanation begins by discussing the audience's implicit theory and showing why it is plausible. Then you move to showing how the implicit theory is limited and conclude by presenting the accepted explanation and why that explanation is better. In the case of scientists disproving theories, you might start by talking about what science has proven (e.g., the causes of malaria, the usefulness of penicillin in treating infection) and why focusing on science as proof is a plausible way of thinking. Then you might show how the science as proof theory is limited by providing examples of ideas that were accepted as "proven" but were later found to be false, such as the belief that diseases are caused by miasma, or "bad air"; or that bloodletting cures diseases by purging the body of "bad humors." You can then conclude by showing how science is an enterprise designed to disprove theories and that all theories are accepted as tentative in light of existing knowledge.

Rowan's framework is helpful because it keeps our focus on the most important element of an informative speech: increasing audience understanding about a topic.

Ethics

Honesty and credibility must undergird your presentation; otherwise, they betray the trust of your listeners. Therefore, if you choose a topic that turns out to be too difficult, you must decide what will serve the needs and interests of the audience. Shortcuts and oversimplifications are not the answer.

Being ethical often involves a surprising amount of work. In the case of choosing too ambitious a topic, you have some choices:

- Narrow your topic further.
- Narrow your topic in a different way.
- Reconsider your specific purpose.
- Start over with a new topic.

Your goal is to serve the interests and needs of your audience, whoever they are and whether you believe they already know something about your topic.

Key Takeaways

- A variety of different topic categories are available for informative speaking.
- One way to develop your topic is to focus on areas that might be confusing to the audience. If the audience is likely to be confused about language or a concept, an elucidating explanation might be helpful. If a process is complex, a quasi-scientific explanation may help. If the audience already has an erroneous implicit idea of how something works then a transformative explanation might be needed.

Exercises

1. Choose a topic such as "American Education in the Twenty-First Century." Write a new title for that speech for each of the following audiences: financial managers, first-year college students, parents of high school students, nuns employed in Roman Catholic schools, psychotherapists, and teamsters. Write a specific purpose for the speech for each of these audiences.
2. Think about three potential topics you could use for an informative speech. Identify where the audience might experience confusion with concepts, processes, or preexisting implicit theories.

Select one of the topics and outline how you would develop the topic to address the audience's potential confusion.

ROLE OF SPEAKER

Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe. – H. G. Wells

Now that you understand the importance of informing others, this next section will show you the speakers' responsibilities for preparing and presenting informative speeches.

Informative Speakers Are Objective

Most public speaking texts discuss three general purposes for speeches: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. Although these general purposes are theoretically distinct, in practice, they tend to overlap. Even in situations when the occasion calls for an informative speech (one which enhances understanding), often persuasive and entertaining elements are present. First, all informative speeches have a persuasive component by virtue of the fact that the speaker tries to convince the audience that the facts presented are accurate (Harlan, 1993). Second, a well-written speech can make even the most dry, technical information entertaining through engaging illustrations, colorful language, unusual facts, and powerful visuals.

In spite of this caveat, when planning your informative speech your primary intent will be to increase listeners' knowledge in an impartial way. For instance, in a speech about urban legends (Craughwell, 2000), your specific purpose statement may be: "*At the end of my speech, my audience will understand what an urban legend is, how urban legends are spread, and common variations of urban legends.*" The topic you choose is not as important as your approach to the material in determining whether your speech is informative or persuasive (Peterson, Stephan, & White, 1992). Can you imagine how speeches on witchcraft, stem cell research, the federal deficit, or hybrid cars could be written either to inform or persuade? Informative speeches need to be as objective, fair, and unbiased as possible. You are not asking your audience to take action or convincing them to change their mind. You are teaching them something and allowing them to decide for themselves what to do with the information. When writing your speech, present all sides of the story and try to remove all unrelated facts, personal opinions, and emotions (Westerfield, 2002).

Informative Speakers are Credible

An objective approach also enhances a speaker's **credibility**. Credibility, or ethos, refers to an audience's perception that the speaker is well prepared and qualified to speak on a topic (Fraleigh & Tuman, 2011). Peterson, Stephan, and White (1992) explain that there are two kinds of credibility; the reputation that precedes you before you give your speech (antecedent credibility) and the credibility you develop during the course of your speech (consequent credibility). In many cases, the audience has no prior knowledge of the speaker, so they make judgments about the quality of the evidence and arguments in the speech. In addition, they look at and listen to the speaker to determine if s/he is a reliable source of information.

Audience members have no motivation to listen to a speaker they perceive as lacking authority or credibility—except maybe to mock the speaker. To avoid this pitfall, there are at least three ways to boost your credibility as a speaker; by establishing your expertise, helping your audience identify with you, and showing you are telling the truth (see examples in Table 15.1). It seems to be common sense that we do not listen to speakers who do not know what they are talking about, who cannot relate to us, or who give the impression of being dishonest. However, in planning informative speeches, we can get so wrapped up in the topic that is easy to forget about the elements of credibility. Just remember that in order to teach, we first have to show that we are worthy of our audience's attention.

Table 15.1 Boost Your Credibility

Establish Expertise By:	• Citing reputable sources • Making sure your facts are accurate • Covering your points in enough detail to demonstrate your knowledge • Revealing your personal expertise with the topic
Help the Audience Identify with You By:	• Wearing appropriate and attractive clothing • Mentioning what you have in common • Being friendly and enthusiastic • Relating to listeners' situations, feelings, and motives
Show You are Telling the Truth By:	• Presenting both sides of an issue • Sharing what motivated you to select your topic • Having open, natural nonverbals that correspond to what you say • Approaching the speech with ethics and positive intentions for your audience

> In the end, you make your reputation and you have your success based upon credibility and being able to provide people who are really hungry for information what they want. – Brit Hume

Informative Speakers Are Knowledgeable

Good informative speeches contain a number of different source citations throughout the speech. To show that the information you present is accurate and complete, these sources should be up-to-date, reliable, unbiased, and directly relevant to your topic. Even if you plan to give a speech about an activity you have done all of your life, you will still need to seek out additional sources for your speech. By all means, you should cite and use your own experiences with the topic, but if you want to appear objective, you will need to show that your ideas and experiences correspond with others'. Using a variety of sound reference materials helps you appear well-informed and more trustworthy.

In our information age, people are fortunate to have unlimited and free access to information on virtually any topic they can imagine via the internet. Unfortunately, in addition to the credible information, the internet contains an abundance of garbage. Good speech writers know that it is important to avoid weak or questionable sources (e.g. Wikipedia, Britannica.com or Ask.com) when constructing their speeches. Start by asking what you know, find out what the experts know, and then move to find out what information other sources can provide (Gladis, 1999). You can search your library catalogue or Amazon.com to locate books (which provide details and depth), and then check out or order these books via interlibrary loan (often free) if they are not available in your library. Explain not only *how* something is done, but also why it is done for a great speech (MacInnis, 2006). This variety gives a speech depth and a level of interest that cannot be achieved merely by doing a Google search and using the first five websites that pop up. For additional ideas on locating sources, "*Sources of interesting information*" is provided at the end of this chapter.

> The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity. – Dorothy Parker

Informative Speakers Make the Topic Relevant

When you are selecting your topic and thinking about what you want to accomplish in your informative speech, two factors should drive your decision. Foremost, you want to select a topic that holds a high degree of interest for you (i.e. the topic is meaningful to you). Students who feel at a loss for topic ideas should turn their attention to their own lives and activities. If you like to play video games, you might give a speech about how they are made. If you have a passion for ska reggae music, you might bring in MP3 cuts to help define the boundaries of this music genre. If you have to work three jobs to help pay for school, you could give a speech on effective time management. Genuine curiosity will make the research and preparation process easier. Further, when you have enthusiasm for a topic, it shows when you speak. On the other hand, if you do not really care about your topic, your audience is not likely to care either.

In addition to having relevance for you, it is crucial that you tie your topic directly to your listeners. Early in the speech, give listeners at least one reason why they should care about your topic and the ways in which the information will be beneficial or entertaining (Morreale & Bovee, 1998). Establishing a motive for your audience to listen to you is commonly referred to by the acronym **WIIFM**—"What's in it for me?" This is what the audience consciously or unconsciously asks when you start speaking (Urech, 1998). To establish WIIFM, you clearly link the topic to the listeners' values, attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle. Consider not only what the audience *wants* to hear, but also what they *need* to hear (Gladis, 1999; Maxey & O'Connor, 2006). Take the topic of retirement planning as an example. Younger listeners may not perceive this as relevant to their lives when they are not yet making a steady salary. But, if you can demonstrate how investing even a small amount every month can grow to a considerable nest egg by retirement age, and that getting into the habit of saving early can lower the number of years they have to work, the topic becomes more interesting for them.

Making the topic relevant for your audience can also mean that you show them how to apply the information immediately. In a speech on relaxation techniques, a speaker can lead the audience through a simple stress reduction exercise they can use at home. For a speech on handwriting analysis, listeners can be given paper, asked to write a sample sentence and shown how to interpret some points on the sample. If the audience members have laptops, a speaker can show them how to improve one of their digital photos. If listeners can use the information they learn quickly, they tend to remember it longer, and they are more likely to try the action again later (Nelson, et al., 2010).

DEVELOPING INFORMATIVE SPEECHES

The first sections of this chapter explained the importance of informative speaking, the functions of informative speeches, the role of the informative speaker, and the four major types of informative speeches. This final section of the chapter discusses three goals in developing informative speeches and advice for increasing the effectiveness of your speech. These three goals include 1) arousing the interest of your audience, 2) presenting information in a way that can be understood, and 3) helping the audience remember what you have said (Fujishin, 2000).

Generate and Maintain Interest

Use Attention-Getting Elements

Before you capture the interest of an audience, you have to get their attention. As you know, attention getters are used in the introduction of a speech, but **attention getters** can also be used throughout your speech to maintain an audience's attention. There are a number of techniques you can use that will naturally draw listeners' attention (German, et al., 2010).

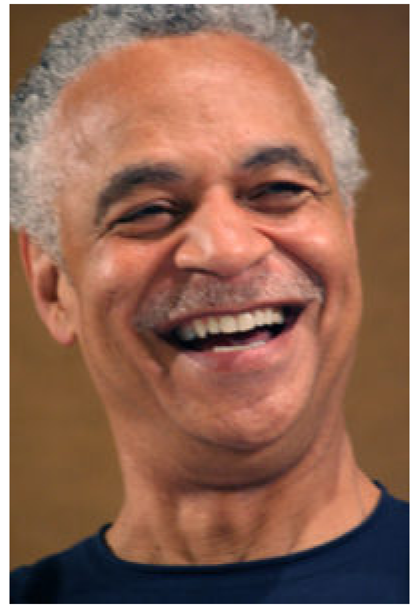
Intensity refers to something that has a high or extreme degree of emotion, color, volume, strength or other defining characteristic. In a speech about sharks' senses, showing how sharks smell 10,000 times better than humans would be an example of the intensity principle.

Novelty involves those things that are new or unusual. Discussing the recent invention of the flesh-eating mushroom death suit developed by Jae Rhim Lee would be novel. This suit is designed to help bodies decompose naturally above ground to avoid the use of dangerous embalming chemicals.

Contrast can also be used to draw attention through comparison to something that is different or opposite. This works best when the differences are significant. If you were showing the audience how to make hot sauce, and you showed a bar graph comparing the scoville units (level of hotness) of different chili peppers, this would be contrast. Jalapenos rate at 2500–8000 scoville units, habaneros rate at 100,000–350,000, and the naga jolokia rates at 855,000–1,041,241.

Audiences will also attend to movement or **Activity**. To employ this technique, the speaker can either use action words, well-chosen movements, an increased rate of speech, or s/he can show action with video. A speech describing or showing extreme sports with high levels of risk, a fast pace, or amazing stunts could be used to illustrate activity.

Finally, **Humor** can be used to draw attention to a subject or point, but be sure that it is relevant and in good taste. In a speech about the devotion of Trekkies (Star Trek fans), you could share the example of Tony Alleyne who designed and outfitted his flat in England as a replica of the deck of the Voyager. You could also direct the audience's attention to couples who have wedding ceremonies spoken in Klingon.



Tell a Story

Story telling is not only the basis for most of our entertainment; it is also one of the best ways to teach an audience (Carlson, 2005). Also known as narratives, stories typically have a beginning in which the characters and setting are introduced, a rise in action, some complication or problem, and a resolution. Stories with compelling characters can be used in a creative way to weave facts otherwise dry and technical facts together (Walters, 1995), as in a speech about preparing a space shuttle for take-off from a mouse's perspective. Jaffe (1998) differentiates between three types of narratives that can be used in informative speeches. The first type of story is a natural reality in which natural or scientific facts are brought together in chronological accounts, as in the formation of the Grand Canyon. The second narrative involves social realities which detail historic events, and the development of cultures and institutions. The last kind of story, the ultimate reality, is focused on profound philosophical and spiritual questions like "Where do we come from?" and "What happens to us when we die?"

Nursery rhymes and song lyrics familiar to the audience can also be used in an interactive way to get listeners interested in the topic (Maxey & O'Connor, 2006). In a speech about the global population explosion, you could ask audience to finish the phrase "There was an old woman who lived in a shoe…" Common commercials, lyrics to Beatles songs, holiday songs, and children's games are universal.

> The wisest mind has something yet to learn. – George Santayna

Commercial jingles and song lyrics also work to get the audience involved. You could start a speech on boating safety with these lyrics: Just sit right back / And you'll hear a tale / A tale of a fateful trip / That started from this tropic port / Aboard this tiny ship (from *Gilligan's Island*). Depending on the make-up of your audience, you might use lyrics from Johnny Cash, Billy Holiday, The Doors, The Beatles, JayZ, The Judds or the Arctic Monkeys. Just remember you probably can't read all of the lyrics, you need to make sure the lyrics are directly linked to your topic, and you should be sure to cite the artist and song title.

Just for fun, can you name the artist who sang the lyrics below? Can you think of a speech topic that would correspond to the lyrics? (Answer at the end of the chapter)

Lyric	Artist	Speech Topic
Money, get away.		

Get a good job with good pay and you're okay.

Money, it's a gas.

Grab that cash with both hands and make a stash.

New car, caviar, four star daydream

Think I'll buy me a football team.

Be Creative

Speakers who are different are memorable (Maxey & O'Connor, 2006). To give your speech impact, be imaginative and dare to push the envelope of conformity. When you have spent time researching a topic, you may be able to envision ways to incorporate surprising facts, props or visuals that make your presentation different from others, and therefore more memorable. You could dress like a Shakespearian actor for a speech about the famous playwright. You could have the audience move their chairs and take part in a yoga demonstration. Or you might use your own audience plants to help with a speech entitled "Behind the Scenes of TV Talk Shows." When one student got up to speak, he drew a row of houses on the blackboard and then began to drink a glass of water and speak about the life giving properties of water. After making a few comments, he threw the glass of water on the blackboard—erasing most of the houses. Then he began his speech on the devastating effects of a flood (be sure to get your professor's permission before you do something like this!). Another student giving a speech about "Clowning" had two actual clowns wait in the hall until she was ready to bring them in and show off their make-up and costumes. The speaker was wise to have her cohorts in the room just long enough to make the point (but not the entire time which would distract from the speaker), and the audience was attentive and grateful for the variety. Hanks and Parry (1991) explain that anyone can be creative, if s/he wants to be and is willing to make the effort. For some tips on how to foster your creativity, see Table 16.2. However, you need to remember that creativity is just a tool to help you teach your audience. Do not overlook the requirements of the occasion, the content of your research, or the needs of your audience in your zeal to be creative.

Table 16.2 Tips for Jump Starting Your Creativity From Everyday Creativity by Carlin Flora (2009)

- Take a different way to work
- Collaborate with others with complementary skills
- Seek inspiration in beautiful surroundings
- Start working on the problem right away
- Work in a blue room (it boosts creativity)
- Get a hobby or play music
- Think about your problem right before falling asleep

> The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt. – Sylvia Plath

Stimulate Audience Intellect

Most people have a genuine desire to understand the world around them, to seek out the truth, and learn how to solve problems. The role of the informative speaker is to satisfy this desire to learn and know. To illustrate our quest for knowledge, consider the success of the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, the History Channel, the Food Network and other educational broadcasts. So how do we appeal to the minds of listeners? Think about all of the information we encounter every day but do not have time to pursue. Think about subjects that you would like to know more about. Ask what information would be universally interesting and useful for listeners. Many people fly on airplanes, but do they know how to survive a plane crash? People also share many ordinary illnesses, so what are some common home remedies? All of the people on earth originated someplace, so who were our ancient ancestors?

In addition to finding topics that relate to listeners, the information we supply should be up to date. For instance, Egypt recently had a revolution, and if you are giving a speech on traveling to the Pyramids, you should be aware of this. When you are talking about a topic that your audience is familiar with, you should share little known facts or paint the subject in a new light. In a speech about a famous person, you might depict what they are like behind the scenes, or what they were like growing up. In a speech about a new technology, you might also talk about the inventors. In a speech about a famous city, you could discuss the more infamous landmarks and attractions.

Create Coherence

Organize Logically

Several types of organizational patterns are discussed in the *Selecting and Arranging Main Points* chapter. Using these as a starting point, you should make sure the overall logic of the speech is well thought out. If you were giving speech best suited to chronological order, but presented the steps out of order, it would be very difficult to follow. Those of you who have seen the movie *Memento* (which presented the sequence of events backwards), may have noticed how difficult it was to explain the plot to others. In a logical speech, the points you are trying to draw are obvious, the supporting materials are coherent and correspond exactly to the thesis, and the main points are mutually exclusive and flow naturally from start to finish. Clarity of thought is critical in presenting information. As Peggy Noonan (1998, p. 64) argues:

> *The most moving thing in a speech is always the logic. It's never the flowery words and flourishes, it's not sentimental exhortations, it's never the faux poetry we're all subjected to these days. It's the logic; it's the thinking behind your case. A good case well argued and well said is inherently moving. It shows respect for the brains of the listeners. There is an implicit compliment in it. It shows that you are a serious person and that you are talking to other serious persons.*

When planning your speech, ask questions like: What information needs to come first? What organizational pattern best suits the topic? What information must be shared or omitted to aid in audience understanding? What points or sub-points should be grouped together to aid listeners' understanding?

Use Simple Language

One common mistake that speech writers make when they are writing their speech is to use the same language that they would use in a written document. Experienced speech writers know that simple language and ideas are easier to understand than complex ones. “Clear speaking is not an alternative to intelligent discourse, but rather an enabler of intelligent discourse” (Carlson, 2005, p. 79). Did you know that Lincoln’s Gettysburg address contains only 271 words, and 251 of these words only have one or two syllables (Hughes & Phillips, 2000)? Another benefit of using simple language is that you are less likely to trip over or mispronounce simple words.

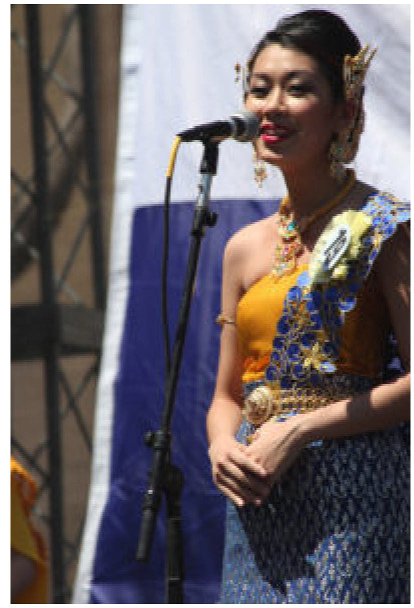


Table 16.3 Simplify Your Language	
Low Impact	**High Impact**
Under the present circumstances	Currently
At the present time	Now
Are in agreement with	Agree
Due to the fact that	Because
Is fully operational	Works
In close proximity to	Near
Of sufficient magnitude	Big enough
In the event of	If
Each and everyone	Each
In the course of	During
Never before or since	Never
Deciduous trees (jargon)	Trees that lose their leaves
Somnolent (jargon)	Drowsy
Awesome (slang)	Impressive
Put the bit on (slang)	Borrow

Table 16.3 Simplify Your Language	
Low Impact	**High Impact**
No brainer (cliché)	Easy decision
An arm and a leg	Expensive
Vertically challenged (euphemism)	Short
Gone to the great beyond (euphemism)	Dead

Instead of “protracted,” say “drawn out.” Instead of “conundrum,” say “puzzle.” And instead of “loquacious,” say “talkative.” As you are writing your speech you also want to avoid technical jargon, slang, clichés, and euphemisms. This type of language is difficult to understand and tends to be low impact. Compare the *Low Impact* language column with the *High Impact* column in Table 16.3 above to see examples of ways to make your language more powerful.

Avoid Information Overload

No one is given an unlimited amount of time to speak. You can’t cover everything that there is to know about your topic. And even if you could speak forever about everything there was to know about a subject, your listeners would never be able to take it all in. **Information overload** occurs when a person feels that they are faced with an overwhelming amount of information, with the effect that they are unable to process it all or unable to make decision. So whether you have five minutes to give a presentation or three eight-hour days, you will need to narrow and focus your speech topic and objectives. If you know that you have ten minutes to speak, you will not be able to cover “Car Maintenance for Dummies,” but you probably could give a good speech entitled “How to Change the Oil in Your Car.” When planning your speech, be sure to determine the amount of information that can reasonably be covered in the time allowed. In fact, rather than taking the entire allotted speaking time, you should get into the practice of speaking only for 90—95% of the time that you are given (Reynolds, 2008). More is not always better—and your audience will appreciate it if you can skillfully make your point with time to spare.

> Today knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement. – Peter Drucker

Make Your Speech Memorable

Build in Repetition

Audience retention is determined by a number of factors including listeners’ interest, knowledge, physical and emotional state, level of stress, background, and other competing demands (Fujishin, 2000). One way to help your audience remember the content of your speech is by repetition (Hughes & Phillips, 2000). There are three ways to incorporate repetition into your speech. The first form repetition involves restating your main points in your introduction, body and conclusion. When you do this, you will restate your points using different language—not repeat the points word for word. The second form of repetition is where a word or a phrase is repeated in a poetic way, either throughout the speech or at a critical point in the speech. One example of this would be Abraham Lincoln’s “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Another example can be found in Sojourner Truth’s speech, delivered in 1851 at a women’s rights convention.

> *… That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as*

much as a man—when I could get it—and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

The final way to use repetition in your speech is through nonverbal communication. When you say the word "four" and you hold up four fingers, or when you verbally agree with a point and nod your head at the same time, you are reinforcing the idea verbally and nonverbally.

Appeal to Different Ways of Learning

Individuals have different learning styles, so some people are visual [V] learners, some are aural [A] learners, some learn by reading [R] and writing, and some learn kinesthetically [K] (Fleming, 2001). You can test your own learning style at www.varklearn.com. Understanding your own and others' learning styles is useful for two reasons. First, you will find that you tend to teach others using your own learning style. Second, regardless of your own learning styles, you need to appeal to as many different learning styles as possible in your informative speech. To see how each learning style prefers to be taught, see the table below.

Unfortunately, since the ear alone is a very poor information gathering device, steps must be taken to improve retention. Typically listeners only retain only a small fraction of what is explained to them verbally. The first way to enhance retention is to appeal to as many of the senses as possible. Studies show that audiences retain 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and 50 percent of what they hear *and* see (Westerfield, 2002). When the audience has an opportunity to *do* something (adding the kinesthetic sense), their retention increases to 80 percent (Walters, 1995). Or, if participation is not possible, a handout will raise retention to an impressive 85 percent—if the audience can review the handout at least once (Slutsky & Aun, 1997).

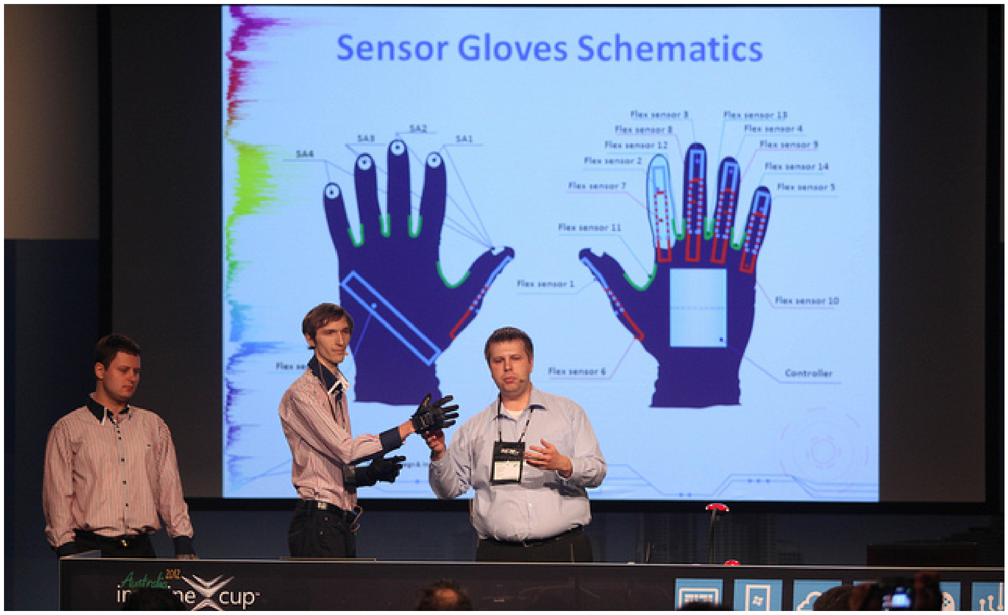
Table 16.4 The VARK Model of Learning

Learning Style	Approach the Learner With…
Visual Learners	Maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, brochures, flow charts, highlighters, different colors, pictures, word pictures, and different spatial arrangements
Aural Learners	Explanations of new ideas, large and small group discussions, lectures, audio recordings, stories, and jokes
Read/Write Learners	Lists, essays, reports, textbooks, definitions, printed handouts, readings, manuals, and web pages
Kinesthetic Learners	Field trips, hands-on projects, sensory stimulations, laboratories, recipes and solutions to problems, and collections of samples

From Hawk and Shaw (2007, p. 7) and Fleming (2001).

Another way to help your listeners remember is by the use of techniques like *association*, linking the new topic to things that the audience knows about or already understands. If you were giving a speech about rugby, you might compare it to soccer and football to help the audience understand the rules. The use of *acronyms* also aids retention. On the "*Krusty Krab Training Video*" episode of Spongebob Squarepants (a spoof on corporate training videos), they use the acronym "POOP." When I asked my then eight-year-old son if he remembered (several weeks after watching the episode) what "POOP" stood for, he immediately and correctly answered "People Order Our Patties." The final technique to help audiences remember information is the *simplicity criterion*. Information is best retained when it is explained from top to bottom (rather than bottom to top), when events are presented from first to last (rather than last to first), and when information is presented in the positive voice (rather than in the negative voice) (Devito, 1981).

Use Visuals



Visual aids can be a very powerful and efficient way to present facts that might otherwise be difficult to convey verbally. The benefits of visuals used for informative speeches include increasing interest, understanding, retention, and the speed at which your audience can understand complex facts. We live in a mediated culture, where people are visually oriented. This means that they expect to be visually stimulated with pictures, graphs, maps, video images and objects. Speakers who do not make use of visuals may be at a disadvantage when compared to speakers who use them. This is assuming of course that the visuals enhance what you are saying and that you use them well. As you know, plenty of people use Power Point, and it does not necessarily make their speech better or more memorable.

Perhaps the best reason to use visuals aids during an informative speech is to help your audience understand a concept that may be difficult to understand just by explaining it. In a speech about heart bypass surgery, would it be better to verbally describe the parts of the human heart, or to show a picture of it? How about a model of the heart? How about an actual human heart? Be sure to consider your audience! What if your speech is about an abstract concept that does not lend itself well to slick graphic representations? One way trainers get their audiences involved and make their presentations memorable is to provide handouts which the listeners complete (in part) themselves. You could use fill-in-the blank statements (where you provide the answer), open-ended questions where listeners can write their thoughts, and activities like matching or crossword puzzles. Regardless of the type of visual media you select for your speech, just make sure that it does not overpower you or the subject. Work to keep the audience's attention on you and what you are saying, and use the visual to complement what *you* have to say.

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION

Activity	The use of action words, physical or visual movement, or faster rate of speech to draw the audience's attention.
Attention Getter	A device or technique used to gain the audience's attention in the introduction or keep the audience's attention during the course of a speech.
Contrast	An attention getting technique whereby supporting ideas are compared to emphasize difference.
Credibility	Refers to the audience's perception of the speaker's expertise, authenticity, and trustworthiness.
Definitional Speech	A type of speech in which the speaker attempts to explain or identify the essential qualities or components of concepts, theories, philosophies, or issues.
Demonstration Speech	A speech that shows listeners how some process is accomplished or how to perform it themselves.
Descriptive Speech	A speech that provides a detailed, vivid, word picture of a person, animal, place, or object.
Explanatory Speech	Also known as a briefing, the focus of this speech is on reports of current and historical events, customs, transformations, inventions, policies, outcomes, and options.
General Purpose	The speaker's overall goal, objective, or intent: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain.
Humor	The use of amusing or comical facts, stories, or forms of expression to maintain an audience's attention.
Information Overload	An overwhelming feeling of being faced with so much information one cannot completely process it.
Informative Speech	A speech in which the primary purpose is to provide the audience with information that they did not already know, or to teach them more about a topic with which they are already familiar.
Intensity	Supporting material that is characterized by a high degree of emotion, color, volume, strength, or other defining characteristic.
Novelty	Very recent or unusual supporting ideas.
WIIFM	An acronym that stands for "What's in it for me?" This is the question that listeners ask themselves when they begin to listen to a speech. Listeners want to know; What does this speech have to do with my life? Is this information useful to me? Is the speaker talking about something I already know? Is the subject interesting? Why should I pay attention?

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STUDY GUIDE

Communication Apprehension

"fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons."

Physiological Symptoms of Communication Apprehension

Heart pounding

Clammy hands

Sweat

Stomach Butterflies

Nervous Pacing

Voice quiver

Dry Mouth

Shakes- hands and legs

Rapid Breathing

Dizzy and/or light headed

Myths about Communication Apprehension

1. People who suffer from speaking anxiety are neurotic
2. Telling a joke or two is always a good way to begin a speech.
3. Telling a joke or two is always a good way to begin a speech.
4. Any mistake means that you have "blown it."
5. Avoid speaking anxiety by writing your speech out word for word and memorizing it.
6. Audiences are out to get you.
7. You will look to the audience as nervous as you feel.
8. A little nervousness helps you give a better speech. This is TRUE

Sources of Communication Apprehension

Trait Anxiety	some people feel more uncomfortable than the average person regardless of the context, audience, or situation.
Context Anxiety	anxiety prompted by specific communication contexts
Formality	As the formality of the communication context increases, the stakes are raised, sometimes prompting more apprehension.
Uncertainty	you don't know what to expect, so you are more nervous
Novelty	Anxiety becomes more of an issue in communication environments that are new to us
Audience Anxiety	Audience anxiety describes communication apprehension prompted by specific audience characteristics

Situational Anxiety	the unique combination of influences generated by audience, time and context.”

Reducing Communication Apprehension

- Speech-Related Considerations
- Think Positively
- Reducing Anxiety through Preparation
- Analyze Your Audience
- Adapt Your Language to the Oral Mode
- Practice in Conditions Similar to Those You Will Face When Speaking
- Watch What You Eat
- Reducing Nervousness during Delivery
- Maintain Your Sense of Humor
- Stress Management Techniques

General Purposes of speaking refers to the broad goal in creating and delivering a speech

Inform	this is about helping audience members acquire information that they do not already possess
Persuade	we attempt to get listeners to embrace a point of view or to adopt a behavior that they would not have done otherwise
Entertain	focused on the theme and occasion of the speech

Selecting a Topic

- Common Constraints of Public Speaking
    - Purpose
    - Audience
    - Context
    - Time Frame
- Selecting a Broad Subject Area
    - Narrowing Your Topic

Specific Purposes

A specific purpose starts with one of the three general purposes and then specifies the actual topic you have chosen and the basic objective you hope to accomplish with your speech. Basically, the specific purpose answers the who, what, when, where, and why questions for your speech.

Finding Resources

- Nonacademic Information Sources
- Books
- General-Interest Periodicals

- Special-Interest Periodicals
- Newspapers and Blogs
- Encyclopedias
- Websites
- Academic Information Sources
- Scholarly Books and/or Articles and/or Web Information
- Computerized Databases

Evaluating Resources

- Date of Publication
- Author
- Publisher
- Academic or Nonacademic
- Quality of the Bibliography/Reference Page
- Do People Cite the Work?

Avoid Plagiarism

- Do your own work, and use your own words
- Allow yourself enough time to research the assignment
- Keep careful track of your sources and take careful notes
- Assemble your thoughts, and make it clear who is speaking
- If you use an idea, quotation, paraphrase, or summary, then credit the source
- Cite sources correctly in the body and in the Works Cited (Reference Page)
- Quote accurately and sparingly
- Paraphrase carefully
- Do not patchwrite (patchspeak)
- Summarize, don't auto-summarize
- Do not rework another student's speech or buy one

Avoid Academic Fraud

- Don't Mislead Your Audience
- Give Author Credentials
- Use Primary Research Ethically

The Importance of an Introduction

- Gain Audience Attention and Interest
- State the Purpose of Your Speech
- Establish Credibility
- Provide Reasons to Listen
- Preview Main Ideas
- Reference to Subject, Audience, Events, Occassion
- Quotation, Historical Reference, Anecdote ,Startling Statement
- Question (Rhetorical is the preferred type)
- Humor
- Personal Reference
- Express Your Specific Purpose

Conclusions Matter

- Signals the End
- Aids Audience's Memory of Your Speech

- Restatement of the Thesis
- Review of Main Points
- Review of Main Points
- Conclude with a Quotation, Summary, Visualize Future, Inspiration
- Conclude with a Challenge, Advice, Appeal for Action (persuasion only)
- Conclude by Proposing a Solution (persuasion only)
- Conclude with a Question (usually Rhetorical)
- Conclude with a Reference to Audience

Four Methods of Delivery

Impromptu	presentation of a short message without advance preparation
Extemporaneous	carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes
Manuscript	the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains his or her attention on the printed page except when using visual aids
Memory	recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory

Using Notes Effectively

- Understand the Purpose of Speaker Notes
- Include Only Key Words (no paragraphs)
- Hold Your Notes Naturally
- Prepare Notecards to Trigger Recall
- Write in Large Letters
- Using Notecards Effectively

Good Delivery

- Posture, Body Movement, Facial Expressions
- Dress, Self-Presentation, Variety
- Practice Effectively, Seek Input from Others
- Conversational Style
- Eye Contact
- Effective Use of Vocalics
    - Volume, Rate, Pitch, Pauses,
    - Vocal Variety, Pronunciation

Good Delivery Is a Habit

Informative Speaking

- Conveys knowledge
- Does not attempt to convince the audience that one thing is better than another
- Does not advocate a course of action
- Conveys accurate information

- Three goals—accuracy, clarity, and interest
- Avoid expressing opinion

Informative Speaking Goals

- Making Information Clear and Interesting for the Audience
- Adjust Complexity to the Audience
- Avoid Unnecessary Jargon
- Create Concrete Images
- Keep Information Limited
- Link Current Knowledge to New Knowledge
- Make It Memorable
- Make It Relevant and Useful
- Personalize Your Content

Types of Informative Speeches

Object	People	Event	Concept	Process
Stink Bug	Aristotle	Super Bowl	Karma	Cell Division
Skyline Drive	Neymar	World Cup	Freedom	FAFSA Application
Washington Monument	RGIII	Battle of Gettysburg	The American Dream	Plastic Recycling

Key Terms

- Communication Apprehension
- Trait Anxiety
- Context Anxiety
- Formality
- Uncertainty
- Novelty
- Audience Anxiety
- Situational Anxiety
- General Purposes of Speaking
- Common Types of Informative Topics
- Behavior
- Attitude
- Value
- Belief
- Specific Purposes
- Plagiarism
- Ethos
- Thesis Statement
- Impromptu Speaking
- Extemporaneous Speaking
- Speaking from a Manuscript
- Speaking from Memory
- Vocalics
- Pitch

- Vocal Variety
- Pronunciation
- Physical Manipulation
- Jargon
- Abstract
- Concrete

A PDF of this Rhetorical Communication Study Guide can be downloaded here.

AMERICAN RHETORIC ONLINE SPEECH BANK

Click on the link below to visit the American Rhetoric Online Speech Bank. This repository contains thousands of speeches from political leaders and public figures. Most include multiple formats of the speech, including text, audio, and video.

- American Rhetoric Online Speech Bank

THE ETHICS PYRAMID

Ethics Today

Every day, people around the world make ethical decisions regarding public speech. Is it ever appropriate to lie to a group of people if it's in the group's best interest? As a speaker, should you use evidence within a speech that you are not sure is correct if it supports the speech's core argument? As a listener, should you refuse to listen to a speaker with whom you fundamentally disagree? These three examples represent ethical choices speakers and listeners face in the public speaking context. In this chapter, we will explore what it means to be both an ethical speaker and an ethical listener. To help you understand the issues involved with thinking about ethics, this chapter begins by presenting a model for ethical communication known as the ethics pyramid. We will then show how the National Communication Association (NCA) Credo for Ethical Communication can be applied to public speaking. The chapter will conclude with a general discussion of free speech.

Learning Objectives
• Explain how the three levels of the ethics pyramid might be used in evaluating the ethical choices of a public speaker or listener.

The word "ethics" can mean different things to different people. Whether it is an ethical lapse in business or politics or a disagreement about medical treatments and end-of-life choices, people come into contact with ethical dilemmas regularly. Speakers and listeners of public speech face numerous ethical dilemmas as well. What kinds of support material and sources are ethical to use? How much should a speaker adapt to an audience without sacrificing his or her own views? What makes a speech ethical?

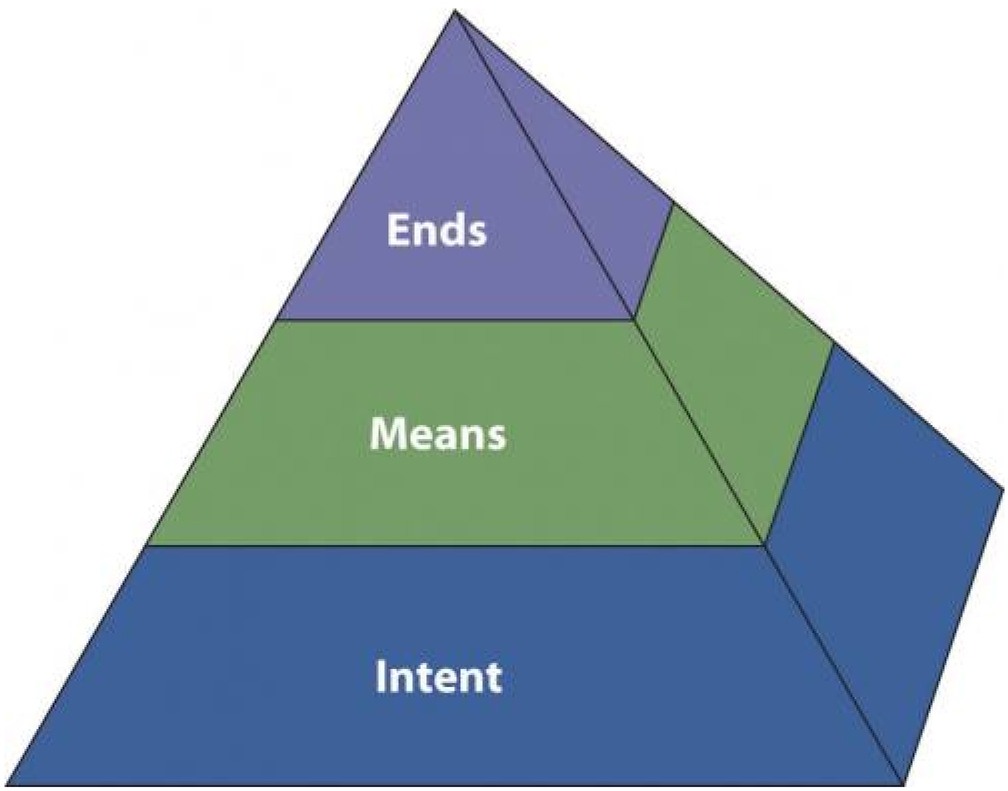


Figure 1. Ethical Pyramid

Elspeth Tilley, a public communication ethics expert from Massey University, proposes a structured approach to thinking about ethics. (((Note: Tilley, E. (2005). The ethics pyramid: Making ethics unavoidable in the public relations process. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *20*, 305–320.))) Her ethics pyramid involves three basic concepts: intent, means, and ends. Figure 1. "Ethical Pyramid" illustrates the Tilley pyramid.

Intent

According to Tilley, the first major consideration to be aware of when examining the ethicality of something is the issue of intent. To be an ethical speaker or listener, it is important to begin with ethical intentions. For example, if we agree that honesty is ethical, it follows that ethical speakers will prepare their remarks with the intention of telling the truth to their audiences. Similarly, if we agree that it is ethical to listen with an open mind, it follows that ethical listeners will be intentional about letting a speaker make his or her case before forming judgments.

One option for assessing intent is to talk with others about how ethical they think a behavior is; if you get a variety of answers, it might be a sign that the behavior is not ethical and should be avoided. A second option is to check out existing codes of ethics. Many professional organizations, including the Independent Computer Consultants Association, American Counseling Association, and American Society of Home Inspectors, have codes of conduct or ethical guidelines for their members. Individual corporations such as Monsanto, Coca-Cola, Intel, and

ConocoPhillips also have ethical guidelines for how their employees should interact with suppliers or clients. Even when specific ethical codes are not present, you can apply general ethical principles, such as whether a behavior is beneficial for the majority or whether you would approve of the same behavior if you were listening to a speech instead of giving it.

In addition, it is important to be aware that people can engage in unethical behavior unintentionally. For example, suppose we agree that it is unethical to take someone else's words and pass them off as your own—a behavior known as plagiarism. What happens if a speaker makes a statement that he believes he thought of on his own, but the statement is actually quoted from a radio commentator whom he heard without clearly remembering doing so? The plagiarism was unintentional, but does that make it ethical?

Means

Tilley describes the means you use to communicate with others as the second level of the ethics pyramid. According to McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond, (((Note: McCroskey, J. C., Wrench, J. S., & Richmond, V. P. (2003). *Principles of public speaking*. Indianapolis, IN: The College Network.))) "means" are the tools or behaviors we employ to achieve a desired outcome. We must realize that there are a range of possible behavioral choices for any situation and that some choices are good, some are bad, and some fall in between.

For example, suppose you want your friend Marty to spend an hour reviewing a draft of your speech according to criteria, such as audience appropriateness, adequate research, strong support of assertions, and dynamic introduction and conclusion. What means might you use to persuade Marty to do you this favor? You might explain that you value Marty's opinion and will gladly return the favor the next time Marty is preparing a speech (good means), or you might threaten to tell a professor that Marty cheated on a test (bad means). While both of these means may lead to the same end—having Marty agree to review your speech—one is clearly more ethical than the other.

Ends

The final part of the ethics pyramid is the ends. According to McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond, (((Note: McCroskey, J. C., Wrench, J. S., & Richmond, V. P. (2003). *Principles of public speaking*. Indianapolis, IN: The College Network.))) ends are those outcomes that you desire to achieve. Examples of ends might include persuading your audience to make a financial contribution for your participation in Relay for Life, persuading a group of homeowners that your real estate agency would best meet their needs, or informing your fellow students about newly required university fees. Whereas the means are the behavioral choices we make, the ends are the results of those choices.

Like intentions and means, ends can be good or bad, or they can fall into a gray area where it is unclear just how ethical or unethical they are. For example, suppose a city council wants to balance the city's annual budget. Balancing the budget may be a good end, assuming that the city has adequate tax revenues and areas of discretionary spending for nonessential services for the year in question. However, voters might argue that balancing the budget is a bad end if the city lacks these things for the year in question, because in that case balancing the budget would require raising taxes, curtailing essential city services, or both.

When examining ends, we need to think about both the source and the receiver of the message or behavior. Some end results could be good for the source but bad for the receiver, or vice versa. Suppose, for example, that Anita belongs to a club that is raffling off a course of dancing lessons. Anita sells Ben a ten-dollar raffle ticket. However, Ben later thinks it over and realizes that he has no desire to take dancing lessons and that if he should win the raffle, he will never take the lessons. Anita's club has gained ten dollars—a good end—but Ben has lost ten dollars—a bad end. Again, the ethical standards you and your audience expect to be met will help in deciding whether a particular combination of speaker and audience ends is ethical.

Thinking through the Pyramid

Ultimately, understanding ethics is a matter of balancing all three parts of the ethical pyramid: intent, means, and ends. When thinking about the ethics of a given behavior, Tilley recommends asking yourself three basic questions:

1. “Have I discussed the ethicality of the behavior with others and come to a general consensus that the behavior is ethical?”
2. “Does the behavior adhere to known codes of ethics?”
3. “Would I be happy if the outcomes of the behavior were reversed and applied to me?” (((Note: Tilley, E. (2005). The ethics pyramid: Making ethics unavoidable in the public relations process. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *20*, 305–320.)))

While you do not need to ask yourself these three questions before enacting every behavior as you go through a day, they do provide a useful framework for thinking through a behavior when you are not sure whether a given action, or statement, may be unethical. Ultimately, understanding ethics is a matter of balancing all three parts of the ethical pyramid: intent, means, and ends.

Key Takeaways

- The ethics pyramid is a pictorial way of understanding the three fundamental parts of ethics: intent, means, and ends. Intent exists at the base of the ethical pyramid and serves as a foundation for determining the ethics of specific behavior. Means are the tools one uses to accomplish a goal and constitute the second layer of the ethical pyramid. Finally, ends are the results that occur after a specific behavior has occurred and exist at the top of the pyramid.

Exercises

1. Can you think of a time when you intended to have a “good” end and employed “good” means, but you ended up accomplishing a “bad” end? Why do you think our ends are not always in line with our intentions?
2. Ursula is developing a speech on the importance of organ donation. She has found lots of impressive statistics in her research but feels she needs an interesting story to really make an impression on her audience and persuade them to become organ donors. Ursula can’t find a true story she really likes, so she takes elements of several stories and pieces them together into a single story. Her speech is a huge success and six of her classmates sign up to be organ donors immediately after her presentation. How do we decide whether Ursula’s behavior is ethical?
3. Pablo has been scheduled to work late several nights this week and is very tired by the time his public speaking class rolls around in the late afternoon. One of his classmates gives a speech about environmental sustainability and Pablo does not really pay attention to what the classmate is saying. After the speech, Pablo’s teacher asks him to critique the speech. Because he doesn’t really know what happened in the speech, Pablo makes a general statement that the speech was pretty good, that the delivery was OK, and that the organization was fine. Using the ethics pyramid as a guide, in what ways might Pablo’s response be ethical? In what ways might it be unethical? What are Pablo’s responsibilities as an ethical listener?

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Admittedly, this discussion of listening may add a layer of intimidation for public speakers. After all, it can be daunting to think of having to get an audience to not only hear, but also truly listen.

Nevertheless, once we recognize the difference and become aware of active listening and its barriers, we can better tailor our spoken words to captivate and engage an audience. A broader awareness of the importance of effective listening is another weapon in your arsenal as a public speaker. At the same time, building up your own effective listening skills can enhance your academic, professional, and personal success. Being heard is one thing, but speakers need listeners to complete the communication loop. Reap the rewards: Instead of saying "I hear you," try out "I'm listening."

"Defense.gov photo essay" by Elaine Wilson. Public domain.

Review Questions

1. What distinguishes listening from hearing?
2. What are some benefits for you personally from effective listening?
3. Name and give an example of each of the three A's of active listening.
4. Identify the three main barriers to listening. Which of these barriers is most problematic for you? What can you do about it?
5. What does an effective listener do with the extra thought process time while a speaker is speaking only 150 words-per-minute?
6. How can you communicate non-verbally that you are listening?
7. What are some considerations in offering constructive feedback?
8. What are strategies that help hold your listeners' attention during your speech?

Activities

1. Discuss the following in small groups. How do your listening behaviors change in the following situations: A) At a concert, B) In class, C) At the dinner table with your parents, D) In a doctor's office? What are the distractions and other barriers to listening you might encounter in each setting? What might you do to overcome the barriers to effective listening in each situation?
2. Listen to someone you disagree with (maybe a politician from the opposing party) and work to listen actively with an open mind. Try to pay attention to the person's argument and the reasons he offers in support of his point of view. Your goal is to identify why the speaker believes what he does and how he proves it. You need not be converted by this person's argument.
3. Reflect on a situation in your personal life where poor listening skills created a problem. Briefly describe the situation, then spend the bulk of your reflection analyzing what went wrong in terms of listening and how, specifically, effective listening would have made a difference. Share your observations in small group class discussion.

4. Spend a few minutes brainstorming your trigger words. What are the words that would provoke a strong emotional response in you? List three concrete strategies you might use to combat this while being an effective listener.

COMMUNICATION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click “Check Your Understanding” to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three “Maybe”/”Probably”/”Definitely” options to see if you were correct.
- Click “Next” to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

PERSUASIVE SPEECHES

PERSUASIVE SPEAKING

Foundations of Persuasion

Every day we are bombarded by persuasive messages. Some messages are mediated and designed to get us to purchase specific products or vote for specific candidates, while others might come from our loved ones and are designed to get us to help around the house or join the family for game night. Whatever the message being sent, we are constantly being persuaded and persuading others. In this chapter, we are going to focus on persuasive speaking. We will first talk about persuasion as a general concept. We will then examine four different types of persuasive speeches, and finally, we'll look at three organizational patterns that are useful for persuasive speeches.

PERSUASION: AN OVERVIEW

Learning Objectives

- Define and explain persuasion.
- Explain the three theories of persuasion discussed in the text: social judgment theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the elaboration likelihood model.

In his text *The Dynamics of Persuasion: Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*, Richard Perloff noted that the study of persuasion today is extremely important for five basic reasons:

1. The sheer number of persuasive communications has grown exponentially.
2. Persuasive messages travel faster than ever before.
3. Persuasion has become institutionalized.
4. Persuasive communication has become more subtle and devious.
5. Persuasive communication is more complex than ever before. (((Note: Perloff, R. M. (2003). *The dynamics of persuasion: Communication and attitudes in the 21st Century* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp. 5–6.)))

In essence, the nature of persuasion has changed over the last fifty years as a result of the influx of various types of technology. People are bombarded by persuasive messages in today's world, so thinking about how to create persuasive messages effectively is very important for modern public speakers. A century (or even half a century) ago, public speakers had to contend only with the words printed on paper for attracting and holding an audience's attention. Today, public speakers must contend with laptops, netbooks, iPads, smartphones, billboards, television sets, and many other tools that can send a range of persuasive messages immediately to a target audience. Thankfully, scholars who study persuasion have kept up with the changing times and have found a number of persuasive strategies that help speakers be more persuasive.

What Is Persuasion?

We defined persuasion earlier in this text as an attempt to get a person to behave in a manner, or embrace a point of view related to values, attitudes, and beliefs, that he or she would not have done otherwise.

Change Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

The first type of persuasive public speaking involves a change in someone's attitudes, values, and beliefs. An attitude is defined as an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, or negative or positive. Maybe you believe that local curfew laws for people under twenty-one are a bad idea, so you want to persuade others to adopt a negative attitude toward such laws.

You can also attempt to persuade an individual to change her or his value toward something. Value refers to an individual's perception of the usefulness, importance, or worth of something. We can value a college education or technology or freedom. Values, as a general concept, are fairly ambiguous and tend to be very lofty ideas. Ultimately, what we value in life actually motivates us to engage in a range of behaviors. For example, if you value technology, you are more likely to seek out new technology or software on your own. On the contrary, if you do not value technology, you are less likely to seek out new technology or software unless someone, or some circumstance, requires you to.

Lastly, you can attempt to get people to change their personal beliefs. Beliefs are propositions or positions that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof. Typically, beliefs are divided into two basic categories: core and dispositional. Core beliefs are beliefs that people have actively engaged in and created over the course of their lives (e.g., belief in a higher power, belief in extraterrestrial life forms). Dispositional beliefs, on the other hand, are beliefs that people have not actively engaged in but rather judgments that they make, based on their knowledge of related subjects, when they encounter a proposition. For example, imagine that you were asked the question, "Can stock cars reach speeds of one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile oval track?" Even though you may never have attended a stock car race or even seen one on television, you can make split-second judgments about your understanding of automobile speeds and say with a fair degree of certainty that you believe stock cars cannot travel at one thousand miles per hour on a one-mile track. We sometimes refer to dispositional beliefs as virtual beliefs. (((Note: Frankish, K. (1998). Virtual belief. In P. Carruthers & J. Boucher (Eds.), *Language and thought* (pp. 249–269). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.)))

As we explained in Chapter 6 "Finding a Purpose and Selecting a Topic," when it comes to persuading people to alter core and dispositional beliefs, persuading audiences to change core beliefs is more difficult than persuading audiences to change dispositional beliefs. For this reason, you are very unlikely to persuade people to change their deeply held core beliefs about a topic in a five- to ten-minute speech. However, if you give a persuasive speech on a topic related to an audience's dispositional beliefs, you may have a better chance of success. While core beliefs may seem to be exciting and interesting, persuasive topics related to dispositional beliefs are generally better for novice speakers with limited time allotments.

Change Behavior

The second type of persuasive speech is one in which the speaker attempts to persuade an audience to change their behavior. Behaviors come in a wide range of forms, so finding one you think people should start, increase, or decrease shouldn't be difficult at all. Speeches encouraging audiences to vote for a candidate, sign a petition opposing a tuition increase, or drink tap water instead of bottled water are all behavior-oriented persuasive speeches. In all these cases, the goal is to change the behavior of individual listeners.

Why Persuasion Matters

Frymier and Nadler enumerate three reasons why people should study persuasion. (((Note: Frymier, A. B., & Nadler, M. K. (2007). *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research, and practice*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.))) First, when you study and understand persuasion, you will be more successful at persuading others. If you want to be a persuasive public speaker, then you need to have a working understanding of how persuasion functions.

Second, when people understand persuasion, they will be better consumers of information. As previously mentioned, we live in a society where numerous message sources are constantly fighting for our attention. Unfortunately, most people just let messages wash over them like a wave, making little effort to understand or analyze them. As a result, they are more likely to fall for half-truths, illogical arguments, and lies. When you start to understand persuasion, you will have the skill set to actually pick apart the messages being sent to you and see why some of them are good and others are simply not.

Lastly, when we understand how persuasion functions, we'll have a better grasp of what happens around us in the world. We'll be able to analyze why certain speakers are effective persuaders and others are not. We'll be able to understand why some public speakers can get an audience eating out of their hands, while others flop.

Furthermore, we believe it is an ethical imperative in the twenty-first century to be persuasively literate. We believe that persuasive messages that aim to manipulate, coerce, and intimidate people are unethical, as are messages that distort information. As ethical listeners, we have a responsibility to analyze messages that manipulate, coerce, and/or intimidate people or distort information. We also then have the responsibility to combat these messages with the truth, which will ultimately rely on our own skills and knowledge as effective persuaders.

Theories of Persuasion

Understanding how people are persuaded is very important to the discussion of public speaking. Thankfully, a number of researchers have created theories that help explain why people are persuaded. While there are numerous theories that help to explain persuasion, we are only going to examine three here: social judgment theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and the elaboration likelihood model.

Social Judgment Theory

Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland created social judgment theory in an attempt to determine what types of communicative messages and under what conditions communicated messages will lead to a change in someone's behavior. (((Note: Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961). *Social judgment: Assimilation and contrast effects in communication and attitude change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.))) In essence, Sherif and Hovland found that people's perceptions of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors exist on a continuum including latitude of rejection, latitude of noncommitment, and latitude of acceptance (Figure 1 "Latitudes of Judgments").

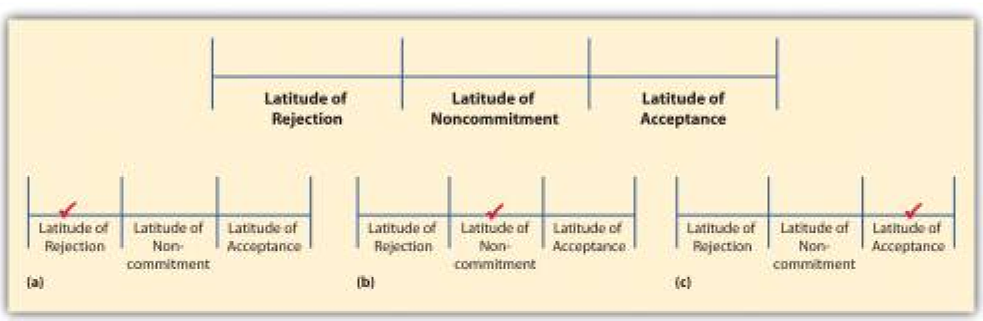


Figure 1. Latitudes of Judgments

Imagine that you're planning to persuade your peers to major in a foreign language in college. Some of the students in your class are going to disagree with you right off the bat (latitude of rejection, part (a) of Figure 1 "Latitudes of Judgments"). Other students are going to think majoring in a foreign language is a great idea (latitude of acceptance, part (c) of Figure 1 "Latitudes of Judgments"). Still others are really going to have no opinion either way (latitude of noncommitment, part (b) of Figure 1 "Latitudes of Judgments"). Now in each of these different latitudes there is a range of possibilities. For example, one of your listeners may be perfectly willing to accept the idea of minoring in a foreign language, but when asked to major or even double major in a foreign language, he or she may end up in the latitude of noncommitment or even rejection.

Not surprisingly, Sherif and Hovland found that persuasive messages were the most likely to succeed when they fell into an individual's latitude of acceptance. For example, if you are giving your speech on majoring in a foreign language, people who are in favor of majoring in a foreign language are more likely to positively evaluate your message, assimilate your advice into their own ideas, and engage in desired behavior. On the other hand, people who reject your message are more likely to negatively evaluate your message, not assimilate your advice, and not engage in desired behavior.

In an ideal world, we'd always be persuading people who agree with our opinions, but that's not reality. Instead, we often find ourselves in situations where we are trying to persuade others to attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors with which they may not agree. To help us persuade others, what we need to think about is the range of possible attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that exist. For example, in our foreign language case, we may see the following possible opinions from our audience members:

1. Complete agreement. Let's all major in foreign languages.
2. Strong agreement. I won't major in a foreign language, but I will double major in a foreign language.
3. Agreement in part. I won't major in a foreign language, but I will minor in a foreign language.
4. Neutral. While I think studying a foreign language can be worthwhile, I also think a college education can be complete without it. I really don't feel strongly one way or the other.
5. Disagreement in part. I will only take the foreign language classes required by my major.
6. Strong disagreement. I don't think I should have to take any foreign language classes.
7. Complete disagreement. Majoring in a foreign language is a complete waste of a college education.

These seven possible opinions on the subject do not represent the full spectrum of choices, but give us various degrees of agreement with the general topic. So what does this have to do with persuasion? Well, we're glad you asked. Sherif and Hovland theorized that persuasion was a matter of knowing how great the discrepancy or difference was between the speaker's viewpoint and that of the audience. If the speaker's point of view was similar to that of audience members, then persuasion was more likely. If the discrepancy between the idea proposed by the speaker and the audience's viewpoint is too great, then the likelihood of persuasion decreases dramatically.

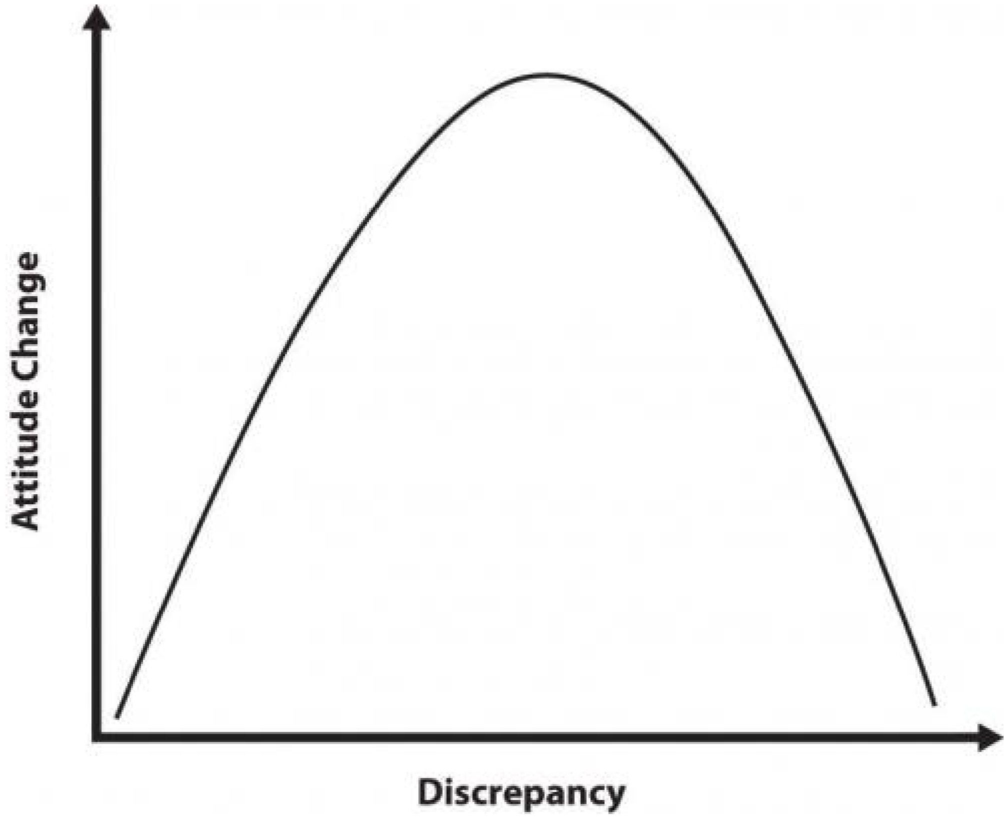


Figure 2. Discrepancy and Attitude Change

Furthermore, Sherif and Hovland predicted that there was a threshold for most people where attitude change wasn't possible and people slipped from the latitude of acceptance into the latitude of noncommitment or rejection. Figure 2 "Discrepancy and Attitude Change" represents this process. All the area covered by the left side of the curve represents options a person would agree with, even if there is an initial discrepancy between the speaker and audience member at the start of the speech. However, there comes a point where the discrepancy between the speaker and audience member becomes too large, which move into the options that will be automatically rejected by the audience member. In essence, it becomes essential for you to know which options you can realistically persuade your audience to and which options will never happen. Maybe there is no way for you to persuade your audience to major or double major in a foreign language, but perhaps you can get them to minor in a foreign language. While you may not be achieving your complete end goal, it's better than getting nowhere at all.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

In 1957, Leon Festinger proposed another theory for understanding how persuasion functions: cognitive dissonance theory.Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance.* Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, & Company. Cognitive dissonance is an aversive motivational state that occurs when an individual entertains two or more contradictory attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors simultaneously. For example, maybe you know you should be working on your speech, but you really want to go to a movie with a friend. In this case, practicing your speech and going to the movie are two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another. The goal of persuasion is to induce enough dissonance in listeners that they will change their attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Frymier and Nadler noted that for cognitive dissonance to work effectively there are three necessary conditions: aversive consequences, freedom of choice, and insufficient external justification. (((Note: Frymier, A. B., & Nadler, M. K. (2007). *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research, and practice*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.))) First, for cognitive dissonance to work, there needs to be a strong enough aversive consequence, or punishment, for *not* changing one's attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. For example, maybe you're giving a speech on why people need to eat more apples. If your aversive consequence for not eating apples is that your audience will not get enough fiber, most people will simply not be persuaded, because the punishment isn't severe enough. Instead, for cognitive dissonance to work, the punishment associated with not eating apples needs to be significant enough to change behaviors. If you convince your audience that without enough fiber in their diets they are at higher risk for heart disease or colon cancer, they might fear the aversive consequences enough to change their behavior.

The second condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work is that people must have a freedom of choice. If listeners feel they are being coerced into doing something, then dissonance will not be aroused. They may alter their behavior in the short term, but as soon as the coercion is gone, the original behavior will reemerge. It's like the person who drives more slowly when a police officer is nearby but ignores speed limits once officers are no longer present. As a speaker, if you want to increase cognitive dissonance, you need to make sure that your audience doesn't feel coerced or manipulated, but rather that they can clearly see that they have a choice of whether to be persuaded.

The final condition necessary for cognitive dissonance to work has to do with external and internal justifications. External justification refers to the process of identifying reasons outside of one's own control to support one's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. Internal justification occurs when someone voluntarily changes a behavior, belief, or attitude to reduce cognitive dissonance. When it comes to creating change through persuasion, external justifications are less likely to result in change than internal justifications. (((Note: Festinger, L., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1959). Cognitive consequences of forced compliance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 58*, 203–210.))) Imagine that you're giving a speech with the specific purpose of persuading college students to use condoms whenever they engage in sexual intercourse. Your audience analysis, in the form of an anonymous survey, indicates that a large percentage of your listeners do not consistently use condoms. Which would be the more persuasive argument: (a) "Failure to use condoms inevitably results in unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including AIDS"—or (b) "If you think of yourself as a responsible adult, you'll use condoms to protect yourself and your partner"? With the first argument, you have provided external justification for using condoms (i.e., terrible things will happen if you don't use condoms). Listeners who reject this external justification (e.g., who don't believe these dire consequences are inevitable) are unlikely to change their behavior. With the second argument, however, if your listeners think of themselves as responsible adults and they don't consistently use condoms, the conflict between their self-image and their behavior will elicit cognitive dissonance. In order to reduce this cognitive dissonance, they are likely to seek internal justification for the view of themselves as responsible adults by changing their behavior (i.e., using condoms more consistently). In this case, according to cognitive dissonance theory, the second persuasive argument would be the one more likely to lead to a change in behavior.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The last of the three theories of persuasion discussed here is the elaboration likelihood model created by Petty and Cacioppo. (((Note: Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 19*, 123–205.))) The basic model has a continuum from high elaboration or thought or low elaboration or thought. For the purposes of Petty and Cacioppo's model, the term elaboration refers to the amount of thought or cognitive energy someone uses for analyzing the content of a message. High elaboration uses the central route and is designed for analyzing the content of a message. As such, when people truly analyze a message, they use cognitive energy to examine the arguments set forth within the message. In an ideal world, everyone would process information through this central route and actually analyze arguments presented to them. Unfortunately, many people often use the peripheral route for attending to persuasive messages, which results in low elaboration or thought. Low elaboration occurs when people attend to messages but do not analyze the message or use cognitive energy to ascertain the arguments set forth in a message.

For researchers of persuasion, the question then becomes: how do people select one route or the other when attending to persuasive messages? Petty and Cacioppo noted that there are two basic factors for determining whether someone centrally processes a persuasive message: ability and motivation. First, audience members must be able to process the persuasive message. If the language or message is too complicated, then people will not highly elaborate on it because they will not understand the persuasive message. Motivation, on the other hand, refers to whether the audience member chooses to elaborate on the message. Frymier and Nadler discussed five basic factors that can lead to high elaboration: personal relevance and personal involvement, accountability, personal responsibility, incongruent information, and need for cognition. (((Note: Frymier, A. B., & Nadler, M. K. (2007). *Persuasion: Integrating theory, research, and practice*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.)))

Personal Relevance and Personal Involvement

The first reason people are motivated to take the central route or use high elaboration when listening to a persuasive message involves personal relevance and involvement. Personal relevance refers to whether the audience member feels that he or she is actually directly affected by the speech topic. For example, if someone is listening to a speech on why cigarette smoking is harmful, and that listener has never smoked cigarettes, he or she may think the speech topic simply isn't relevant. Obviously, as a speaker you should always think about how your topic is relevant to your listeners and make sure to drive this home throughout your speech. Personal involvement, on the other hand, asks whether the individual is actively engaged with the issue at hand: sends letters of support, gives speeches on the topic, has a bumper sticker, and so forth. If an audience member is an advocate who is constantly denouncing tobacco companies for the harm they do to society, then he or she would be highly involved (i.e., would engage in high elaboration) in a speech that attempts to persuade listeners that smoking is harmful.

Accountability

The second condition under which people are likely to process information using the central route is when they feel that they will be held accountable for the information after the fact. With accountability, there is the perception that someone, or a group of people, will be watching to see if the receiver remembers the information later on. We've all witnessed this phenomenon when one student asks the question "will this be on the test?" If the teacher says "no," you can almost immediately see the glazed eyes in the classroom as students tune out the information. As a speaker, it's often hard to hold your audience accountable for the information given within a speech.

Personal Responsibility

When people feel that they are going to be held responsible, without a clear external accounting, for the evaluation of a message or the outcome of a message, they are more likely to critically think through the message using the central route. For example, maybe you're asked to evaluate fellow students in your public speaking class. Research has shown that if only one or two students are asked to evaluate any one speaker at a time, the quality of the evaluations for that speaker will be better than if everyone in the class is asked to evaluate every speaker. When people feel that their evaluation is important, they take more responsibility and therefore are more critical of the message delivered.

Incongruent Information

Some people are motivated to centrally process information when it does not adhere to their own ideas. Maybe you're a highly progressive liberal, and one of your peers delivers a speech on the importance of the Tea Party movement in American politics. The information presented during the speech will most likely be in direct contrast to your personal ideology, which causes incongruence because the Tea Party ideology is opposed to a progressive liberal ideology. As such, you are more likely to pay attention to the speech, specifically looking for flaws in the speaker's argument.

Need for Cognition

The final reason some people centrally process information is because they have a personality characteristic called need for cognition. Need for cognition refers to a personality trait characterized by an internal drive or need to engage in critical thinking and information processing. People who are high in need for cognition simply enjoy thinking about complex ideas and issues. Even if the idea or issue being presented has no personal relevance, high need for cognition people are more likely to process information using the central route.

Key Takeaways

- Persuasion is the use of verbal and nonverbal messages to get a person to behave in a manner or embrace a point of view related to values, attitudes, and beliefs that he or she would not have done otherwise. Studying persuasion is important today because it helps us become more persuasive individuals, become more observant of others' persuasive attempts, and have a more complete understanding of the world around us.
- Social judgment theory says that persuaders need to be aware of an audience's latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment, and rejection in order to effectively persuade an audience. Second, cognitive dissonance theory reasons that people do not like holding to ideas in their heads that are contrary and will do what is necessary to get rid of the dissonance caused by the two contrary ideas. Lastly, the elaboration likelihood model posits that persuaders should attempt to get receivers to think about the arguments being made (going through the central route) rather than having receivers pay attention to nonargument related aspects of the speech.

Exercises

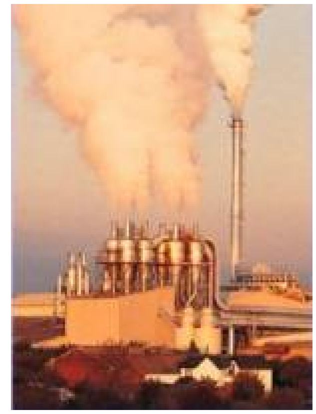
1. Imagine you're giving a speech to a group of college fraternity and sorority members about why hazing shouldn't be tolerated. Explain the persuasive process using each of the three theories of persuasion discussed in this chapter.
2. Make a list of strategies that you could employ to ensure that your audience analyzes your message using the central route and not the peripheral route. According to Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) elaboration likelihood model, which of these strategies are most likely to be effective? Why?

FUNCTIONS OF PERSUASIVE SPEECHES

So far, we have discussed the functions of persuasive speeches—to influence or reinforce—only peripherally as they relate to our working definition. Next, we turn to an in-depth discussion about how persuasive speeches function.

Speeches to Convince

Some persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce particular beliefs, attitudes, or values. In these speeches, called **speeches to convince**, the speaker seeks to establish agreement about a particular topic. For instance, a climatologist who believes that global warming is caused by human behavior might try to convince an audience of government officials to adopt this belief. She might end her speech by saying, "In recent years, humans have been producing machines that expel CO_2 either in their production, their consumption, or in both. At the same time, the level of CO_2 in the atmosphere increased dramatically. The connection is clear to many of us that humans have caused this damage and that it is up to us to similarly intervene." Throughout her speech, the scientist would likely recite a number of statistics linking human productivity with global warming in her effort to convince the government officials that both the causes and solutions to the climatic changes were a distinctly human problem.



"AirPollutionSource" by US Environmental Protection Agency. Public domain.

Speeches to Actuate

Other times, persuasive speeches attempt to influence or reinforce actions. **Speeches to actuate** are designed to motivate particular behaviors. Think of a time when you found yourself up at 2 a.m. watching infomercials. Someone on the television screen was trying very hard to sell you a $20 spatula that morphed into a spoon with the click of a button. The salesperson described its utility and innovation for your kitchen, and he described why it would be a good purchase for you—after all, how does a busy person like you have time to use two different utensils? "But wait," he would say, "there's more!" In case he had not already convinced you that you needed this kitchen tool, he ended his spiel with a final plea—an extra Spoonatula for free. In this infomercial, the salesperson attempted to convince you that you needed to buy the kitchen tool—it will save you time and money. Thus, not only was the commercial an attempt to convince you to change how you felt about spoons and spatulas, but also an effort to incite you to action—to actually purchase the Spoonatula. This illustrates a function of persuasive speeches, to motivate behavior.

TYPES OF PERSUASIVE SPEECHES

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate among the four types of persuasive claims.
- Understand how the four types of persuasive claims lead to different types of persuasive speeches.
- Explain the two types of policy claims.

Obviously, there are many different persuasive speech topics you could select for a public speaking class. Anything from localized claims like changing a specific college or university policy to larger societal claims like adding more enforcement against the trafficking of women and children in the United States could make for an interesting persuasive speech. You'll notice in the previous sentence we referred to the two topics as claims. In this use of the word "claim," we are declaring the goodness or positivity of an attitude, value, belief, or behavior that others may dispute. As a result of the dispute between our perceptions of the goodness of an attitude, value, belief, or behavior and the perceptions of others, we attempt to support the claim we make using some sort of evidence and logic as we attempt to persuade others. There are four common claims that can be made: definitional, factual, policy, and value.

Definitional Claims

The first common types of claims that a persuasive speaker can make are definitional or classification claims. Definitional claims are claims over the denotation or classification of what something is. In essence, we are trying to argue for what something is or what something is not. Most definitional claims falling to a basic argument formula:

X is (or is not) a **Y** because it has (or does not have) features **A**, **B**, or **C**.

For example, maybe you're trying to persuade your class that while therapeutic massage is often performed on nude clients, it is not a form of prostitution. You could start by explaining what therapeutic massage is and then what prostitution is. You could even look at the legal definition of prostitution and demonstrate to your peers that therapeutic massage does not fall into the legal definition of prostitution because it does not involve the behaviors characterized by that definition.

Factual Claims

Factual claims set out to argue the truth or falsity of an assertion. Some factual claims are simple to answer: Barack Obama is the first African American President; the tallest man in the world, Robert Wadlow, was eight feet and eleven inches tall; Facebook wasn't profitable until 2009. All these factual claims are well documented by evidence and can be easily supported with a little research.

However, many factual claims cannot be answered absolutely. Some factual claims are simply hard to determine the falsity or trueness of because the final answer on the subject has not been discovered (e.g., when is censorship good, what rights should animals have, when does life begin). Probably the most historically interesting and consistent factual claim is the existence of a higher power, God, or other religious deity. The simple fact of the matter is that there is not enough evidence to clearly answer this factual claim in any specific direction, which is where the notion of faith must be involved in this factual claim.

Other factual claims that may not be easily answered using evidence are predictions of what may or may not happen. For example, you could give a speech on the future of climate change or the future of terrorism in the United States. While there may be evidence that something will happen in the future, unless you're a psychic, you don't actually know what will happen in the future.

When thinking of factual claims, it often helps to pretend that you're putting a specific claim on trial and as the speaker your job is to defend your claim as a lawyer would defend a client. Ultimately, your job is to be more persuasive than your audience members who act as both opposition attorneys and judges.

Policy Claims

The third common claim that is seen in persuasive speeches is the policy claim—a statement about the nature of a problem and the solution that should be implemented. Policy claims are probably the most common form of persuasive speaking because we live in a society surrounded by problems and people who have ideas about how to fix these problems. Let's look at a few examples of possible policy claims:

- The United States should stop capital punishment.
- The United States should become independent from the use of foreign oil.
- Human cloning for organ donations should be legal.
- Nonviolent drug offenders should be sent to rehabilitation centers and not prisons.
- The tobacco industry should be required to pay 100 percent of the medical bills for individuals dying of smoking-related cancers.
- The United States needs to invest more in preventing poverty at home and less in feeding the starving around the world.

Each of these claims has a clear perspective that is being advocated. Policy claims will always have a clear and direct opinion for what should occur and what needs to change. When examining policy claims, we generally talk about two different persuasive goals: passive agreement and immediate action.

Gain Passive Agreement

When we attempt to gain the passive agreement of our audiences, our goal is to get our audiences to agree with what we are saying and our specific policy without asking the audience to do anything to enact the policy. For example, maybe your speech is on why the Federal Communications Commission should regulate violence on television like it does foul language (i.e., no violence until after 9 p.m.). Your goal as a speaker is to get your audience to agree that it is in our best interest as a society to prevent violence from being shown on television before 9 p.m., but you are not seeking to have your audience run out and call their senators or congressmen or even sign a petition. Often the first step in larger political change is simply getting a massive number people to agree with your policy perspective.

Let's look at a few more passive agreement claims:

- Racial profiling of individuals suspected of belonging to known terrorist groups is a way to make America safer.
- Requiring American citizens to "show their papers" is a violation of democracy and resembles tactics of Nazi Germany and communist Russia.
- Colleges and universities should voluntarily implement a standardized testing program to ensure student learning outcomes are similar across different institutions.

In each of these claims, the goal is to sway one's audience to a specific attitude, value, or belief, but not necessarily to get the audience to enact any specific behaviors.

Gain Immediate Action

The alternative to passive agreement is immediate action, or persuading your audience to start engaging in a specific behavior. Many passive agreement topics can become immediate action-oriented topics as soon as you tell your audience what behavior they should engage in (e.g., sign a petition, call a senator, vote). While it is much easier to elicit passive agreement than to get people to do something, you should always try to get your audience to act and do so quickly. A common mistake that speakers make is telling people to enact a behavior that will occur in the future. The longer it takes for people to engage in the action you desire, the less likely it is that your audience will engage in that behavior.

Here are some examples of good claims with immediate calls to action:

- College students should eat more fruit, so I am encouraging everyone to eat the apple I have provided you and start getting more fruit in your diet.
- Teaching a child to read is one way to ensure that the next generation will be stronger than those that have come before us, so please sign up right now to volunteer one hour a week to help teach a child to read.
- The United States should reduce its nuclear arsenal by 20 percent over the next five years. Please sign the letter provided encouraging the president to take this necessary step for global peace. Once you've signed the letter, hand it to me, and I'll fax it to the White House today.

Each of these three examples starts with a basic claim and then tags on an immediate call to action. Remember, the faster you can get people to engage in a behavior the more likely they actually will.

Value Claims

The final type of claim is a value claim, or a claim where the speaker is advocating a judgment claim about something (e.g., it's good or bad, it's right or wrong, it's beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral).

Let's look at three value claims. We've italicized the evaluative term in each claim:

- Dating people on the Internet is an *immoral* form of dating.
- SUVs are *gas guzzling monstrosities*.
- It's *unfair* for pregnant women to have special parking spaces at malls, shopping centers, and stores.

Each of these three claims could definitely be made by a speaker and other speakers could say the exact opposite. When making a value claim, it's hard to ascertain why someone has chosen a specific value stance without understanding her or his criteria for making the evaluative statement. For example, if someone finds all forms of technology immoral, then it's really no surprise that he or she would find Internet dating immoral as well. As such, you need to clearly explain your criteria for making the evaluative statement. For example, when we examine the SUV claim, if your criteria for the term "gas guzzling monstrosity" are ecological impact, safety, and gas consumption, then your evaluative statement can be more easily understood and evaluated by your audience. If, however, you state that your criterion is that SUVs are bigger than military vehicles and shouldn't be on the road, then your statement takes on a slightly different meaning. Ultimately, when making a value claim, you need to make sure that you clearly label your evaluative term and provide clear criteria for how you came to that evaluation.

Key Takeaways

- There are four types of persuasive claims. Definition claims argue the denotation or classification of what something is. Factual claims argue the truth or falsity about an assertion being made. Policy claims argue the nature of a problem and the solution that should be taken. Lastly, value claims argue a judgment about something (e.g., it's good or bad, it's right or wrong, it's beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral).
- Each of the four claims leads to different types of persuasive speeches. As such, public speakers need to be aware what type of claim they are advocating in order to understand the best methods of persuasion.
- In policy claims, persuaders attempt to convince their audiences to either passively accept or actively act. When persuaders attempt to gain passive agreement from an audience, they hope that an audience will agree with what is said about a specific policy without asking the audience to do anything to enact the policy. Gaining immediate action, on the other hand, occurs when a persuader gets the audience to actively engage in a specific behavior.

Exercises

1. Look at the list of the top one hundred speeches in the United States during the twentieth century compiled by Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst. Select a speech and examine the speech to determine which type of claim is being made by the speech.
2. Look at the list of the top one hundred speeches in the United States during the twentieth century compiled by Stephen E. Lucas and Martin J. Medhurst and find a policy speech. Which type of policy outcome was the speech aimed at achieving—passive agreement or immediate action? What evidence do you have from the speech to support your answer?

ORGANIZING PERSUASIVE SPEECHES

Learning Objectives
• Understand three common organizational patterns for persuasive speeches. • Explain the steps utilized in Monroe's motivated sequence. • Explain the parts of a problem-cause-solution speech. • Explain the process utilized in a comparative advantage persuasive speech.

Previously in this text we discussed general guidelines for organizing speeches. In this section, we are going to look at three organizational patterns ideally suited for persuasive speeches: Monroe's motivated sequence, problem-cause-solution, and comparative advantages.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

One of the most commonly cited and discussed organizational patterns for persuasive speeches is Alan H. Monroe's motivated sequence. The purpose of Monroe's motivated sequence is to help speakers "sequence supporting materials and motivational appeals to form a useful organizational pattern for speeches as a whole." (((Note: German, K. M., Gronbeck, B. E., Ehninger, D., & Monroe, A. H. (2010). *Principles of public speaking* (17th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p. 236.)))

While Monroe's motivated sequence is commonly discussed in most public speaking textbooks, we do want to provide one minor caution. Thus far, almost no research has been conducted that has demonstrated that Monroe's motivated sequence is any more persuasive than other structural patterns. In the only study conducted experimentally examining Monroe's motivated sequence, the researchers did not find the method more persuasive, but did note that audience members found the pattern more organized than other methods. (((Note: Micciche, T., Pryor, B., & Butler, J. (2000). A test of Monroe's motivated sequence for its effects on ratings of message organization and attitude change. *Psychological Reports, 86*, 1135–1138.))) We wanted to add this sidenote because we don't want you to think that Monroe's motivated sequence is a kind of magic persuasive bullet; the research simply doesn't support this notion. At the same time, research does support that organized messages are perceived as more persuasive as a whole, so using Monroe's motivated sequence to think through one's persuasive argument could still be very beneficial.

Table 1 "Monroe's Motivated Sequence" lists the basic steps of Monroe's motivated sequence and the subsequent reaction a speaker desires from his or her audience.

Table 1. Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Steps	Audience Response
Attention—Getting Attention	I want to listen to the speaker.
Need—Showing the Need, Describing the Problem	Something needs to be done about the problem.
Satisfaction—Satisfying the Need, Presenting the Solution	In order to satisfy the need or fix the problem this is what I need to do.
Visualization—Visualizing the Results	I can see myself enjoying the benefits of taking action.

Steps	Audience Response
Action—Requesting Audience Action or Approval	I will act in a specific way or approve a decision or behavior.

Attention

The first step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the attention step, in which a speaker attempts to get the audience's attention. To gain an audience's attention, we recommend that you think through three specific parts of the attention step. First, you need to have a strong attention-getting device. As previously discussed in Chapter 9 "Introductions Matter: How to Begin a Speech Effectively," a strong attention getter at the beginning of your speech is very important. Second, you need to make sure you introduce your topic clearly. If your audience doesn't know what your topic is quickly, they are more likely to stop listening. Lastly, you need to explain to your audience why they should care about your topic.

Needs

In the need step of Monroe's motivated sequence, the speaker establishes that there is a specific need or problem. In Monroe's conceptualization of need, he talks about four specific parts of the need: statement, illustration, ramification, and pointing. First, a speaker needs to give a clear and concise statement of the problem. This part of a speech should be crystal clear for an audience. Second, the speaker needs to provide one or more examples to illustrate the need. The illustration is an attempt to make the problem concrete for the audience. Next, a speaker needs to provide some kind of evidence (e.g., statistics, examples, testimony) that shows the ramifications or consequences of the problem. Lastly, a speaker needs to point to the audience and show exactly how the problem relates to them personally.

Satisfaction

In the third step of Monroe's motivated sequence, the satisfaction step, the speaker sets out to satisfy the need or solve the problem. Within this step, Monroe (1935) proposed a five-step plan for satisfying a need:

1. Statement
2. Explanation
3. Theoretical demonstration
4. Reference to practical experience
5. Meeting objections

First, you need to clearly state the attitude, value, belief, or action you want your audience to accept. The purpose of this statement is to clearly tell your audience what your ultimate goal is.

Second, you want to make sure that you clearly explain to your audience why they should accept the attitude, value, belief, or action you proposed. Just telling your audience they should do something isn't strong enough to actually get them to change. Instead, you really need to provide a solid argument for why they should accept your proposed solution.

Third, you need to show how the solution you have proposed meets the need or problem. Monroe calls this link between your solution and the need a theoretical demonstration because you cannot prove that your solution will work. Instead, you theorize based on research and good judgment that your solution will meet the need or solve the problem.

Fourth, to help with this theoretical demonstration, you need to reference practical experience, which should include examples demonstrating that your proposal has worked elsewhere. Research, statistics, and expert testimony are all great ways of referencing practical experience.

Lastly, Monroe recommends that a speaker respond to possible objections. As a persuasive speaker, one of your jobs is to think through your speech and see what counterarguments could be made against your speech and then rebut those arguments within your speech. When you offer rebuttals for arguments against your speech, it shows your audience that you've done your homework and educated yourself about multiple sides of the issue.

Visualization

The next step of Monroe's motivated sequence is the visualization step, in which you ask the audience to visualize a future where the need has been met or the problem solved. In essence, the visualization stage is where a speaker can show the audience why accepting a specific attitude, value, belief, or behavior can positively affect the future. When helping people to picture the future, the more concrete your visualization is, the easier it will be for your audience to see the possible future and be persuaded by it. You also need to make sure that you clearly show how accepting your solution will directly benefit your audience.

According to Monroe, visualization can be conducted in one of three ways: positive, negative, or contrast. (((Note: Monroe, A. H. (1935). *Principles and types of speech*. Chicago, IL: Scott Foresman.))) The positive method of visualization is where a speaker shows how adopting a proposal leads to a better future (e.g., recycle, and we'll have a cleaner and safer planet). Conversely, the negative method of visualization is where a speaker shows how not adopting the proposal will lead to a worse future (e.g., don't recycle, and our world will become polluted and uninhabitable). Monroe also acknowledged that visualization can include a combination of both positive and negative visualization. In essence, you show your audience both possible outcomes and have them decide which one they would rather have.

Action

The final step in Monroe's motivated sequence is the action step, in which a speaker asks an audience to approve the speaker's proposal. For understanding purposes, we break action into two distinct parts: audience action and approval. Audience action refers to direct physical behaviors a speaker wants from an audience (e.g., flossing their teeth twice a day, signing a petition, wearing seat belts). Approval, on the other hand, involves an audience's consent or agreement with a speaker's proposed attitude, value, or belief.

When preparing an action step, it is important to make sure that the action, whether audience action or approval, is realistic for your audience. Asking your peers in a college classroom to donate one thousand dollars to charity isn't realistic. Asking your peers to donate one dollar is considerably more realistic. In a persuasive speech based on Monroe's motivated sequence, the action step will end with the speech's concluding device. As discussed elsewhere in this text, you need to make sure that you conclude in a vivid way so that the speech ends on a high point and the audience has a sense of energy as well as a sense of closure.

Now that we've walked through Monroe's motivated sequence, let's look at how you could use Monroe's motivated sequence to outline a persuasive speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that the United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments.

Main Points:

- Attention: Want to make nine thousand dollars for just three weeks of work lying around and not doing much? Then be a human guinea pig. Admittedly, you'll have to have a tube down your throat most of those three weeks, but you'll earn three thousand dollars a week.
- Need: Every day many uneducated and lower socioeconomic-status citizens are preyed on by medical and pharmaceutical companies for use in for-profit medical and drug experiments. Do you want one of your family members to fall prey to this evil scheme?
- Satisfaction: The United States should have stronger laws governing the use of for-profit medical experiments to ensure that uneducated and lower-socioeconomic-status citizens are protected.
- Visualization: If we enact tougher experiment oversight, we can ensure that medical and pharmaceutical research is conducted in a way that adheres to basic values of American decency. If we do not enact tougher experiment oversight, we could find ourselves in a world where the lines between research subject, guinea pig, and patient become increasingly blurred.
- Action: In order to prevent the atrocities associated with for-profit medical and pharmaceutical experiments, please sign this petition asking the US Department of Health and Human Services to pass stricter regulations on this preying industry that is out of control.

This example shows how you can take a basic speech topic and use Monroe's motivated sequence to clearly and easily outline your speech efficiently and effectively.

Table 2 "Monroe's Motivated Sequence Checklist" also contains a simple checklist to help you make sure you hit all the important components of Monroe's motivated sequence.

Table 2. Monroe's Motivated Sequence Checklist

Step in the Sequence	Yes	No
Attention Step		
Gained audience's attention	◻	◻
Introduced the topic clearly	◻	◻
Showed the importance of the topic to the audience	◻	◻
Need Step		
Need is summarized in a clear statement	◻	◻
Need is adequately illustrated	◻	◻
Need has clear ramifications	◻	◻
Need clearly points the audience	◻	◻
Satisfaction Step		
Plan is clearly stated	◻	◻
Plan is plainly explained	◻	◻
Plan and solution are theoretically demonstrated	◻	◻
Plan has clear reference to practical experience	◻	◻
Plan can meet possible objections	◻	◻
Visualization Step		
Practicality of plan shown	◻	◻
Benefits of plan are tangible	◻	◻
Benefits of plan relate to the audience	◻	◻
Specific type of visualization chosen (positive method, negative method, method of contrast)	◻	◻
Action Step		
Call of specific action by the audience	◻	◻
Action is realistic for the audience	◻	◻

Step in the Sequence	Yes	No
Concluding device is vivid	◻	◻

Problem-Cause-Solution

Another format for organizing a persuasive speech is the problem-cause-solution format. In this specific format, you discuss what a problem is, what you believe is causing the problem, and then what the solution should be to correct the problem.

Specific Purpose: To persuade my classroom peers that our campus should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for hate speech.

Main Points:

1. Demonstrate that there is distrust among different groups on campus that has led to unnecessary confrontations and violence.
2. Show that the confrontations and violence are a result of hate speech that occurred prior to the events.
3. Explain how instituting a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy against hate speech could stop the unnecessary confrontations and violence.

In this speech, you want to persuade people to support a new campus-wide policy calling for zero-tolerance of hate speech. Once you have shown the problem, you then explain to your audience that the cause of the unnecessary confrontations and violence is prior incidents of hate speech. Lastly, you argue that a campus-wide zero-tolerance policy could help prevent future unnecessary confrontations and violence. Again, this method of organizing a speech is as simple as its name: problem-cause-solution.

Comparative Advantages

The final method for organizing a persuasive speech is called the comparative advantages speech format. The goal of this speech is to compare items side-by-side and show why one of them is more advantageous than the other. For example, let's say that you're giving a speech on which e-book reader is better: Amazon.com's Kindle or Barnes and Nobles' Nook. Here's how you could organize this speech:

Specific Purpose: To persuade my audience that the Nook is more advantageous than the Kindle.

Main Points:

1. The Nook allows owners to trade and loan books to other owners or people who have downloaded the Nook software, while the Kindle does not.
2. The Nook has a color-touch screen, while the Kindle's screen is black and grey and noninteractive.
3. The Nook's memory can be expanded through microSD, while the Kindle's memory cannot be upgraded.

As you can see from this speech's organization, the simple goal of this speech is to show why one thing has more positives than something else. Obviously, when you are demonstrating comparative advantages, the items you are comparing need to be functional equivalents—or, as the saying goes, you cannot compare apples to oranges.

Key Takeaways

- There are three common patterns that persuaders can utilize to help organize their speeches effectively: Monroe's motivated sequence, problem-cause-solution, and comparative advantage. Each of these patterns can effectively help a speaker think through his or her thoughts and organize them in a manner that will be more likely to persuade an audience.
- Alan H. Monroe's (1935) motivated sequence is a commonly used speech format that is used by many people to effectively organize persuasive messages. The pattern consists of five basic stages:

attention, need, satisfaction, visualization, and action. In the first stage, a speaker gets an audience's attention. In the second stage, the speaker shows an audience that a need exists. In the third stage, the speaker shows how his or her persuasive proposal could satisfy the need. The fourth stage shows how the future could be if the persuasive proposal is or is not adopted. Lastly, the speaker urges the audience to take some kind of action to help enact the speaker's persuasive proposal.
- The problem-cause-solution proposal is a three-pronged speech pattern. The speaker starts by explaining the problem the speaker sees. The speaker then explains what he or she sees as the underlying causes of the problem. Lastly, the speaker proposes a solution to the problem that corrects the underlying causes.
- The comparative advantages speech format is utilized when a speaker is comparing two or more things or ideas and shows why one of the things or ideas has more advantages than the other(s).

Exercises

1. Create a speech using Monroe's motivated sequence to persuade people to recycle.
2. Create a speech using the problem-cause-solution method for a problem you see on your college or university campus.
3. Create a comparative advantages speech comparing two brands of toothpaste.

CHOOSING A PERSUASIVE SPEECH TOPIC

"Jade Raymond" by Gamerscore Blog. CC-BY-SA.

In order to offer a persuasive speech, you must decide precisely what it is you want to talk about, to whom you will be speaking, and to what ends you hope the speech will lead. Persuasive speeches do not normally happen within a vacuum, even in a public speaking course where that might seem to be the case. In fact, most persuasive speeches serve as a response to larger circumstances—gas prices increase dramatically and drivers cannot afford to fill up their tanks; war veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and can find little governmental assistance for the necessary treatments; an election is forthcoming and candidates need to secure votes. These are just a few times when a persuasive speech would make sense. A driver might try to persuade their employer to embrace telecommuting as a response to the high rate of gasoline. Veterans with PTSD might stage speeches to a national audience imploring them to advocate for better mental health care for people who have fought in wars. And candidates, of course, will give many speeches during a campaign that tease out the various reasons they, and not another candidate, should be elected. Appendix A (at the end of the chapter) offers a lengthier list of possible topics for persuasive speaking, but keep in mind the advice that Burnett offers in Chapter 8 (public speaking: the virtual text) regarding topic selection. The topics in Appendix A are written as propositions that can be defended. Some are propositions of fact, others are propositions of value, and yet others are propositions of policy.

APPROACHING AUDIENCES

> If I can get you to laugh with me, you like me better, which makes you more open to my ideas. And if I can persuade you to laugh at the particular point I make, by laughing at it you acknowledge its truth. – John Cleese

When choosing a topic for your persuasive speech, it is crucial to consider the composition of your audience. Because persuasive speeches are intended to influence or reinforce an audience's thoughts or behaviors, speakers must consider what and how the audience thinks, feels, and does. Your audience might be ambivalent about your topic, or they may be strongly opposed, in strong agreement, or somewhere along the spectrum. In persuasive speeches, it matters where they fall on this continuum. For instance, if you want to argue that abortion should be illegal and your audience is composed of pro-life advocates, your speech might seem like you are preaching to the choir. But if your audience is made up of staunch pro-choice activists, your speech would be raising a significant objection to a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and actions the audience was already committed to.

"Photo Essay" by United States Armed Force. Public domain.

Decaro, Adams and Jefferis offer advice for carrying out a thorough audience analysis in Chapter 5 of this book. Some questions you might ask before giving a speech include, "Who is hosting the speech?" Often this can provide a great deal of information about who will be in the audience. Audience members at a National Rifle Association gathering probably do not need to be convinced that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution— the right to keep and bear arms—is worth upholding. You should also ask, "Is the audience fairly heterogeneous?" In a public speaking class, you may be able to gauge that through your interactions with your fellow classmates before you make your way to the podium; but in other settings this may not be the case. If an organization is sponsoring or has invited you to speak, this is a question that can be directed to organizational staff with access to demographic information. Some **demographics** that may be useful as you craft your speech include age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation. Each of these characteristics is known to influence a listener's beliefs, attitudes, values, and actions.

Receptive Audiences

"Children Play in Push Car" by Nils Fretwurst. *CC-BY-SA.*

Persuasive speakers will not generally address an audience that already fully agrees with them and is behaving in the way they would like, because that audience no longer needs to be persuaded. However, you may find yourself in situations that allow you to appeal to a **receptive audience** which already knows something about your topic and is generally supportive of, or open to, the point you are trying to make. For example, parents are generally interested in keeping their children safe. If you seek to persuade them that they should work with their kids to prevent them from being taken advantage of on social networking sites, they are likely to welcome what you have to say. Although they are already convinced that it is important to keep their children safe, this audience may not yet be persuaded that they have the need or ability to keep their kids safe in an online environment. In order to persuade this receptive audience, you should first attempt to foster **identification** with them by highlighting things you have in common. If you are a parent you might say something like, "I have two children and one of my biggest concerns is making sure they are safe." If you are not a parent you might say, "one of the things I appreciate most about my parents is that I know they are always trying to keep me safe." With these statements, you not only relate to the audience, but also demonstrate that you share a common concern.

> If you would persuade, you must appeal to interest rather than intellect. – Benjamin Franklin

Next, offer a clear statement of purpose and tell the audience what you would like them to do in response to your message. If the audience is already likely to agree with your point, they will be looking for ways to act on it. Offer practical steps that they can take. Even if the steps must be carried out later (i.e. the parents in our example may have to wait to get home and start talking with their child about social networking habits), give them a way to respond to the message immediately and show their support. In this case you may have them write down the first thing they will say to their child, or practice saying it to the person next to them. Having them act on your message before leaving reinforces their already favorable response to what you are asking. (((Note: Beebe, S.A. & Beebe, S.J. (2003). *Public Speaking: An Audience Centered Approach* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.)))

> I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. – Elie Wiesel

Neutral Audiences

"Untitled" by Petr Kratochvil. *CC-0.*

Most of the groups that a persuasive speaker addresses are **neutral audiences**. These audiences are not passionate about the topic or speaker, often because they do not have enough information or because they are not aware that they should be concerned. Beebe & Beebe explain that the challenge in addressing a neutral audience is to foster their interest in your proposition. (((Note: (Beebe & Beebe 2003)))) They offer a few tips for cultivating interest in a neutral audience. Begin by gaining their attention. To do this you might offer a story or statistic that relates the topic directly to the dominant demographic in the audience. If you are trying to convince first-year college students to avoid credit card solicitors on campus you might start with something like, "I know those t-shirts the credit card vendors are handing out are stylish and, best of all, free! But that t-shirt could cost you thousands of dollars before you even graduate." Rather than beginning with a diatribe on the evils of debt, which many of them may not yet have experienced, you relate to their desire for a free t-shirt and a common belief they are likely to share, that “free” should not translate to “expensive.” If you cannot relate the topic directly to the audience, another approach is to relate the topic to someone they care about, like a family member or friend. Keep in mind that, while the receptive audience may be eager to respond immediately, the neutral audience may simply be more concerned about the topic or more inclined to consider the behavior change you are advocating. (((Note: (Beebe & Beebe 2003)))) In this case, consider offering resources for more information, or a few minor steps they can take when they are ready.

> He who dreads hostility too much is unfit to rule. – Lucius Annaeus Seneca

Hostile Audiences

Unfortunately, some audiences may be resistant or even hostile to your persuasive speech. A **hostile audience** may take issue with your topic or with you as a speaker. In this case, your primary goal is to persuade the audience to listen to what you have to say. (((Note: (Beebe & Beebe 2003)))) Once they are willing to listen, then you will have the ability to change their minds in the future. Later in this chapter we will address ways that you can foster a better relationship with the audience by building your ethos. However, if the audience is opposed to your proposition, there are a few steps that you can take to encourage them to at least hear you out. If the audience is not likely to agree with your proposition, wait until later in the speech to offer it. Opening with a clear statement of purpose, which a receptive audience welcomes, will make an unreceptive audience more hostile to your goals. For example, if you begin by telling business owners that you think they should pay workers more, they are likely to think of all the reasons that will threaten their livelihood rather than listening to your message. Instead, begin by highlighting issues on which you agree. You might open with a discussion of the challenges businesses face in attempting to retain quality workers and increase productivity.

> I have spent many years of my life in opposition, and I rather like the role. – Eleanor Roosevelt

Once you have identified areas of agreement, you can offer your proposition as a way of addressing your shared goals. To promote an increase in wages, you might explain that a study of more than 10,000 workers and managers in a variety of industries demonstrated that companies who pay their workers more were also more motivated to invest in new technology, enhance their management techniques, better train workers, and better deliver their services, all of which lead to higher productivity and increased profits. (((Note: Applebaum, E. & Berhardt, A. (2004, December 18). Employers also benefit from a higher minimum wage. Brennan Center for Justice. Retrieved from: http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/employers-also-benefit-higher-minimum-wage))) Focusing on areas of agreement will make the audience more receptive to your proposition, but they will still hold some reservations. Acknowledge those reservations and demonstrate that you have given them ample consideration. Cite credible evidence that supports your proposition in light of those reservations. Showing that you understand and respect their opposing position is the most important step toward encouraging a hostile audience to at least hear you out.

PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES

Ethos

In addition to understanding how your audience feels about the topic you are addressing, you will need to take steps to help them see you as credible and interesting. The audience's perception of you as a speaker is influential in determining whether or not they will choose to accept your proposition. Aristotle called this element of the speech **ethos**, "a Greek word that is closely related to our terms *ethical* and *ethnic.*" (((Note: Campbell, K.K. & Huxman, S.S. (2009). *The Rhetorical Act: Thinking, Speaking, and Writing Critically*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.))) He taught speakers to establish credibility with the audience by appearing to have good moral character, common sense, and concern for the audience's well-being. (((Note: Beebe, S.A. & Beebe, S.J. (2003). Public Speaking: An Audience Centered Approach (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.))) Campbell & Huxman explain that ethos is not about conveying that you, as an individual, are a good person. It is about "mirror[ing] the characteristics idealized by [the] culture or group" (ethnic), (((Note: Campbell & Huxman 2009))) and demonstrating that you make good moral choices with regard to your relationship within the group (ethics).

"Danny Shine Speaker's Corner" by Acapeloahddub. Public domain.

While there are many things speakers can do to build their ethos throughout the speech, "assessments of ethos often reflect superficial first impressions," and these first impressions linger long after the speech has concluded. (((Note: Zarefsky, D. (2005). *Public Speaking: Strategies for Success* (Special edition for The Pennsylvania State University). Boston: Pearson.))) This means that what you wear and how you behave, even before opening your mouth, can go far in shaping your ethos. Be sure to dress appropriately for the occasion and setting in which you speak. Also work to appear confident, but not arrogant, and be sure to maintain enthusiasm about your topic throughout the speech. Give great attention to the crafting of your opening sentences because they will set the tone for what your audience should expect of your personality as you proceed.

> I covered two presidents, LBJ and Nixon, who could no longer convince, persuade, or govern, once people had decided they had no credibility; but we seem to be more tolerant now of what I think we should not tolerate. – Helen Thomas

Logos

Another way to enhance your ethos, and your chances of persuading the audience, is to use sound arguments. In a persuasive speech, the **argument** will focus on the reasons for supporting your specific purpose statement. This argumentative approach is what Aristotle referred to as **logos**, or the logical means of proving an argument. (((Note: Braet, A.C. (1992). Ethos, pathos, and logos in Aristotle's rhetoric: A reexamination. *Argumentation*, *6*(3), pp. 307–320.)))

When offering an argument you begin by making an assertion that requires a logical leap based on the available evidence. (((Note: Campbell & Huxman 2009))) One of the most popular ways of understanding how this process works was developed by British philosopher Stephen Toulmin. (((Note: Herrick, J.A. (2011). *Argumentation: Understanding and Shaping Arguments*. State College, PA: Strata Publishing.))) Toulmin explained that basic arguments tend to share three common elements: claim, data, and warrant. The **claim** is an assertion that you want the audience to accept. **Data** refers to the preliminary evidence on which the claim is based. For example, if I saw large gray clouds in the sky, I might make the claim that "it is going to rain today."

The gray clouds (data) are linked to rain (claim) by the **warrant**, an often unstated general connection, that large gray clouds tend to produce rain. The warrant is a connector that, if stated, would likely begin with “since” or “because.” In our rain example, if we explicitly stated all three elements, the argument would go something like this: There are large gray clouds in the sky today (data). Since large gray clouds tend to produce rain (warrant), it is going to rain today (claim). However, in our regular encounters with argumentation, we tend to only offer the claim and (occasionally) the warrant.

To strengthen the basic argument, you will need backing for the claim. Backing provides foundational support for the claim (((Note: Herrick 2011))) by offering examples, statistics, testimony, or other information which further substantiates the argument. To substantiate the rain argument we have just considered, you could explain that the color of a cloud is determined by how much light the water in the cloud is reflecting. A thin cloud has tiny drops of water and ice crystals which scatter light, making it appear white. Clouds appear gray when they are filled with large water droplets which are less able to reflect light. (((Note: Brill, R. (2003, July 21). Why do clouds turn gray before it rains? *Scientific American*. Retrieved from: http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-do-clouds-turn-gray-b/)))

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Table 16.1: The Toulmin Model</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Basic Argument</th></tr>
<tr><td>data

I had a hard time finding a place to park on campus.</td><td>claim

The school needs more parking spaces.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">warrant

If I can’t find a place to park, there must be a shortage of spaces.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Argument with Backing</th></tr>
<tr><td>data

Obesity is a serious problem in the U.S.</td><td>claim

U.S. citizens should be encouraged to eat less processed foods.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">warrant

Processed foods contribute to obesity more than natural or unprocessed foods.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">backing

“As a rule processed foods are more ‘energy dense’ than fresh foods: they contain less water and fiber but more added fat and sugar, which makes them both less filling and more fattening.” (Pollan, 2007) (((Note: Pollan, M. (2007, April 22). You are what you grow. The New York Times. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/22/magazine/22wwlnlede.t.html?pagewanted=all)))</td></tr>
</table>

> Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end. – Leonard Nimoy

The elements that Toulmin identified (see Table 16.1) may be arranged in a variety of ways to make the most logical argument. As you reason through your argument you may proceed inductively, deductively, or causally, toward your claim. **Inductive reasoning** moves from specific examples to a more general claim. For example, if you read online reviews of a restaurant chain called Walt's Wine & Dine and you noticed that someone reported feeling sick after eating at a Walt's, and another person reported that the Walt's they visited was understaffed, and another commented that the tables in the Walt's they ate at had crumbs left on them, you might conclude (or claim) that the restaurant chain is unsanitary. To test the validity of a general claim, Beebe and Beebe encourage speakers to consider whether there are "enough specific instances to support the conclusion," whether the specific instances are typical, and whether the instances are recent. (((Note: Beebe & Beebe 2003)))

"Dining Booth" by Wayne Truong. CC-BY.

The opposite of inductive reasoning is **deductive reasoning**, moving from a general principle to a claim regarding a specific instance. In order to move from general to specific we tend to use **syllogisms**. A syllogism begins with a major (or general) premise, then moves to a minor premise, then concludes with a specific claim. For example, if you know that all dogs bark (major premise), and your neighbor has a dog (minor premise), you could then conclude that your neighbor's dog barks (specific claim). To verify the accuracy of your specific claim, you must verify the truth and applicability of the major premise. What evidence do you have that all dogs bark? Is it possible that only *most* dogs bark? Next, you must also verify the accuracy of the minor premise. If the major premise is truly generalizable, and both premises are accurate, your specific claim should also be accurate.

Your reasoning may also proceed causally. **Causal reasoning** examines related events to determine which one caused the other. You may begin with a cause and attempt to determine its effect. For example, when the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, scientists explained that because many animals in the Gulf were nesting and reproducing at the time, the spill could wipe out "an entire generation of hundreds of species." (((Note: Donovan, T.W. (2010, July 10). 7 Long term effects of the Gulf oil spill. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/10/7-long-term-effects-of-th_n_562947.html#s87787title=Environmental_Damage))) Their argument reasoned that the spill (cause) would result in species loss (effect). Two years later, the causal reasoning might be reversed. If we were seeing species loss in the Gulf (effect), we could reason that it was a result of the oil spill (cause). Both of these claims rely on the evidence available at the time. To make the first claim, scientists not only offered evidence that animals were nesting and reproducing, but they also looked at the effects of an oil spill that occurred 21 years earlier in Alaska. (((Note: Donovan 2010))) To make the second claim, scientists could examine dead animals washing up on the coast to determine whether their deaths were caused by oil.

"Deepwater Horizon offshore drilling unit on fire" by US Coast Guard. Public domain.

Pathos

While we have focused heavily on logical reasoning, we must also recognize the strong role that emotions play in the persuasive process. Aristotle called this element of the speech **pathos**. Pathos draws on the emotions, sympathies, and prejudices of the audience to appeal to their non-rational side. (((Note: Beebe & Beebe 2003))) (((Note: Reike, R.D., Sillars, M.O., & Peterson, T.R. (2009). *Argumentation and Critical Decision Making* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson.))) Human beings are constantly in some emotional state, which means that tapping into an audience's emotions can be vital to persuading them to accept your proposition. (((Note: Dillard, J.P. & Meijnders, A. (2002). Persuasion and the structure of affect. In J.P. Dillard & M. Pfau (Eds.), *The Persuasion Handbook: Developments in Theory and Practice* (309–328). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.)))

One of the most helpful strategies in appealing to your audience's emotions is to use clear examples that illustrate your point. Illustrations can be crafted verbally, nonverbally, or visually. To offer a verbal illustration, you could tell a compelling story. For example, when fundraising for breast cancer research, Nancy Brinker, creator of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, has plenty of compelling statistics and examples to offer. Yet, she regularly talks about her sister, explaining:

> *Susan G. Komen fought breast cancer with her heart, body and soul. Throughout her diagnosis, treatments, and endless days in the hospital, she spent her time thinking of ways to make life better for other women battling breast cancer instead of worrying about her own situation. That concern for others continued even as Susan neared the end of her fight.* (((Note: Komen National. (n.d.). St. Louis Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure: Who We Are. Retrieved from: http://www.komenstlouis.org/site/PageServer?pagename=whoweare_national)))

Brinker promised her sister that she would continue her fight against breast cancer. This story compels donors to join her fight.

Speakers can also tap into emotions using nonverbal behaviors to model the desired emotion for their audience. In the summer of 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives debated holding the Attorney General in contempt for refusing to release documents concerning a controversial gun-tracking operation. Arguing for a contempt vote, South Carolina Representative Trey Gowdy did not simply state his claim; instead he raised his voice, slowed his pace, and used hand motions to convey anger with what he perceived as deception on the part of the Attorney General. (((Note: Gowdy, T. (2012). Trey Gowdy's emotional speech on Holder contempt [Video file]. Retrieved from: https://youtu.be/2bP-G4Btwp0))) His use of volume, tone, pace, and hand gestures enhanced the message and built anger in his audience.

> Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

In addition to verbal and nonverbal illustrations, visual imagery can enhance the emotional appeal of a message. For example, we have all heard about the dangers of drugs, and there are multiple campaigns that attempt to prevent people from even trying them. However, many young adults experiment with drugs under the assumption that they are immune from the negative effects if they only use the drug recreationally. To counter this assumption regarding methamphetamines, the Montana Meth project combines controversial statements with graphic images on billboards to evoke fear of the drug (see the Montana Meth Project for some disturbing examples). Young adults may have heard repeated warnings that meth is addictive and that it has the potential to cause sores, rotten teeth, and extreme weight loss, but Montana Meth Project's visual display is more compelling because it turns the audience's stomach, making the message memorable. This image, combined with the slogan, "not even once," conveys the persuasive point without the need for other forms of evidence and rational argument.

Appeals to fear, like those in the Montana Meth Project ads, have proven effective in motivating people to change a variety of behaviors. However, speakers must be careful with their use of this emotion. Fear appeals tend to be more effective when they appeal to a high-level fear, such as death, and they are more effective when offered by speakers with a high level of perceived credibility. (((Note: Beebe & Beebe 2003))) Fear appeals are also more persuasive when the speaker can convince the audience they have the ability to avert the threat. If audiences doubt their ability to avoid or minimize the threat, the appeal may backfire. (((Note: Witte, K. & Allen, M. (2000). A metaanalysis of fear appeals: Implications for effective public health campaigns. *Health Education & Behavior*, *27*(5), 591–615.)))

> I would rather try to persuade a man to go along, because once I have persuaded him, he will stick. If I scare him, he will stay just as long as he is scared, and then he is gone. – Dwight D. Eisenhower

David Brooks argues that, "emotions are not separate from reason, but they are the foundation of reason because they tell us what to value." (((Note: Brooks, D. (2011, November 17). TED 2001: David Brooks explains why there is no reason without emotion. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/03/14/ted-david-brooks_n_835476.html))) Those values are at the core of fostering a credible ethos. All of Aristotle's strategies, ethos, logos, and pathos, are interdependent. The most persuasive speakers will combine these strategies to varying degrees based on their specific purpose and audience.

Ethics of Persuasion

"Speakers Corner Speaker 1987" by Deborah MacLean. Public domain.

In addition to considering their topic and persuasive strategy, speakers must take care to ensure that their message is ethical. Persuasion is often confused with another kind of communication that has similar ends, but different methods—coercion. Like persuasion, **coercion** is a process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered. But in coercive acts, deceptive or harmful methods propel the intended changes, not reason. Strong and Cook contrasted the two: "persuasion uses argument to compel power to give way to reason while coercion uses force to compel reason to give way to power." (((Note: Strong, W. F., & Cook, J. A. (1992). *Persuasion: Strategies for public influence* (3rd ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.))) The "force" that Strong and Cook mention frequently manifests as promises for reward or punishment, but sometimes it arises as physical or emotional harm. Think of almost any international crime film you have seen, and you are likely to remember a scene where someone was compelled to out their compatriots by way of force. Jack Bauer, the protagonist in the American television series *24*, became an infamous character by doing whatever it took to get captured criminals to talk. Although dramatic as an example, those scenes where someone is tortured in an effort to produce evidence offer a familiar reference when thinking about coercion. To avoid coercing an audience, speakers should use logical and emotional appeals responsibly.

> The pendulum of the mind alternates between sense and nonsense, not between right and wrong.
> – Carl Jung

Persuasive speakers must be careful to avoid using **fallacies** in their reasoning. Fallacies are errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument. There are a wide variety of fallacies, and it is not possible to list them all here. However, speakers should watch for four common categories of fallacies: "fallacies of faulty assumption," which occur when the speaker reasons based on a problematic assumption; "fallacies directed to the person," which occur when the speaker focuses on the attributes of an individual opponent rather than the relevant arguments; "fallacies of case presentation," which occur when the speaker mischaracterizes the issue; and "fallacies of suggestion," which occur when the speaker implies or suggests an argument without fully developing it. (((Note: Herrick 2011))) See the Table 16.2 on the following page for examples of each of these types of fallacies. To learn more about fallacies, see Chapter 6 by Russ (Critical Thinking and Reasoning), or see the supplemental handout found on the Persuasive Speaking chapter homepage.

Table 16.2: Examples of Fallacies	
Fallacies of Faulty Assumption	
Casual Fallacy	It is cloudy outside, and I feel sick. Cloudy days make me sick. The school board voted to buy new picnic tables for the lunch room. Many students were out sick the following day. The students must be upset about the picnic tables.
Bandwagon Fallacy	Everyone takes out a loan to buy a car, so you should too. None of the cool kids wear helmets when they ride bikes. You should take yours off.

Table 16.2: Examples of Fallacies	
Begging the Question	*The Lion King* is an excellent film because it has excellent animation. Marijuana is good for you because it is natural.
Fallacies Directed to the Person	
Ad Hominem	We should reject President Obama's healthcare legislation because it is socialism.
Poisoning the Well	Before the defense makes their closing statement, keep in mind that their client has not said one truthful word throughout the trial. My opponent is going to try to manipulate you into thinking her plan is better for the city.
Appeal to Flattery	First, I wanted to tell you that this is my favorite class. I tell all my friends how much I love it. I just think I deserve a better grade on my exam. You are such a generous person. I know you'll want to donate to this cause.
Fallacies of Case Presentation	
Non Sequitur	I don't plan to vote today because I am moving next week. You should clean your room because I am going to do the laundry.
Red Herring	I should not be fined for parking in a red zone when there are so many people out there committing real crimes like robbery and murder. War is wrong, but in times of crisis we should support the president.
Appeal to Misplaced Authority	This diet is the best one for people with my health condition. Oprah said so. I want to visit the Museum of Modern Art. My English professor says they have the best collection anywhere!
Fallacies of Suggestion	
Paralepsis	I'm not saying he cheated; he just did uncharacteristically well on that exam. If she wants to work for a crook, that's her business.
Either/Or	Either you're with us or against us. Love it or leave it.
Arrangement	I have so much to do today. I have to get my car fixed, finish a paper, take a nap, and pick my mom up from the airport.

Table 16.2: Examples of Fallacies	
	So many highly respected musicians will be there: Paul McCartney, Elton John, LMFAO, Billy Joel…

There are some positive steps you can take to avoid these pitfalls of persuasive speaking and ensure that you are presenting your message in the most ethical manner. We have already discussed some of these, such as offering credible evidence for your arguments and showing concern for the audience's well being. However, you should also offer a transparent goal for your speech. Even with a hostile audience, where you may wait until later in the speech to provide the specific purpose statement, you should be forthcoming about your specific purpose. In fact, be truthful with your audience throughout the speech.

It is appropriate to use fictional scenarios to demonstrate your point, but tell the audience that is what you are doing. You can accomplish this by introducing fictional examples with the phrase, "hypothetically," or "imagine," to signal that you are making it up. (((Note: Beebe & Beebe 2003))) Additionally, be sure to offer a mix of logical and emotional appeals. Blending these strategies insures that you have evidence to back up emotional claims, and that you are sensitive to the audiences' emotional reactions to your logical claims. Attending to both aspects will help you be more ethical and more persuasive.

> The most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity. – Zig Ziglar

ORGANIZING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

Once you have selected your topic, know who your audience is, and have settled on an end goal for your persuasive speech, you can begin drafting your speech. Outlines are organized according to the particular speech, and the following organizational patterns are used routinely for persuasive speeches.

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Monroe's Motivated Sequence is an organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech. (((Note: Monroe, A. H. (1949). *Principles and types of speech*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.))) Five separate steps characterize the Motivated Sequence organization style:

1. The *attention step* should get the audience's attention as well as describe your goals and preview the speech.

2. The *need step* should provide a description of the problem as well as the consequences that may result if the problem goes unresolved. In this step, the speaker should also alert audience members to their role in mitigating the issue.

3. The *satisfaction step* is used to outline your solutions to the problems you have previously outlined as well as deal with any objections that may arise.

4. In the *visualization step*, audience members are asked to visualize what will happen if your solutions are implemented and what will happen if they do not come to fruition. Visualizations should be rich with detail.

5. The *action appeal step* should be used to make a direct appeal for action. In this step, you should describe precisely how the audience should react to your speech and how they should carry out these actions. As the final step, you should also offer a concluding comment. See Figure 16.1 to see this method of arrangement illustrated.

Figure 16.1: Monroe's Motivated Sequence Sample Outline
I. Attention step
A. When was the last time you saw a dog chained to a tree in a neighbor's yard, heard about a puppy mill in your town, or went into a pet store only to find dogs and cats for sale? B. I work with the Morris County Animal Protection Group, and I would like to share some ways in which you can help prevent these travesties. C. First, I will describe some of the major problems in Morris County, and then I will tell you how you can get involved.
II. Need step: Many animals in Morris County are abused and neglected.
A. There are too many stray animals that are neither spayed nor neutered, resulting in an overabundance of cats and dogs. B. These animals often cannot find enough food to survive, and the local shelter cannot accommodate such high populations. C. The cost of local spay/neuter programs is too high for our agency to handle.
III. Satisfaction step: Raising $1 million for the Morris County Animal Protection Agency can effectively solve these problems.
A. We could afford to spay or neuter most stray animals. B. Obtained animals could be fed and accommodated until a home can be secured for them. C. Additionally, we could subsidize spay/neuter costs for local citizens.
IV. Visualization step: Imagine what we can do for our animals with this money.
A. What will it be like if we can carry out these actions? B. What will it be like if we cannot do these things?
V. Action appeal step: Donate to the Morris County Animal Protection Agency.
A. If you want to help protect the many struggling stray animals in Morris County, make a donation to our organization. B. Your donation will make a real difference in the lives of our animals. C. We cannot effect real change for the animals of our county without each and every one of you.

Direct Method Pattern

If your goal is to convince your audience to adopt a particular idea, you might prefer the **direct method pattern** as a way of organizing your speech. This pattern consists of a claim and a list of reasons to support it. Every piece of support in the speech directly supports the central claim you wish to make. As Jaffe points out, “It’s a good pattern to use when listeners are apathetic or neutral, either mildly favoring or mildly opposing your claim.” (((Note: Jaffe, C. (2004). *Public speaking: Concepts and skills for a diverse society* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.))) The outline for a speech on vegetarianism in Figure 16.2 provides three reasons that vegetarianism provides useful health benefits for people struggling with obesity.

“Roman Rackwitz Presentation” by Romrack. CC-BY-SA.

Figure 16.2: Direct Method Pattern Sample Outline
Proposition: Vegetarianism offers many positive health benefits for people struggling with obesity.
I. Vegetarianism often reduces the amount of processed food that one eats. II. Vegetarianism promotes a sense of reflective consumption. III. Vegetarianism decreases the likelihood that one will contract some diseases, such as cancer and heart disease.
As you can see from this example, the statement of reasons that follows the proposition directly supports the central claim of the speech. Each reason offers another bit of evidence that vegetarianism is a good option for people struggling with obesity.

> History creates comprehensibility primarily by arranging facts meaningfully and only in a very limited sense by establishing strict causal connections. – Johan Huizinga

Causal Pattern

Similar to a problem-solution speech, which was covered in Chapter 8, a causal speech describes a general cause and a specific effect. In other words, a **causal pattern** first addresses some cause and then shares what effects resulted. A causal speech can be particularly effective when the speaker wants to convince their audience of the relationship between two things. With sound causal reasoning, a speech of this sort can be used to convince the audience of something they were previously opposed to believing.

As the example in Figure 16.3 illustrates, the basic components of the causal speech are the cause and the effect. Such an organizational style is useful when a speaker needs to share the results of a new program, discuss how one act led to another, or discuss the positive/negative outcomes of taking some action. Through this pattern, the speaker can convince audiences to adopt a new belief about a particular phenomenon.

Figure 16.3: Causal Pattern Sample Outline
Proposition: Macintosh computers make people more creative.

Figure 16.3: Causal Pattern Sample Outline
I. Macintosh computers rely on a simple, intuitive interface and are sold through a marketing campaign that encourages users to "Think Different." (cause) II. The simplicity of Macintosh computers allows people to be more creative since they are not spending their time figuring out how to use their computer. And these same consumers are socialized to "think differently" with their Macintosh computers from the moment they consider purchasing one. (effect)

Refutation Pattern

"Jeanette Chong-Aruldoss" by Terence Lee. CC-BY.

Sometimes an occasion will arise when your audience is already opposed to your argument. In this case, a **refutation pattern** can be engaged to persuade audience members that your side of the argument is better or more accurate. In a refutation speech, the speaker must anticipate the audience's opposition, then bring attention to the tensions between the two sides, and finally refute them using evidential support. Refutation patterns are frequently seen in debates, where speakers are fundamentally opposed to one another's arguments. Refutation generally happens through a set of four steps: (1) signaling the argument to which you are responding, (2) stating your own argument, (3) providing justification or evidence for your side of the argument, and (4) summarizing your response. An advocate of reusing as opposed to recycling might present the argument in Figure 16.4 to respond to someone who believes recycling is the best way to individually work on environmental stewardship. As this example illustrates, a refutation speech should clearly delineate where the audience is perceived to stand on an issue, why their view is in disagreement with the speaker's, and why the audience should adopt the speaker's position. Moreover, the speaker should be sure to highlight the importance of the debate, which will clue the audience into why they should spend their time listening to a speaker who clearly disagrees with them. An example of this pattern can be found on the next page in Figure 16.4.

Figure 16.4: Sample Outline Refutation Pattern
(Imagine that the speaker is giving the speech at a recycling convention.) **Proposition:** Reusing products is better than recycling them.
I. Although Thomas argued that recycling is the most important individual act of environmental stewardship, I would like to argue that reusing is an even better way to care for our environment. (signaling and stating)
II. Reusing has several advantages over recycling. (providing evidence)
A. Reusing reduces consumption. B. Reusing extends the life of a product before it needs to be recycled. C. It is cheaper to reuse an item than to recycle it.

Figure 16.4: Sample Outline Refutation Pattern
III. Given these advantages, it is more useful for people to reuse items when possible than it is to recycle them.

Neither irony nor sarcasm is argument. – Samuel Butler

OUTLINE FOR MONROE'S MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

Note: The verbiage here is only meant to trigger the direction for each particular step of Monroe's Sequence. You should not use this exact wording in your outline. Your content should simply cover each area shown here.

I. Attention Step

Thesis/Preview

II. Need-

1. The problem
2. Here's proof that this is a serious problem
3. Here's how this problem impacts your life, audience
4. Some people say this isn't really a problem.
5. I say they're wrong, and here's why

Transition-

III. Satisfaction-

1. Here's the solution to this problem:
2. Here's how the solution works:
3. Here's proof that this solution does work to solve the problem:
4. Some say this kind of a solution won't work.
5. I say they're wrong, and here's why:

Transition-

IV. Visualization-

1. Picture how much worse off we'll be if we don't move to use my solution
2. Picture how much better the world will be once we put my solution into place

V. Action-

1. Restate thesis:
2. Call to action:
3. Because if you don't:

4. But if you do
5. Tie Down

Sources:

VIDEO: MONROE'S MOTIVATED SEQUENCE

An introduction to MMS:

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/k0ED3PckYaM

Example of a powerful persuasive speech:

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/EzZzZ_qpZ4w

PERSUASION STUDY GUIDE

Persuasion: an attempt to get a person to behave in a manner, or embrace a point of view related to values, attitudes, and beliefs, that he or she would not have done otherwise.

The first type of persuasive public speaking involves a change in someone's attitudes, values, and beliefs. The second type of persuasive speech is one in which the speaker attempts to persuade an audience to change their behavior

An **attitude** is defined as an individual's general predisposition toward something as being good or bad, right or wrong, or negative or positive.

Value refers to an individual's perception of the usefulness, importance, or worth of something.

Beliefs are propositions or positions that an individual holds as true or false without positive knowledge or proof.

Behaviors come in a wide range of forms, so finding one you think people should start, increase, or decrease shouldn't be difficult at all.

3 reasons why people should study persuasion.

1. when you study and understand persuasion, you will be more successful at persuading others
2. when people understand persuasion, they will be better consumers of information.
3. when we understand how persuasion functions, we'll have a better grasp of what happens around us in the world

Social Judgment Theory: says that persuaders need to be aware of an audience's latitudes of acceptance, noncommitment, and rejection in order to effectively persuade an audience.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory : reasons that people do not like holding to ideas in their heads that are contrary and will do what is necessary to get rid of the dissonance caused by the two contrary ideas.

elaboration Likelihood Model : persuaders should attempt to get receivers to think about the arguments being made (going through the central route) rather than having receivers pay attention to nonargument related aspects of the speech.

4 types of persuasive claims

Definitional Claim: claim over the denotation or classification of what something is.

Factual Claims set out to argue the truth or falsity of an assertion

Policy Claim—a statement about the nature of a problem and the solution that should be implemented.

Value Claim, or a claim where the speaker is advocating a judgment claim about something (e.g., it's good or bad, it's right or wrong, it's beautiful or ugly, moral or immoral).

Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Steps	Audience Response
Attention–Getting Attention	I want to listen to the speaker.
Need–Showing the Need, Describing the Problem	Something needs to be done about the problem.
Satisfaction–Satisfying the Need, Presenting the Solution	In order to satisfy the need or fix the problem this is what I need to do.
Visualization–Visualizing the Results	I can see myself enjoying the benefits of taking action.
Action–Requesting Audience Action or Approval	I will act in a specific way or approve a decision or behavior.

Problem-Cause-Solution Format

you discuss what a problem is, what you believe is causing the problem, and then what the solution should be to correct the problem.

Comparative Advantages

The goal of this speech is to compare items side-by-side and show why one of them is more advantageous than the other.

Key Terms

- Persuasion
- Value
- Belief
- Attitude
- Social Judgment Theory
- Cognitive Dissonance Theory
- Elaboration Likelihood Model
- Pathos
- Ethos
- Logos
- Personal Relevance and Personal Involvement
- Accountability
- Incongruent Information
- Need for Cognition
- Definitional Claims
- Factual Claims
- Policy Claims
- Value Clams
- Monroe's Motivated Sequence
- problem-cause-solution proposal
- comparative advantages speech format

A PDF of this Persuasion Study Guide can be downloaded here.

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Argument	A proposition supported by one or more reasons or pieces of evidence.
Backing	Foundational evidence which supports a claim, such as examples, statistics, or testimony.
Causal Pattern	A speech designed to explain a cause-effect relationship between two phenomena.
Causal Reasoning	The process of formulating an argument by examining related events to determine which one caused the other.
Claim	The proposition you want the audience to accept.
Coercion	A process whereby thoughts or behaviors are altered through deceptive or harmful methods.

Data	Preliminary evidence on which a claim is based.
Deductive Reasoning	The process of formulating an argument by moving from a general premise to a specific conclusion.
Demographics	Statistical information that reflects the make-up of a group, often including age, sex, ethnic or cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, and political affiliation.
Direct Method Pattern	A speech designed to present a claim with a list of several supporting pieces of data.
Ethos	The audience's perception of a speaker's credibility and moral character.
Evaluation Criteria	A set of standards for judging the merit of a proposition.
Fallacies	Errors in reasoning that occur when a speaker fails to use appropriate or applicable evidence for their argument.
Hostile Audience	An audience that is opposed to the speaker or to the persuasive proposition.
Identification	A connection that is fostered between the speaker and their audience by highlighting shared attributes or attitudes.
Inductive Reasoning	The process of formulating an argument by moving from specific instances to a generalization.
Logos	The logical means of proving an argument.
Monroe's Motivated Sequence	An organizational pattern that attempts to convince the audience to respond to a need that is delineated in the speech through five sequential steps.
Neutral Audience	An audience that is neither open nor opposed to the persuasive proposition.
Pathos	The use of emotional appeals to persuade an audience.
Persuasion	The art of influencing or reinforcing people's beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions.
Persuasive Speeches	Speeches which aim to convince an audience to think or behave in a particular way.
Proposition of Fact	An argument that seeks to establish whether something is true or false.
Proposition of Policy	An argument that seeks to establish an appropriate course of action.
Proposition of Value	An argument that seeks to establish the relative worth of something.
Receptive Audience	An audience that is generally supportive of, or open to, the persuasive proposition.

Refutation Pattern	A speech designed to anticipate the negative response of an audience, to bring attention to the tensions between the two sides of the argument, and to explain why the audience should change their views.
Speeches to Actuate	Persuasive speeches which seek to change or motivate particular behaviors.
Speeches to Convince	Persuasive speeches which seek to establish agreement about a particular topic.
Status Quo	The current situation.
Syllogisms	Reasoning beginning with a major premise, then moving to a minor premise, before establishing a specific claim.
Warrant	The (often unstated) connection between data and claim.

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APPENDIX A: PERSUASIVE SPEECH TOPIC IDEAS

Environmental Topics

- Citizens should try to reuse items before recycling them.
- The U.S. should ban mountaintop removal as a mode of harvesting coal.
- Contemporary climate change is human-caused.
- Governmental funding for clean energy should be increased.
- All municipalities should offer public transportation.
- The U.S. should ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
- Bottled water should undergo the same quality testing as municipal water.
- Preservation is a better environmental sustainability model than is conservation. • Hunting should be banned on all public lands.

Social Justice Topics

- The right to marry should be extended to gays and lesbians.
- Abortion should be illegal.
- State colleges should be free to attend.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most influential leader of the civil rights movement
- The death penalty should be abolished.
- Convicted rapists should be sentenced to the death penalty.
- Women should receive equal pay for equal work.
- Affirmative action does not work and should be ended.
- Individuals and communities affected by environmental injustices should receive compensation.

Campus Life

- Dorm rooms should have individual thermostats.
- Professors' office hours should be held at reasonable hours, not 7 a.m. on Mondays.
- Free coffee should be provided in all classroom buildings before noon.
- Student fees at universities are too high.
- Dining halls should provide nutritional information for all meals.
- Student government leaders should host regular forums to answer questions from the general student population.
- Plagiarism should be prosecuted to the fullest extent.

Everyday Life Topics

- The legal drinking age should be lowered to 18.
- Frequent flyers should not be required to remove their shoes in airport security lines.
- Eating five meals a day is better than eating three.
- Smoking should be illegal in all public areas.
- Gmail is the best email service.
- All restaurants should offer vegan and vegetarian options or substitutes.
- Netflix and Hulu are better ways to watch movies and television shows.
- ATM fees should be outlawed.
- Proximity to religious facilities should have no bearing on alcohol sales.

Economic Topics

- Social security benefits should be guaranteed for those who pay in to the program.
- All multi-year jobs should include pension plans.

- The U.S. should spend less on wars and more on education.
- Everyone should be required to pay an equal percentage of taxes.
- A consumption tax is more just than an income tax.
- The minimum wage in the U.S. is too low.
- Multi-million dollar bonuses for corporate executives are unjust because they preclude better wages/ reduced prices for others.

Quirky Topics

- Tacos are the greatest of human inventions.
- Ghosts are real.
- Short haircuts are more comfortable than long hairstyles.
- Bourbon should only be served “on the rocks.”
- Traditional eyeglasses make those who wear them look smarter.
- Eating chicken with a fork should be illegal. (An actual law in Gainesville, Georgia!)

PERSUASIVE SPEAKING EXERCISES

Speaking Ethically

Doreen is delivering a speech on the topic of donating money to help feed the children of AIDS victims in Africa. She set up her speech using Monroe’s motivated sequence. She sails through attention, need, and satisfaction. She starts delivering her visualization step, and she goes a little crazy. She claims that if more people would donate to this cause, the world would be devoid of hunger, children in Africa could all get an education, and we could establish world peace. She then makes claims that not feeding the children of AIDS victims in Africa could lead to world chaos and nuclear war.

1. Is it ethical to create unrealistic expectations during the visualization step?
2. Should you try to exaggerate the visualization stage if you know, realistically, that the possible outcomes are not that impressive?
3. If Doreen was your friend, how would you respond to this section of her speech? Should you point out that her argument is unethical?

End-of-Chapter Assessment

1. Which of the following is one of the reasons why Richard Perloff (2003) believes students should study public speaking today, more so than in the past?
    1. The number of persuasive communications has decreased with media consolidation.
    2. Persuasive messages take longer to travel today.
    3. Persuasion has become less institutionalized.
    4. Persuasive communication has become more subtle and devious.
    5. Persuasive communication is more obvious and blatant today.
2. Which theory of persuasion poses that if the discrepancy between the idea proposed by the speaker and the opinion of an audience member is too great, then the likelihood of persuasion decreases dramatically?
    1. social judgment theory
    2. social exchange theory
    3. cognitive dissonance theory
    4. psychodynamic theory
    5. elaboration likelihood model

3. While attempting to persuade an audience, Anne realizes that some of her audience members really like to engage in critical thinking and information processing. Knowing this, Anne makes sure her speech has very sound arguments that are completely supported by relevant research. Which of the five factors that lead to high elaboration discussed by Frymier and Nadler (2007) is shown here?
    1. personal relevance
    2. accountability
    3. personal responsibility
    4. incongruent information
    5. need for cognition
4. Jose gives a speech in which he argues that laws applying to traveling carnivals should not be the same as laws applying to amusement parks because the two are clearly different entities. What type of claim is Jose making?
    1. definitional claim
    2. factual claim
    3. policy claim
    4. value claim
    5. attitude claim
5. During a speech Paula states, "If my plan is enacted, our community will simply be safer. Families will be able to walk with their children without fear of gang violence. Parents and children will be able to go to the park without fear of drug dealers." What part of Monroe's motivated sequence is Paula using?
    1. attention
    2. need
    3. satisfaction
    4. visualization
    5. action

Answer Key

1. d
2. a
3. e
4. a
5. d

ACTIVITIES

The primary goal of persuasive speaking is to influence an audience's beliefs or behaviors so that they can make necessary or positive change. Persuasive speaking is a vital skill in all areas of life, whether it is a political candidate convincing voters to elect them, an employee convincing the boss to give them a promotion, or a sales person convincing a consumer to buy a product, individuals must understand what persuasion is and how it functions.

When formulating a persuasive speech, remember to determine the type of question you seek to answer so that you can decide whether to offer a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, or a proposition of policy. Weave the topic and the proposition together to create a compelling argument for your specific audience.

"Martin Kingham, CFMEU" by pfctdayelise. *CC-BY-SA.*

Knowing your audience can help when it comes to choosing the appropriate strategies for convincing them that you are a credible speaker. Once you have established your credibility, you can advance both logical and emotional appeals to move your audience toward the belief or behavior you hope they will adopt. As you weave these appeals together, be sure to offer the most ethical arguments by avoiding fallacies and supporting emotional appeals with relevant evidence.

Once you have compiled the most relevant arguments and emotional appeals for a given audience, take care to organize your message effectively. Give thought to your persuasive goals and determine whether they can be best achieved through the use of Monroe's Motivated Sequence, a direct method pattern, a causal pattern, or a refutation pattern.

The combination of a confident and credible speaker with the right organization of logical and emotional appeals can go far in swaying an audience.

> It's better to get smart than to get mad. I try not to get so insulted that I will not take advantage of an opportunity to persuade people to change their minds. – John H. Johnson

Review Activities

1. Early in the chapter the prevalence of persuasion was discussed. Think of an instance in which you knew you were being persuaded. What were you being persuaded to do? Was the persuader focused on changing your beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions? How do you know?
2. Imagine you are giving a persuasive speech on ______________ [you fill in the blank]. Draft a specific purpose statement on this topic for a speech to convince. Next, draft a specific purpose statement on the same topic for a speech to actuate.
3. Draft a proposition of fact, proposition of value, and proposition of policy for one or more of the following topics:
    - Shortening class time
    - Pro-anorexia images on social networking sites
    - Airline fees
4. You have been invited to speak to administrators about increasing alumni support for the school. What steps will you take to build your ethos for this audience? What logical appeals will you make? How will you appeal to their emotions?
5. Identify the following fallacies (adapted from Labossiere, 1995):
    a. If those actions were not illegal, they would not be prohibited by law.
    b. Our team had a losing record until we won the last three games. I wore blue socks in the last three games. Blue socks are lucky, and if I keep wearing them, we can't lose!
    c. The store Joe works at changed the dress code, requiring him to buy all new work clothes. When he went to the manager to complain, she told him that no one else voiced concern, so he must be the only one who had that problem.
    d. Your roommate has invited his classmate, Annie, over to work on a project. Before Annie arrives, your roommate explains that she will probably be late because she never helps with the work and always leaves him to take care of everything.(Answers can be found on the bottom of page)

6. Imagine you are giving a speech in which you hope to convince audience members to begin retirement planning while they are still in their twenties. Which of the organizational patterns described above best fits this topic? Why? Describe its advantages over the other organization styles for the specific purpose.

Show Answer For #5

Activities

1. Using a recent newspaper, locate an example of a proposition of fact, a proposition of value, and a proposition of policy, and underline each one. Then, see if you can locate the data, warrant, and backing for each of these claims. If you cannot locate one or more of the elements, write your own based on the information provided in the article.
2. Two organizations, Mercy For Animals (MFA) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), sponsor billboard advertisements to advocate that people transition to a vegetarian diet. Examine the billboards from each organization and consider the following:
    - What logical claims are advanced by each organization's billboards?
    - Are there any logical fallacies on the billboards?
    - What emotional appeals are used on the billboards?
    - Are any of the emotional appeals unethical? If so, why?
    - Which is the more ethically persuasive campaign? Why?

PERSUASION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click "Check Your Understanding" to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three "Maybe"/"Probably"/"Definitely" options to see if you were correct.
- Click "Next" to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

ESSAY: PERSUASIVE SPEECH ANALYSIS

The purpose of this assignment is to better understand the fundamentals of established, powerful, effective persuasive speakers by examining a speech that they have given. In addition to exploring the historical circumstances that led to the speech, you will be looking at the delivery, organizational, and persuasive techniques that can be found in the speech.

First, choose a famous speech to examine. You can find thousands of speeches here in the American Rhetoric Database (http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbank.htm), and most include text, audio, and video if available. You are free to choose whichever speech you find most interesting, and the more well-known the speech is, the easier it will be to write about it effectively.

Once you have chosen a speech, you will write a 3 to 4 page paper discussing the following:

1. **Historical significance of the speech.** Discuss the circumstances that led to the speech being given. Why was this the appropriate time to give this particular speech? Why did this person give this speech? Who was the intended audience, and how was it received?
2. **Delivery Techniques.** What kinds of nonverbal and verbal behaviors is the speaker engaging in, and how does it contribute to the effectiveness of the speech? Is the delivery style that the speaker used effective? Could he or she have been more effective with their body language to better engage their audience? What kind of persona does the speaker project?
3. **Organization Techniques.** Review the organizational patterns and information beginning on page 566 of the assigned reading on Persuasion. Talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the way this speech is organized. Include comments on the introduction, body, conclusion, transitions, etc. Was this speech well organized and easy to follow? Did the organization contribute to the audience's overall understanding/interest in the speech?
4. **Persuasive Techniques.** Discuss how the rhetorical proofs are used in this speech (ethos, pathos, and logos) and provide specific examples. Which of these proofs is used the most in this speech? Is it effective?

Your analysis should be thorough and specific. Directly reference the text of the speech that you have chosen, and be sure to cite all of your sources. You will need to find information about the history surrounding your speech, and you are expected to conduct college level research. You are not permitted to use Wikipedia to copy and paste information. The paper should be 3-4 pages (typed), 1 in margins, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with no cover page required. You must cite the course textbook using MLA formatting. When saving your document, include your last name and the assignment, and save as either a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) or a Rich Text File (.rtf).

Grading

This assignment is worth a total of 75 points. The Paper grading is as follows:

Up to 10 pts.	Description of historical significance of selected speech;
Up to 15 pts.	Citations from the readings to describe delivery, organizational and persuasive techniques.
Up to 40 pts.	Examples and description of delivery, organizational and persuasive techniques.
Up to 10 pts.	Grammar and spelling; Correct formatting (font, type, margins); Correct length

CRITICAL THINKING AND REASONING

LOGIC AND THE ROLE OF ARGUMENTS

Critical thinkers tend to exhibit certain traits that are common to them. These traits are summarized in Table 6.1: (((Note: Adapted from Facione, P. A. (1990). *Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction, The Delphi Report (Executive Summary)*. Millbrae, CA: California Academic Press.)))

Table 6.1 Traits of Critical Thinkers	
Open-mindedness	Critical thinkers are open and receptive to all ideas and arguments, even those with which they may disagree. Critical thinkers reserve judgment on a message until they have examined the claims, logic, reasoning, and evidence used. Critical thinkers are fair-minded and understand that a message is not inherently wrong or flawed if it differs from their own thoughts. Critical thinkers remain open to the possibility of changing their view on an issue when logic and evidence supports doing so.
Analytic Nature	Critical thinkers are interested in understanding what is happening in a message. Critical thinkers ask questions of the message, breaking it into its individual components and examining each in turn. Critical thinkers dissect these components looking for sound logic and reasoning.
Systematic by Method	Critical thinkers avoid jumping to conclusions. Critical thinkers take the time to systematically examine a message. Critical thinkers apply accepted criteria or conditions to their analyses.
Inquisitive	Critical thinkers are curious by nature. Critical thinkers ask questions of what is going on around them and in a message. Critical thinkers want to know more and take action to learn more.
Judicious	Critical thinkers are prudent in acting and making judgments. Critical thinkers are sensible in their actions. That is, they don't just jump on the bandwagon of common thought because it looks good or everyone else is doing it.
Truth-Seeking Ethos	Critical thinkers exercise an ethical foundation based in searching for the truth. Critical thinkers understand that even the wisest people may be wrong at times.
Confident in Reasoning	Critical thinkers have faith in the power of logic and sound reasoning. Critical thinkers understand that it is in everyone's best interest to encourage and develop sound logic. More importantly, critical thinkers value the power of letting others draw their own conclusions.

Recall that critical thinking is an active mode of thinking. Instead of just receiving messages and accepting them as is, we consider what they are saying. We ask if messages are well-supported. We determine if their logic is sound or slightly flawed. In other words, we act on the messages before we take action based on them. When we enact critical thinking on a message, we engage a variety of skills including: listening, analysis, evaluation, inference and interpretation or explanation, and self-regulation (((Note: Adapted from Facione, P. A. (1990).)))

Next, we will examine each of these skills and their role in critical thinking in greater detail. As you read through the explanation of and examples for each skill, think about how it works in conjunction with the others. It's important to note that while our discussion of the skills is presented in a linear manner, in practice our use of each skill is not so straightforward. We may exercise different skills simultaneously or jump forward and backward.

> Without an open-minded mind, you can never be a great success. – Martha Stewart

"Martha Stewart" by nrkbeta. CC-BY-SA.

Listening

In order to understand listening, we must first understand the difference between ***listening*** and ***hearing***. At its most basic, hearing refers to the *physiological* process of receiving sounds, while listening refers to the *psychological* process of interpreting or making sense of those sounds.

Every minute of every day we are surrounded by hundreds of different noises and sounds. If we were to try to make sense of each different sound we would probably spend our day just doing this. While we may hear all of the noises, we filter out many of them. They pass through our lives without further notice. Certain noises, however, jump to the forefront of our consciousness. As we listen to them, we make sense of these sounds. We do this every day without necessarily thinking about the process. Like many other bodily functions, it happens without our willing it to happen.

Critical thinking requires that we consciously listen to messages. We must focus on what is being said – and not said. We must strive not to be distracted by other outside noises or the internal noise of our own preconceived ideas. For the moment we only need to take in the message.

Listening becomes especially difficult when the message contains highly charged information. Think about what happens when you try to discuss a controversial issue such as abortion. As the other person speaks, you may have every good intention of listening to the entire argument.

However, when the person says something you feel strongly about you start formulating a counter-argument in your head. The end result is that both sides end up talking past each other without ever really listening to what the other says.

Analysis

Once we have listened to a message, we can begin to analyze it. In practice we often begin analyzing messages while still listening to them. When we analyze something, we consider it in greater detail, separating out the main components of the message. In a sense, we are acting like a surgeon on the message, carving out all of the different elements and laying them out for further consideration and possible action.

Let's return to Shonda's persuasive speech to see analysis in action. As part of the needs section of her speech, Shonda makes the following remarks:

> *Americans today are some of the unhealthiest people on Earth. It seems like not a week goes by without some news story relating how we are the fattest country in the world. In addition to being overweight, we suffer from a number of other health problems. When I was conducting research for my speech, I read somewhere that heart attacks are the number one killer of men and the number two killer of women. Think about that. My uncle had a heart attack and had to be rushed to the hospital. They hooked him up to a bunch of different machines to keep him alive. We all thought he was going to die. He's ok now, but he has to take a bunch of pills every day and eat a special diet. Plus he had to pay thousands of dollars in medical bills. Wouldn't you like to know how to prevent this from happening to you?*

If we were to analyze this part of Shonda's speech (see Table 6.2), we could begin by looking at the claims she makes. We could then look at the evidence she presents in support of these claims. Having parsed out the various elements, we are then ready to evaluate them and by extension the message as a whole.

Evaluation

When we evaluate something we continue the process of analysis by assessing the various claims and arguments for validity. One way we evaluate a message is to ask questions about what is being said and who is saying it. The following is a list of typical questions we may ask, along with an evaluation of the ideas in Shonda's speech.

Is the speaker credible?

Yes. While Shonda may not be an expert per se on the issue of health benefits related to wine, she has made herself a mini-expert through conducting research.

Does the statement ring true or false based on common sense?

It sounds kind of fishy. Four or more glasses of wine in one sitting doesn't seem right. In fact, it seems like it might be bordering on binge drinking.

Does the logic employed hold up to scrutiny?

Based on the little bit of Shonda's speech we see here, her logic does seem to be sound. As we will see later on, she actually commits a few fallacies.

What questions or objections are raised by the message?

In addition to the possibility of Shonda's proposal being binge drinking, it also raises the possibility of creating alcoholism or causing other long term health problems.

How will further information affect the message?

More information will probably contradict her claims. In fact, most medical research in this area contradicts the claim that drinking 4 or more glasses of wine a day is a good thing.

Will further information strengthen or weaken the claims?

Most likely Shonda's claims will be weakened.

What questions or objections are raised by the claims?

In addition to the objections we've already discussed, there is also the problem of the credibility of Shonda's expert "doctor."

Table 6.2 Analysis of Shonda's Speech	
Claims	Evidence
• Americans are unhealthy • American is the fattest country • Americans suffer from many health problems • Heart attacks are the number one killer of men • Heart attacks are the number-two killer of women	• Some news stories about America as the fattest country • Research about heart attacks • Story of her uncle's heart attack

A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence. – David Hume

Inference and Interpretation or Explanation

"Imply" or "Infer"?

For two relatively small words, imply and infer seem to generate an inordinately large amount of confusion. Understanding the difference between the two and knowing when to use the right one is not only a useful skill, but it also makes you sound a lot smarter!

Let's begin with imply. Imply means to suggest or convey an idea. A speaker or a piece of writing implies things. For example, in Shonda's speech, she implies it is better to drink more red wine. In other words, she never directly says that we need to drink more red wine, but she clearly hints at it when she suggests that drinking four or more glasses a day will provide us with health benefits.

Now let's consider infer. Infer means that something in a speaker's words or a piece of writing helps us to draw a conclusion outside of his/her words. We infer a conclusion. Returning to Shonda's speech, we can infer she would want us to drink more red wine rather than less. She never comes right out and says this. However, by considering her overall message, we can draw this conclusion.

Another way to think of the difference between imply and infer is: A speaker (or writer for that matter) implies. The audience infers.

Therefore, it would be incorrect to say that Shonda infers we should drink more rather than less wine. She implies this. To help you differentiate between the two, remember that an inference is something that comes from outside the spoken or written text.

The next step in critically examining a message is to interpret or explain the conclusions that we draw from it. At this phase we consider the evidence and the claims together. In effect we are reassembling the components that we parsed out during analysis. We are continuing our evaluation by looking at the evidence, alternatives, and possible conclusions.

Before we draw any inferences or attempt any explanations, we should look at the evidence provided. When we consider evidence we must first determine what, if any, kind of support is provided. Of the evidence we then ask:

1. Is the evidence sound?
2. Does the evidence say what thespeaker says it does?
3. Does contradictory evidenceexist?
4. Is the evidence from a validcredible source?

Even though these are set up as yes or no questions, you'll probably find in practice that your answers are a bit more complex. For example, let's say you're writing a speech on why we should wear our seatbelts at all times while driving. You've researched the topic and found solid, credible information setting forth the numerous reasons why wearing a seatbelt can help save your life and decrease the number of injuries experienced during a motor vehicle accident. Certainly, there exists contradictory evidence arguing seat belts can cause more injuries. For example, if you're in an accident where your car is partially submerged in water, wearing a seatbelt may impede your ability to quickly exit the vehicle. Does the fact that this evidence exists negate your claims? Probably not, but you need to be thorough in evaluating and considering how you use your evidence.

Seatbelt by M.Minderhoud, CC-BY-SA.

A man who does not think for himself does not think at all. – Oscar Wilde

Self-Regulation

The final step in critically examining a message is actually a skill we should exercise throughout the entire process. With self-regulation, we consider our pre-existing thoughts on the subject and any biases we may have. We examine how what we think on an issue may have influenced the way we understand (or think we understand) the message and any conclusions we have drawn. Just as contradictory evidence doesn't automatically negate our claims or invalidate our arguments, our biases don't necessarily make our conclusions wrong. The goal of practicing self-regulation is not to disavow or deny our opinions. The goal is to create distance between our opinions and the messages we evaluate.

The Value of Critical Thinking

In public speaking, the value of being a critical thinker cannot be overstressed. Critical thinking helps us to determine the truth or validity of arguments. However, it also helps us to formulate strong arguments for our speeches. Exercising critical thinking at all steps of the speech writing and delivering process can help us avoid situations like Shonda found herself in. Critical thinking is not a magical panacea that will make us super speakers. However, it is another tool that we can add to our speech toolbox.

When the mind is thinking, it is talking to itself. – Plato

As we will learn in the following pages, we construct arguments based on logic. Understanding the ways logic can be used and possibly misused is a vital skill. To help stress the importance of it, the Foundation for Critical Thinking has set forth universal standards of reasoning. These standards can be found in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3
Universal Standards of Reasoning
All reasoning has a purpose.
All reasoning is an attempt to figure something out, to settle some question, to solve some problem.
All reasoning is based on assumptions.
All reasoning is done from some point of view.
All reasoning is based on data, information, and evidence.
All reasoning is expressed through, and shaped by, concepts and ideas.
All reasoning contains inferences or interpretations by which we draw conclusions and give meaning to data.

Table 6.3
Universal Standards of Reasoning
All reasoning leads somewhere or has implications and consequences.

Logic and the Role of Arguments

We use logic every day. Even if we have never formally studied logical reasoning and fallacies, we can often tell when a person's statement doesn't sound right. Think about the claims we see in many advertisements today—Buy product X, and you will be beautiful/thin/happy or have the carefree life depicted in the advertisement. With very little critical thought, we know intuitively that simply buying a product will not magically change our lives. Even if we can't identify the specific fallacy at work in the argument (non causa in this case), we know there is some flaw in the argument.

"Sharia Law Billboard" by Matt57. Public domain.

By studying logic and fallacies we can learn to formulate stronger and more cohesive arguments, avoiding problems like that mentioned above. The study of logic has a long history. We can trace the roots of modern logical study back to Aristotle in ancient Greece. Aristotle's simple definition of logic as the means by which we come to know anything still provides a concise understanding of logic. (((Note: Aristotle. (1989). Prior Analytics (Trans. Robin Smith). Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing.))) Of the classical pillars of a core liberal arts education of logic, grammar, and rhetoric, logic has developed as a fairly independent branch of philosophical studies. We use logic everyday when we construct statements, argue our point of view, and in myriad other ways. Understanding how logic is used will help us communicate more efficiently and effectively.

Defining Arguments

When we think and speak logically, we pull together statements that combine reasoning with evidence to support an assertion, arguments. A logical argument should not be confused with the type of argument you have with your sister or brother or any other person. When you argue with your sibling, you participate in a conflict in which you disagree about something. You may, however, use a logical argument in the midst of the argument with your sibling. Consider this example:

> *Brother and sister, Sydney and Harrison are arguing about whose turn it is to clean their bathroom. Harrison tells Sydney she should do it because she is a girl and girls are better at cleaning. Sydney responds that being a girl has nothing to do with whose turn it is. She reminds Harrison that according to their work chart, they are responsible for cleaning the bathroom on alternate weeks. She tells him she cleaned the bathroom last week; therefore, it is his turn this week. Harrison, still unconvinced, refuses to take responsibility for the chore. Sydney then points to the work chart and shows him where it specifically says it is his turn this week. Defeated, Harrison digs out the cleaning supplies.*


"Man and Woman Arguing" by mzacha. *morgueFile.*

Throughout their bathroom argument, both Harrison and Sydney use logical arguments to advance their point. You may ask why Sydney is successful and Harrison is not. This is a good question. Let's critically think about each of their arguments to see why one fails and one succeeds.

Let's start with Harrison's argument. We can summarize it into three points:

1. Girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.
2. Sydney is a girl.
3. Therefore, Sydney should clean the bathroom.

Harrison's argument here is a form of deductive reasoning, specifically a syllogism. We will consider syllogisms in a few minutes. For our purposes here, let's just focus on why Harrison's argument fails to persuade Sydney. Assuming for the moment that we agree with Harrison's first two premises, then it would seem that his argument makes sense. We know that Sydney is a girl, so the second premise is true. This leaves the first premise that girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys. This is the exact point where Harrison's argument goes astray. The only way his entire argument will work is if we agree with the assumption girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys.

Let's now look at Sydney's argument and why it works. Her argument can be summarized as follows:

1. The bathroom responsibilities alternate weekly according to the work chart.
2. Sydney cleaned the bathroom last week.
3. The chart indicates it is Harrison's turn to clean the bathroom this week.
4. Therefore, Harrison should clean the bathroom.

Sydney's argument here is a form of inductive reasoning. We will look at inductive reasoning in depth below. For now, let's look at why Sydney's argument succeeds where Harrison's fails. Unlike Harrison's argument, which rests on assumption for its truth claims, Sydney's argument rests on evidence. We can define evidence as anything used to support the validity of an assertion. Evidence includes: testimony, scientific findings, statistics, physical objects, and many others. Sydney uses two primary pieces of evidence: the work chart and her statement that she cleaned the bathroom last week. Because Harrison has no contradictory evidence, he can't logically refute Sydney's assertion and is therefore stuck with scrubbing the toilet.

"Decorative toilet seat" by Bartux~commonswikiv. Public domain.

Defining Deduction

Deductive reasoning refers to an argument in which the truth of its premises guarantees the truth of its conclusions. Think back to Harrison's argument for Sydney cleaning the bathroom. In order for his final claim to be valid, we must accept the truth of his claims that girls are better at cleaning bathrooms than boys. The key focus in deductive arguments is that it must be impossible for the premises to be true and the conclusion to be false. The classic example is:

All men are mortal.
Socrates is a man.
Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

We can look at each of these statements individually and see each is true in its own right. It is virtually impossible for the first two propositions to be true and the conclusion to be false. Any argument which fails to meet this standard commits a logical error or fallacy. Even if we might accept the arguments as good and the conclusion as possible, the argument fails as a form of deductive reasoning.

> A few observations and much reasoning lead to error; many observations and a little reasoning to truth.
> – Alexis Carrel

Another way to think of deductive reasoning is to think of it as moving from a general premise to a specific premise. The basic line of reasoning looks like this:

"Deductive Reasoning" CC-BY-NC-ND.

This form of deductive reasoning is called a syllogism. A syllogism need not have only three components to its argument, but it must have at least three. We have Aristotle to thank for identifying the syllogism and making the study of logic much easier. The focus on syllogisms dominated the field of philosophy for thousands of years. In fact, it wasn't until the early nineteenth century that we began to see the discussion of other types of logic and other forms of logical reasoning.

> Logic: the art of thinking and reasoning in strict accordance with the limitations and incapacities of the human misunderstanding. – Ambrose Bierce

It is easy to fall prey to missteps in reasoning when we focus on syllogisms and deductive reasoning. Let's return to Harrison's argument and see what happens.

"Applied Deductive Reasoning" CC-BY-NC-ND.

Considered in this manner, it should be clear how the strength of the conclusion depends upon us accepting as true the first two statements. This need for truth sets up deductive reasoning as a very rigid form of reasoning. If either one of the first two premises isn't true, then the entire argument fails.

Let's turn to recent world events for another example.

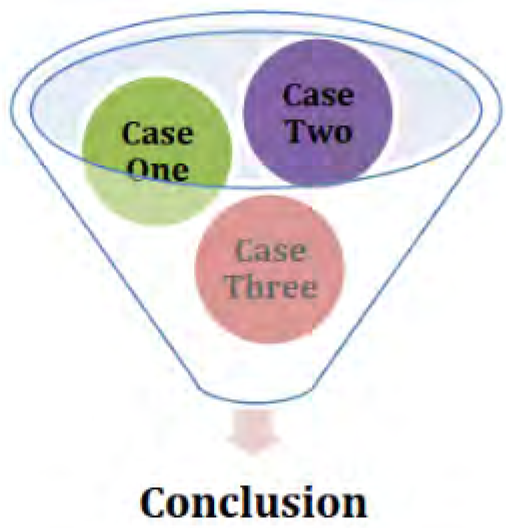
"US Invasion Deductive Reasoning Example" CC-BY-NC-ND.

In the debates over whether the United States should take military action in Iraq, this was the basic line of reasoning used to justify an invasion. This logic was sufficient for the United States to invade Iraq; however, as we have since learned, this line of reasoning also shows how quickly logic can go bad. We subsequently learned that the "experts" weren't quite so confident, and their "evidence" wasn't quite as concrete as originally represented.

Defining Induction

Inductive reasoning is often though of as the opposite of deductive reasoning; however, this approach is not wholly accurate. Inductive reasoning does move from the specific to the general. However, this fact alone does not make it the opposite of deductive reasoning. An argument which fails in its deductive reasoning may still stand inductively.

Unlike deductive reasoning, there is no standard format inductive arguments must take, making them more flexible. We can define an inductive argument as one in which the truth of its propositions lends support to the conclusion. The difference here in deduction is the truth of the propositions establishes with absolute certainty the truth of the conclusion. When we analyze an inductive argument, we do not focus on the truth of its premises. Instead we analyze inductive arguments for their strength or soundness.



"Inductive Reasoning Model" CC-BY-NC-ND.

Another significant difference between deduction and induction is inductive arguments do not have a standard format. Let's return to Sydney's argument to see how induction develops in action:

1. Bathroom cleaning responsibilities alternate weekly according to the work chart.
2. Sydney cleaned the bathroom last week.
3. The chart indicates it is Harrison's turn to clean the bathroom this week.
4. Therefore, Harrison should clean the bathroom.

What Sydney does here is build to her conclusion that Harrison should clean the bathroom. She begins by stating the general house rule of alternate weeks for cleaning. She then adds in evidence before concluding her argument. While her argument is strong, we don't know if it is true. There could be other factors Sydney has left out. Sydney may have agreed to take Harrison's week of bathroom cleaning in exchange for him doing another one of her chores. Or there may be some extenuating circumstances preventing Harrison from bathroom cleaning this week.

You should carefully study the Art of Reasoning, as it is what most people are very deficient in, and I know few things more disagreeable than to argue, or even converse with a man who has no idea of inductive and deductive philosophy. – William John Wills

Let's return to the world stage for another example. After the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, we heard variations of the following arguments:

1. The terrorists were Muslim (or Arab or Middle Eastern)
2. The terrorists hated America.
3. Therefore, all Muslims (or Arabs or Middle Easterners) hate America.

Clearly, we can see the problem in this line of reasoning. Beyond being a scary example of hyperbolic rhetoric, we can all probably think of at least one counter example to disprove the conclusion. However, individual passions and biases caused many otherwise rational people to say these things in the weeks following the attacks. This example also clearly illustrates how easy it is to get tripped up in your use of logic and the importance of practicing self-regulation.

"1993 Word Trade Center bombing" by Bureau of ATF 1993 Explosives Incident Report. Public domain.

UNDERSTANDING FALLACIES

When we form arguments or examine others' arguments, we need to be cognizant of possible fallacies. A fallacy can be defined as a flaw or error in reasoning. At its most basic, a logical fallacy refers to a defect in the reasoning of an argument that causes the conclusion(s) to be invalid, unsound, or weak. The existence of a fallacy in a deductive argument makes the entire argument invalid. The existence of a fallacy in an inductive argument weakens the argument but does not invalidate it.

It is important to study fallacies so you can avoid them in the arguments you make. Studying fallacies also provides you with a foundation for evaluating and critiquing other arguments as well. Once you start studying and thinking about fallacies, you'll find they are everywhere. You could say that we live in a fallacious world!

The study of fallacies can be dated back to the start of the study of logic. In ancient Greece, Aristotle classified fallacies into two categories—linguistic and non-linguistic. Within these two categories, he identified 13 individual fallacies. Through time we have reclassified fallacies using various typologies and criteria. For our purposes, we will focus on formal and informal fallacies.

"Exclamation in a circle" by Orikrin1998. CC-BY.

FORMAL FALLACIES

A formal fallacy exists because of an error in the structure of the argument. In other words, the conclusion doesn't follow from the premises. All formal fallacies are specific types of non sequiturs, or arguments in which the conclusions do not follow from the premises. Formal fallacies are identified by critically examining the structure of the argument exclusive of the individual statements. As you read through the following types of formal fallacies and examples, this definition will become more clear.

Bad Reasons Fallacy (Argumentum ad Logicam)

In this fallacy, the conclusion is assumed to be bad because the arguments are bad. In practice, a premise of the argument is bad and therefore the conclusion is bad or invalid. This fallacy is seen often in debate or argumentation. We summarize the fallacy as: He gave bad reasons for his argument; therefore, his argument is bad. Consider the following claim:

> *The new employee is too quiet and has no sense of style. We should fire him.*

"Bow Tie" by ambimb. CC-BY-NC-SA.

The problem here should be obvious. To be a good employee does not require a certain look or the ability to put together interesting outfits. (Just look around your campus or workplace and you'll probably see how true this is.) As such, the reasons for concluding the new faculty member should be fired are bad. We commit a fallacy if the conclusion to fire him is also bad or wrong. While the given reasons don't necessarily support the conclusion, there may be others that do.

> Bad reasoning as well as good reasoning is possible; and this fact is the foundation of the practical side of logic. – Charles Sanders Peirce

Masked Man Fallacy (Intentional Fallacy)

The masked man fallacy involves a substitution of parties. If the two things we substitute are identical, then the argument is valid:

> *Rosamond Smith wrote the book Nemesis.*
> *Rosamond Smith is an alias for Joyce Carol Oates.*
>
> *Joyce Carol Oates wrote the book Nemesis.*

This argument is valid because Rosamond Smith is in fact an alias for Joyce Carol Oates, so there is no flaw in the structure of the argument.

Consider the following example:

> *Chris told police that a red-haired woman stole her car. Ginny is a red-haired woman. Therefore, Chris told police that Ginny stole her car.*

The fallacy in this example occurs between the second premise and the conclusion. Looking at each premise individually, we can see that each is true. However, simply because each premise is true doesn't mean the conclusion is necessarily true. Even if Ginny did steal Chris's car, this fact doesn't make the conclusion true. The existence of this fact cannot be presumed to change what Chris told the police.

"Callan" by Kristy Davies. CC-BY-NC.

Fallacy of Quantitative Logic

Fallacies of quantitative logic revolve around the grammatical structure of the proposition. The focus is on the use of some sort of quantifying word such as "all" or "some." Consider this example:

> *All philosophers are wise.*

We can show the flaw in this statement by simply finding a counter-example. And since the fact of being wise is abstract, how do we truly know if one is wise or not? Consider how the statement changes with the use of a different quantifier:

> *Some philosophers are wise.*

This statement is stronger because it allows for the possibility there are counter-examples. However, the error arises from the fact that it is not a known quantity. We must infer from the statement that some philosophers are not wise.

Let's look at another example:

> *All conservatives are Republicans.*
> *Therefore, all Republicans are conservatives.*

Without thinking too hard you can probably think of one counter-example. Let's try one more:

> *Some doctors are not MDs. Therefore, some MDs are not doctors.*

While the first premise is true (there are other types of doctors), the second is clearly not true.

"…oops?" by jasmeet. CC-BY-NC-ND.

INFORMAL FALLACIES

An informal fallacy occurs because of an error in reasoning. Unlike formal fallacies which are identified through examining the structure of the argument, informal fallacies are identified through analysis of the content of the premises. In this group of fallacies, the premises fail to provide adequate reasons for believing the truth of the conclusion. There are numerous different types of informal fallacies. In the following, we consider some of the more common types.

accident (sweeping generalization)

A fallacy by accident occurs when a generally true statement is applied to a specific case that is somehow unusual or exceptional. The fallacy looks like this:

> *Xs are normally Ys. Z is an (ab- normal) X. Therefore, Z is an Y.*

Let’s look at a specific example to see how this fallacy can easily occur:

> *Dogs are good pets.*
> *Coyotes are dogs.*
> *Therefore, coyotes are good pets.*

The fallacy here should be clear. I love dogs and coyotes, but I don’t know that I would want a coyote for a pet. The fallacy in this case could be easily fixed with the use of a simple qualifier such as the word “some.” If we changed the first premise to read “Some dogs make good pets,” then we can see how even if the second premise is true it doesn’t automatically lead to the stated conclusion. The basic problem here is that a sometimes true statement is assumed to be universally true.

> I do personal attacks only on people who specialize in personal attacks. – Al Franken

genetic fallacy (ad hominem)

If we examine this exchange we can see that Bill’s arguments are sound and supported by what appears to be good evidence. However, Jane ignores these and focuses on Bill’s supposed character – he’s a big jerk. The fallacy happens when we connect the truth of a proposition to the person asserting it.

The ad hominem fallacy occurs when we shift our focus from the premises and conclusions of the argument and focus instead on the individual making the argument. An easy way to remember this fallacy is to think of it as the personal attack fallacy. It is the weak form of arguing that many of us employed on our elementary school playgrounds such as this exchange:

> *Bill: I think we should go back to class now.*
>
> *Jane: I don’t think we need to worry about it.*
>
> *Bill: Well, the bell rang a few minutes ago. We’re going to be late.*
>
> *Jane: Well, you’re a big jerk and don’t know anything, so we don’t have to go back to class.*

If we examine this exchange we can see that Bill’s arguments are sound and supported by what appears to be good evidence. However, Jane ignores these and focuses on Bill’s supposed character – he’s a big jerk. The fallacy happens when we connect the truth of a proposition to the person asserting it.

Let's consider a more serious example that we see in many political campaigns. We can map out the fallacy as follows:

> *My opponent has trait X. Therefore, she is not qualified to do the job.*

The focus here is on the individual's trait, even when the trait in question has nothing to do with the job. We saw this fallacy in play in the early days of the 2012 U.S. presidential campaign:

> *We will never get out of debt if we allow a Democrat to remain as president.*

The focus here has nothing to do with any individual candidate's skills, experience, or abilities. The focus is solely on their political affiliation.

> There is no greater impediment to the advancement of knowledge than the ambiguity of words. – Thomas Reid

ambiguity (equivocation)

Fallacies caused by ambiguity occur, not surprisingly, when some ambiguous term is used in the argument. An ambiguous term is one that has more than one meaning. The structure of the argument may be clear, and there may be solid evidence supporting the propositions. The problem arises from having nothing solid on which to base our conclusion. We saw this fallacy in play during the Clinton/Lewinsky investigations. If you recall, when questioned about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, President Clinton responded that he never had "sexual relations" with that woman. The phrase "sexual relations" can include a whole range of sexual behaviors.

Let's look at a more recent example:

> *We won't be safe until we win the war on terrorism.*

Can you spot the ambiguity? Actually there are two: safe and terrorism. What is safe to one person is much less so to another. Likewise, behaviors that appear terrorist-like to one person are simply impassioned acts to another.

> An appeal to the reason of the people has never been known to fail in the long run. – James Russell Lowell

fallacies of appeal

This type of fallacy is actually a group of fallacies. At its most basic, the truth of the argument rests on reference to some outside source or force. We will consider four of the most popular appeal fallacies – appeals to authority, emotion, ignorance, and pity.

appeal to authority (ad vericundiam)

When we appeal to authority we claim the truth of a proposition is guaranteed because of the opinion of a famous person. Appeals to authority look like this:

> *Authority figure X says Y. Therefore, Y is true.*

We see this fallacy in play regularly in commercials or other advertisements featuring a doctor, lawyer, or other professional. Think about, for example, ads for the latest weight loss supplement. A doctor will discuss the science of the supplement. At times she will mention that she used the supplement and successfully lost weight. Even though we do learn something about the specifics of the supplement, the focus is on the doctor and her implied authoritative knowledge. We are to infer that the supplement will work because the doctor says it will work.

The fallacy in this type of reasoning occurs when we confuse the truth of the proposition with the person stating it. Instead of considering the strength of the argument and any evidence associated with it, we focus solely on the individual.

It can be easy to fall into the trap of this fallacy. For many of your speeches, you will be asked to research the issue at hand and present supporting evidence. This is a prime place for the fallacy to occur. While it is important to support your arguments with outside research, it is also important to critically evaluate all aspects of the information. Remember the example of Shonda's speech that opened this chapter? Her blind reliance on the research of Dr. Gray is an example of the appeal to authority fallacy.

> Anyone who conducts an argument by appealing to authority is not using his intelligence; he is just using his memory. – Leonardo da Vinci

appeal to emotion

This fallacy occurs with the use of highly emotive or charged language. The force of the fallacy lies in its ability to motivate the audience to accept the truth of the proposition based solely on their visceral response to the words used. In a sense, the audience is manipulated or forced into accepting the truth of the stated conclusions. Consider the following example:

> *Any campus member who thinks clearly should agree that Dr. Lenick is a flaming, radical, feminist, liberal. Dr. Lenick has made it clear she believes that equal rights should be granted to everyone without regard to the traditions and history of this campus or this country. Therefore, Dr. Lenick is a bad teacher and should be fired immediately.*

The thrust of this argument revolves around two interrelated components – Dr. Lenick's advocacy of equal rights for all and her alleged disregard for tradition and history. The emotional appeal rests in the phrase "flaming, radical, feminist, liberal" – words that indicate ideological beliefs, usually beliefs that are strongly held by both sides. Additionally, hot button words like these tend to evoke a visceral response rather than a logical, reasoned response.

> The highest form of ignorance is when you reject something you don't know anything about. – Wayne Dyer

appeal to Ignorance (argumentum ad ignorantiam)

When we appeal to ignorance, we argue that the proposition must be accepted unless someone can prove otherwise. The argument rests not on any evidence but on a lack of evidence. We are to believe the truth of the argument because no one has disproven it. Let's look at an example to see how appeals to ignorance can develop:

> *People have been seeing ghosts for hundreds of years. No one has been able to prove definitively that ghosts don't exist. Therefore, ghosts are real.*

Though rather simplistic, this example makes clear the thrust of this fallacy. The focus is not on supporting evidence, but on a blatant lack of evidence. While ghosts may exist, we don't know for sure they do – or don't for that matter. As such, we could also argue that because we can't prove that ghosts are real they must not exist.

appeal to pity (argumentium ad misericordium)

Appeals to pity are another form of pulling on the emotions of the audience. In the appeal to pity, the argument attempts to win acceptance by pointing out the unfortunate consequences that will fall upon the speaker. In effect, the goal is to make us feel sorry for the speaker and ignore contradictory evidence. This form of fallacy is used often by students. Consider this message a professor recently received at the end of the semester:

> *I know I have not done all the work for the semester and have been absent a lot. However, I am the key point guard for the basketball team. If I get any grade lower than a C, I will not be able to play basketball next semester. If I don't play, the team will lose. Will you please make sure that you give me at least a C for my final grade?*

The student here acknowledges he does not deserve a grade of C or higher. He has missed assignments, failed the midterm, and accrued a number of absences. His argument asks the professor to ignore these facts, though, and focus on the fact that without him the team would lose. In other words, he hopes the professor will feel sorry for him and ignore the evidence.

begging the question (petitio principii)

A begging the question fallacy is a form of circular reasoning that occurs when the conclusion of the argument is used as one of the premises of the argument. Arguments composed in this way will only be considered sound or strong by those who already accept their conclusion.

> *Dilbert: And we know mass creates gravity because more dense planets have more gravity.*
>
> *Dogbert: How do we know which planets are more dense?*
>
> *Dilbert: They have more gravity.*

To see how begging the question develops as a fallacy, let's turn to standard arguments in the abortion debate. One of the common arguments made by those who oppose legalized abortion is the following:

> *Murder is morally wrong. Abortion is murder. Therefore, abortion is morally wrong.*

Most people would agree with the first premise that murder is morally wrong. The problem, then rests in the second premise. Not all individuals would agree that abortion is murder. However, as presented, the premise creates a presumption it is valid in all cases.

Those who advocate for legalized abortion are not immune from this fallacy. One of their standard arguments is:

> *The Constitution guarantees Americans the right to control their bodies.*
> *Abortion is a choice affecting women's bodies.*
>
> *Therefore, abortion is a constitutional right.*

Like the previous example, the second premise generates a potential stopping point. While the choice to have or not have an abortion does clearly impact a woman's body, many individuals would argue this impact is not a deciding issue.

black-or-white Fallacy (bifurcation)

This fallacy is also known as an Either/or fallacy or False Dichotomy. The thrust of the fallacy occurs when we are only given the choice between two possible alternatives, when in fact more than two exist.

Returning to the abortion debates, we can see a form of this fallacy in play by simply looking at the way each side refers to itself. Those who oppose legalized abortion are Pro-Life. The implication here is that if you are for abortion then you are against life. The fallacy in this case is easy to figure out – there are many facets of life, not just abortion. Those who favor legalized abortion are Pro-Choice. The implication here is that if you are against abortion, then you are against choices. Again, the reasoning is faulty.

> There is no black-and-white situation. It's all part of life. Highs, lows, middles. – Van Morrison

Let's look at another hot button topic to see how this fallacy develops in action. In recent years many family advocacy groups have argued that, what they call, the "liberal media" has caused the rapid moral decline of America. They usually ask questions like: Do you support families or moral depravity? This question ignores the whole range of choices between the two extremes.

composition

This fallacy occurs when we assume that if all the parts have a given quality, then the whole of the parts will have it as well. We jump to a conclusion without concrete evidence. We see this fallacy at work in the following example:

> *All of the basketball team's players are fast runners, high jumpers, and winners. Therefore, the team is a winner.*

The problem here is the individuals must work together to make the team a winner. This might very well happen, but it might not.

To make this fallacy more clear, let's look at a humorous, though not so appetizing example:

> *I like smoothies for breakfast because I can drink them on the run. My favorite breakfast foods are scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, bagels with cream cheese, soy sausage links, cottage cheese, oatmeal, cold pizza, and triple espressos. Therefore, I would like a breakfast smoothie made of scrambled eggs, fresh fruit, bagels with cream cheese, soy sausage links, cottage cheese, oatmeal, cold pizza, and triple espressos.*

If you're not feeling too nauseated to keep reading, you should be able to see the composition fallacy here. While each of these breakfast items may be appetizing individually, they become much less so when dropped into a blender and pureed together.

division

The opposite of the composition fallacy, a division fallacy occurs when we think the parts of the whole contain the same quality as the whole. Let's turn to another food-based example to see how this fallacy occurs:

> *Blueberry muffins taste good. Therefore, the individual ingredients comprising blueberry muffins also taste good.*

On the surface, this argument may not appear to be problematic. However, think about the individual ingredients: blueberries, raw eggs, flour, sugar, salt, baking soda, oil, and vanilla. Of these, blueberries are the only items that generally taste good on their own. I don't know about you, but sitting down to a bowl of baking soda doesn't sound too appetizing.

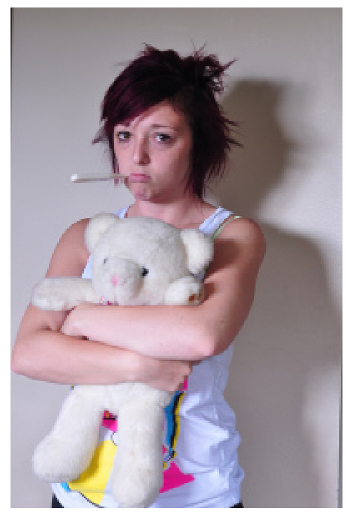
Here's one more example to make the fallacy clearer:

> *Women in general make less money than men. Therefore, Brenda Barnes, CEO of the Sara Lee company, makes less money than the male delivery drivers who work for the company.*

Common sense will tell you the CEO of a company makes more money than the hourly delivery drivers. Additionally, a few quick minutes of research will confirm this inference.

false cause (non causa, pro causa)

Sometimes called a Questionable Cause fallacy, this occurs when there exists a flawed causal connection between events. The fallacy is not just a bad inference about connection between cause and effect, but one that violates the cannons of reasoning about causation. We see two primary types of this fallacy.
Accidental or coincidental connection occurs when we assume a connection where one might or might not exist. We say event C caused event E when we have no clear proof. Here's an example:



> *Yesterday Jen went out in the rain and got soaked. The next day she was in bed with the flu. Therefore, the rain caused her to get sick.*

Most of us probably grew up hearing statements like this without ever realizing we were being exposed to a logical fallacy in action. Flu is caused by exposure to a virus, not to bad weather.

The other type of causal fallacy occurs with a general causation between types of events. For example, we know that drinking excessive amounts of alcohol leads to alcoholism and cirrhosis of the liver. However, not every individual who drinks excessively develops either of these diseases. In other words, there is a possibility the disease will occur as a result of excessive drinking, but it is not an absolute.

red herring (irrelevant thesis)

This fallacy occurs when we introduce an irrelevant issue into the argument. The phrase "red herring" comes from the supposed fox hunting practice of dragging a dried smoke herring across the trail so as to throw off the hound from the scent. In logical reasoning, the red herring fallacy works in much the same way. No, this doesn't mean you make the argument while smelling like an old fish. What it does mean is that we attempt to distract the audience by introducing some irrelevant point, such as this:

> *Each year thousands of people die in car accident across the country. Why should we worry about endangered animals?*

This argument is trying to get us to focus on dead people instead of animals. While car accidents and the deaths resulting from them are a serious issue, this fact does not lessen the importance of worrying about endangered animals. The two issues are not equated with each other.

Political campaigns are a fertile ground for growing red herring fallacies. If you think back to the 2004 Presidential campaign you will find a number of red herrings. For example, at one point we were inundated with ads reminding us that John Kerry's wife was heir to the Heinz ketchup fortune. The implication was that by extension John Kerry was a rich elitist incapable of understanding the plight of working class and middle class individuals.

slippery slope

This fallacy occurs when we assume one action will initiate a chain of events culminating in an undesirable event later. It makes it seem like the final event, the bottom of the slope, is an inevitability. Arguments falling prey to the slippery slope fallacy ignore the fact there are probably a number of other things that can happen between the initial event and the bottom of the slope.

We hear examples of the slippery slope fallacy all around us:

> *If we teach sex education in school, then students will have more sex. If students have more sex, we will have a rash of unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Students will be forced to drop out of school and will never have the chance to succeed in life.*

Clearly, just learning about sex doesn't automatically mean that you will engage in sex. Even more unlikely is the fact that merely learning about sex will force you to drop out of school.

strawman

This fallacy occurs when the actual argument appears to be refuted, but in reality a related point is addressed. The individual using a strawman argument will appear to be refuting the original point made but will actually be arguing a point not made in the original. The best strawman arguments will argue the new point to a conclusion that appears solid; however, because their point is not the original point, it is still a fallacy.

Examples of the strawman fallacy are everywhere and can appear to be quite persuasive:

> *President Obama cannot truly have American interests in mind because he's not truly American but Muslim.*

Statements similar to this were quite prevalent during the 2008 Presidential election and still appear on occasion. The assumption here is that if a person follows Islam and identifies as Muslim they clearly can't be American or interested in America. While there are many potential flaws in this argument as presented, for our purpose the most obvious is that there are many Americans who are Muslim and who are quite interested and concerned about America.

false analogy

When we use analogies in our reasoning, we are comparing things. A fallacy of weak analogy occurs when there exists a poor connection between examples. Structurally, the fallacy looks like this:

A and B are similar.
A has characteristic X. Therefore, B has characteristic X.

This fallacy often occurs when we try to compare two things that on the surface appear similar. For example:

Humans and animals are both living, breathing beings. Humans have civil rights. Therefore, animals have civil rights.

The problem in this argument is that while humans and animals are alike in their living and breathing status, there are numerous other ways they differ. We commit a fallacy when we infer that based on this initial similarity, they are similar in all other ways as well.

The other day while looking at houses, I heard another version of this argument from a real estate agent. The house I was looking at was an older house needing some TLC. I asked how old the roof was and the real estate agent responded:

I don't know for sure, but it's either 10 or 20 years old. You know, though, I put a roof on a house similar to this when I was younger and we haven't had to worry about it. It's been over 20 years now.

Ignoring for the moment that there's a big difference between a 10-year-old roof and a 20-year-old roof, the real estate agent mistakenly assumes that his roof and the roof of the TLC house are the same. They both provide a covering for the home, but that's about where their similarities end.

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Accident Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when a generally true statement is applied to a specific case that is unusual.
Ambiguity Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when a word having more than one meaning appears in the argument.
Analysis	The process of asking what is happening in a message through breaking it into its individual components and asking questions of each section.

Appeal to Authority	A fallacy that occurs when the truth of a proposition is thought to rest in the opinion of a famous other or authority.
Appeal to Ignorance	A fallacy that occurs when we argue something must be accepted because it cannot be proven otherwise.
Appeal to Pity	A fallacy that occurs when an argument attempts to win acceptance by focusing on the unfortunate consequences that will occur if it is not accepted.
Argument	Statements that combine reasoning with evidence to support an assertion.
Bad Reasons Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when then we assume the conclusion of an argument to be bad because a part of the argument is bad.
Begging the Question	A fallacy that occurs when the conclusion of the argument is also used as one of the premises.
Black and White Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when the audience is only given two choices.
Composition Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when we assume that traits inherent in the parts are also present when the parts are combined into a whole.
Critical Thinking	Active thinking in which we evaluate and analyze information in order to determine the best course of action.
Deduction	An argument in which the truth of the premises of the argument guarantee the truth of its conclusion.
Division	A fallacy that occurs when we assume that the trait of a whole occurs when the whole is divided into its parts.
Evaluation	The process of assessing the various claims and premises of an argument to determine their validity.
Evidence	Research, claims, or anything else that is used to support the validity of an assertion.
Fallacy	A flaw or error in reasoning.
Fallacy of Quantitative Logic	A fallacy that occurs when we misuse quantifying words such as “all” or “some.”
False Analogy	A fallacy that occurs when there exists a poor connection between two examples used in an argument.
False Cause	A fallacy that occurs when there exists a flawed connection between two events.
Genetic Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when the individual is attacked.
Hearing	The physiological process of receiving noise and sounds.
Imply	To suggest or convey an idea.
Induction	An argument in which the truth of its propositions lend support to the conclusion.

Infer	To draw a conclusion that rests outside the message.
Interpretation	Explaining and extrapolating the conclusions that we draw from a statement.
Listening	The psychological process of attaching meaning to the sounds and noises we hear.
Masked Man Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when we substitute parties that are not identical within an argument.
Non sequitor	An argument where the conclusion may be true or false, but in which there exists a disconnect within the argument itself.
Premise	A proposition (statement) supporting or helping to support a conclusion; an assumption that something is true.
Red Herring Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when an irrelevant issue is introduced into the argument.
Self-regulation	The process of reflecting on our pre-existing thoughts and biases and how they may influence what we think about an assertion.
Slippery Slope Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when we assume one action will initiate a chain of events that culminate in an undesirable event.
Strawman Fallacy	A fallacy that occurs when the actual argument appears to be refuted, but in reality a related point is addressed.
Syllogism	A form of deductive argument in which the conclusion is inferred from the premises. Most syllogisms contain a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion.

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REVIEW AND EXERCISES

"Quiet Moment" by anitapeppers. morgueFile.

In this chapter we have examined what critical thinking is and how it involves more than simply being critical. Understanding critical thinking helps in formulating and studying arguments. We see arguments every day in advertising, use arguments to persuade others, and we use them to benefit us. The overview of fallacies showed not all arguments are valid or even logical. Always critically think and examine any argument you confront, and remember that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is a fallacious argument.

We practice critical thinking on a daily basis, often without any extra effort. Now that you know a bit more about how to do these things better, you should find that you can put together more persuasive arguments that avoid the pitfalls of fallacious thinking. More importantly, when you hear a statement such as, "You should drink at least four glasses of wine per day," you'll know that something isn't right. And if you do hear a statement like this, you will be prepared to think critically about the statement, and will be in a position to make a more educated decision about the information.

Review Questions

1. Explain the difference between critical thinking and being critical. Why should we care?
2. Explain how listening differs from hearing and why listening is the first component of practicing critical thinking.
3. List and discuss at least three ways that we use logic and argumentation in our daily lives.

4. If I say, “There is plenty of pasta, so you should have some more,” am I implying or inferring that you have not eaten enough?
5. What are a fallacies and why is it important that we study them?
6. Television commercials that use pictures of starving children and sad music as a way to get you to donate money are an example of what type of fallacy?
7. Name, define, and give examples of three different fallacies you have heard recently.

Exercises

1. Throughout this chapter, we have turned to the abortion debates for examples. In order to practice critical thinking in action, spend some time researching the major arguments each side uses. Because the debates in this area are so complex, you might want to narrow your focus just a bit. For example, you could focus on the issue of minors consenting to abortion or abortion in the case of rape or other sexual assault. Compile a list of the most common arguments used by each side. Your list should include: any evidence used to support claims, a list of the major claims, any conclusions. Return to the core critical thinking skills and critically evaluate how each side forms arguments and uses evidence. How do your own biases and thoughts on the issue of abortion influence your evaluation? If you were an advisor, what advisee would you give to each side to make their arguments stronger and more logically sound?
2. Your local newspaper’s Letters to the Editor section is a prime spot to find logical fallacies in action. For several days, read the Letters to the Editor and identify all of the fallacies you find. Keep a log of the specific fallacies you find, dividing them by type. Once you have compiled a variety of example, take a step back and evaluate them. Questions that you might want to ask include: what fallacy or fallacies seem to be most popular? Why do you think this is? Pick a few of the most egregious fallacies and rewrite them correcting for the flaw in reasoning.
3. Throughout this chapter, we have studied arguments by looking at their various parts. In practice, arguments occur as part of larger statements or speeches making their analysis a bit more complicated. To understand the ways arguments occur in daily life, visit the American Rhetoric page (www.americanrhetoric.com). On this page you will find a number of political, activist, movie, and other speeches. Pick one and try to identify the major arguments that are set forth. What are the main claims? What are the sub-claims? What sorts of evidence or support are provided? Are there any fallacies present in the argument? If you were a speech writer, what advice would you give to improve the argument?

DELIVERY

DELIVERING THE SPEECH

How we deliver a speech is just as important, if not more so, than the basic message we are trying to convey to an audience. But if you have worked hard on preparing the verbal part of your speech, you may feel that delivery is just an "extra" that should not require much time or effort. After all, your speech is carefully planned, researched, and polished. It is committed safely to paper and hard drive. It's a carefully constructed, logically crafted, ethical message. The words alone should engage your audience's attention and interest—right?

After all the work of building such a message, you might wish that you could simply read it to the audience. However, this is the case in only a few kinds of circumstances: when the message is highly technical, complex, and extremely important (as in a new medical discovery); when international protocols and etiquette are crucially important and the world is listening; or when the speaker is representing a high-ranking person, such as a president or a king, who is unable to be present. For the purposes of your public speaking class, you will not be encouraged to read your speech. Instead, you will be asked to give an extemporaneous presentation. We will examine what that means.

The nonverbal part of your speech is a presentation of yourself as well as your message. Through the use of eye contact, vocal expression, body posture, gestures, and facial display, you enhance your message and invite your audience to give their serious attention to it, and to you. Your credibility, your sincerity, and your knowledge of your speech become apparent through your nonverbal behaviors.

The interplay between the verbal and nonverbal components of your speech can either bring the message vividly to life or confuse or bore the audience. Therefore, it is best that you neither overdramatize your speech delivery behaviors nor downplay them. This is a balance achieved through rehearsal, trial and error, and experience.

In this chapter, we are going to examine effective strategies for delivering a speech. To help you enhance your delivery, we will begin by exploring the four basic methods of speech delivery. Second, we will discuss how to prepare your delivery for different environments. Third, we will talk about how to effectively use notes to enhance your delivery. Finally, we will examine characteristics of good delivery and give some strategies for practicing effectively for the day when you will deliver your speech.

FOUR METHODS OF DELIVERY

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate among the four methods of speech delivery.
- Understand when to use each of the four methods of speech delivery.

The easiest approach to speech delivery is not always the best. Substantial work goes into the careful preparation of an interesting and ethical message, so it is understandable that students may have the impulse to avoid "messing it up" by simply reading it word for word. But students who do this miss out on one of the major reasons for studying public speaking: to learn ways to "connect" with one's audience and to increase one's confidence in doing so. You already know how to read, and you already know how to talk. But public speaking is neither reading nor talking.

Speaking in public has more formality than talking. During a speech, you should present yourself professionally. This doesn't mean you must wear a suit or "dress up" (unless your instructor asks you to), but it does mean making yourself presentable by being well groomed and wearing clean, appropriate clothes. It also means being prepared to use language correctly and appropriately for the audience and the topic, to make eye contact with your audience, and to look like you know your topic very well.

While speaking has more formality than talking, it has less formality than reading. Speaking allows for meaningful pauses, eye contact, small changes in word order, and vocal emphasis. Reading is a more or less exact replication of words on paper without the use of any nonverbal interpretation. Speaking, as you will realize if you think about excellent speakers you have seen and heard, provides a more animated message.

The next sections introduce four methods of delivery that can help you balance between too much and too little formality when giving a public speech.

Impromptu Speaking

Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advance preparation. Impromptu speeches often occur when someone is asked to "say a few words" or give a toast on a special occasion. You have probably done impromptu speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: "Hi, my name is Steve, and I'm a volunteer with the Homes for the Brave program." Another example of impromptu speaking occurs when you answer a question such as, "What did you think of the documentary?"

The advantage of this kind of speaking is that it's spontaneous and responsive in an animated group context. The disadvantage is that the speaker is given little or no time to contemplate the central theme of his or her message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

Here is a step-by-step guide that may be useful if you are called upon to give an impromptu speech in public.

1. Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point you want to make.
2. Thank the person for inviting you to speak.
3. Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
4. Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
5. Stop talking.

As you can see, impromptu speeches are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

Extemporaneous Speaking

Extemporaneous speaking is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes. By using notes rather than a full manuscript, the extemporaneous speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the speech as it progresses. The opportunity to assess is also an opportunity to restate more clearly any idea or concept that the audience seems to have trouble grasping.

For instance, suppose you are speaking about workplace safety and you use the term "sleep deprivation." If you notice your audience's eyes glazing over, this might not be a result of their own sleep deprivation, but rather an indication of their uncertainty about what you mean. If this happens, you can add a short explanation; for example, "sleep deprivation is sleep loss serious enough to threaten one's cognition, hand-to-eye coordination, judgment, and emotional health." You might also (or instead) provide a concrete example to illustrate the idea. Then you can resume your message, having clarified an important concept.

Speaking extemporaneously has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally. The disadvantage of extemporaneous speaking is that it requires a great deal of preparation for both the verbal and the nonverbal components of the speech. Adequate preparation cannot be achieved the day before you're scheduled to speak.

Because extemporaneous speaking is the style used in the great majority of public speaking situations, most of the information in this chapter is targeted to this kind of speaking.

Speaking from a Manuscript

Manuscript speaking is the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a manuscript speech, the speaker maintains his or her attention on the printed page except when using visual aids.

The advantage to reading from a manuscript is the exact repetition of original words. As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in some circumstances this can be extremely important. For example, reading a statement about your organization's legal responsibilities to customers may require that the original words be exact. In reading one word at a time, in order, the only errors would typically be mispronunciation of a word or stumbling over complex sentence structure.

However, there are costs involved in manuscript speaking. First, it's typically an uninteresting way to present. Unless the speaker has rehearsed the reading as a complete performance animated with vocal expression and gestures (as poets do in a poetry slam and actors do in a reader's theater), the presentation tends to be dull. Keeping one's eyes glued to the script precludes eye contact with the audience. For this kind of "straight" manuscript speech to hold audience attention, the audience must be already interested in the message before the delivery begins.

It is worth noting that professional speakers, actors, news reporters, and politicians often read from an autocue device, such as a TelePrompTer, especially when appearing on television, where eye contact with the camera is crucial. With practice, a speaker can achieve a conversational tone and give the impression of speaking extemporaneously while using an autocue device. However, success in this medium depends on two factors: (1) the speaker is already an accomplished public speaker who has learned to use a conversational tone while delivering a prepared script, and (2) the speech is written in a style that sounds conversational.

Speaking from Memory

Memorized speaking is the rote recitation of a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script in a stage play, television program, or movie scene. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker doesn't want to be confined by notes.

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech uses visual aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage. However, there are some real and potential costs. First, unless you also plan and memorize every vocal cue (the subtle but meaningful variations in speech delivery, which can include the use of pitch, tone, volume, and pace), gesture, and facial expression, your presentation will be flat and uninteresting, and even the most fascinating topic will suffer. You might end up speaking in a monotone or a sing-song repetitive delivery pattern. You might also present your speech in a rapid "machine-gun" style that fails to emphasize the most important points. Second, if you lose your place and start trying to ad lib, the contrast in your style of delivery will alert your audience that something is wrong. More frighteningly, if you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going.

Key Takeaways

- There are four main kinds of speech delivery: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized.
- Impromptu speaking involves delivering a message on the spur of the moment, as when someone is asked to "say a few words."
- Extemporaneous speaking consists of delivering a speech in a conversational fashion using notes. This is the style most speeches call for.
- Manuscript speaking consists of reading a fully scripted speech. It is useful when a message needs to be delivered in precise words.
- Memorized speaking consists of reciting a scripted speech from memory. Memorization allows the speaker to be free of notes.

Exercises

1. Find a short newspaper story. Read it out loud to a classroom partner. Then, using only one notecard, tell the classroom partner in your own words what the story said. Listen to your partner's observations about the differences in your delivery.
2. In a group of four or five students, ask each student to give a one-minute impromptu speech answering the question, "What is the most important personal quality for academic success?"
3. Watch the evening news. Observe the differences between news anchors using a TelePrompTer and interviewees who are using no notes of any kind. What differences do you observe?

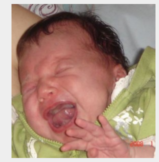
VOCAL ASPECTS OF DELIVERY

Though we speak frequently during the course of a day, a formal speech requires extra attention to detail in preparation of a more formal speech presentation. What can one do in advance to prepare for a speech? The challenge is partly determined by the speaker's experience, background and sometimes cultural influence and existing habits of speaking. Articulation, Pronunciation, Dialect, Tone, Pitch, and Projection each depends on long-term practice for success. These aspects are like signatures, and should be developed and used by each speaker according to his own persona.

Voice, or vocal sound, is made when controlled air being exhaled from the lungs, passes over the vocal cords causing a controlled vibration. The vibrating air resonates in the body, chest cavity, mouth, and nasal passages. The vibrating air causes a chain reaction with the air in the room. The room's air, set in motion by the voice, is captured by the listener's ear. The vibration of the air against the eardrum is transferred to electrical impulses that are interpreted by the listener's brain. Thus, the sounds we can make are predicated on the breaths that we take.

Try This! Breathing

Talk without breathing. It cannot be done. So if you are screaming (like a baby), you are also breathing!
The first word of advice on speaking to an audience: BREATHE!



"Crying baby" by Brazzouk. CC-BY-SA.

Articulation

We are often judged by how well we speak in general. A measure of perceived intellect or education is how well we **articulate**. That is: how well and correctly we form our vowels and consonants using our lips, jaw, tongue, and palate to form the sounds that are identified as speech. **Diction** and **enunciation** are other terms that refer to the same idea. For instance, saying "going to" instead of "gonna" or "did not" instead of "dint" are examples of good versus poor articulation. Consonant and vowels are spoken with standard accepted precision, and serious students and speakers will strive to practice the clarity of their sounds. Proper diction is as integral to the English language as proper spelling, but it takes practice.

Pronunciation

Proper **articulation** applied to a given word is that word's **pronunciation.** The pronunciation includes how the vowels and consonants are produced as well as which syllable is emphasized. For generations, speakers depended on "markings (such as the International Phonetics Alphabet or similar Dictionary Symbols) to discover or decide how words were officially pronounced. With online dictionaries now readily available, one needs only to "look up" a word and select "play" to hear an audible recording of the official and precise way a word should be pronounced. Now there is no excuse for mispronouncing a word in a speech. A mispronounced word will obliterate a speaker's credibility, and the audience's attention will be focused on the fault rather than the message.

Try This! Pronunciation

1. Flip though a book, article or scholarly work until you come to a word that is unfamiliar and you can only guess its pronunciation.
2. Go to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary website, and look up the word.
3. When the definition appears, click the icon of the loudspeaker. The word is audibly pronounced for you.
The online dictionary is useful in both articulation as well as pronunciation.

Accent, Dialect, and Regionalisms

"Iraqi speaker" by Office of United States Rep. Ellen Tauscher. Public domain.

Subtleties in the way we pronounce words and phrase our speech within a given language are evident in **accents**, **regionalisms**, and **dialects**. An accent refers to the degree of prominence of the way syllables are spoken in words, as when someone from Australia says "undah" whereas we say "under." A **regionalism** is a type of expression, as when someone says "The dog wants walked," instead of "the dog wants to go for a walk." Dialect is a variety of language where one is distinguished from others by grammar and vocabulary. In Pennsylvania you might hear people say that they are going to "red up the room," which means "to clean the room."

Those who depend on speaking for a career (broadcasters, politicians, and entertainers) will often strive for unaccented General or Standard English. Listen to most major network newscasters for examples of **regionalism-free** speech. A given audience may be prejudiced towards or against a speaker with an identifiable accent or dialect. Though we would wish prejudice were not the case, the way we speak implies so much about our education, cultural background, and economic status, that prejudice is inevitable. Any speaker should be aware of how accent, **dialect**, and regionalisms can be perceived by a given audience. If you speak in a way that the audience might find difficult to understand, make an extra effort to pay attention to the accent and phrasing of your speech. Ask a sympathetic and objective listener to help you when you practice.

> We often refuse to accept an idea merely because the tone of voice in which it has been expressed is unsympathetic to us. – Friedrich Nietzsche

Vocal Quality

The quality of the voice, its **timbre** (distinctive sound) and texture, affects audibility and can affect the articulation. Our voices are unique to each of us. It is a result of our physical vocal instrument, including diaphragm, vocal cords, lungs and body mass. Some examples of vocal quality include warm, clear, soft, scratchy, mellow and breathy. Each speaker should practice at maximizing the vocal effect of his instrument, which can be developed with vocal exercises. There are numerous books, recordings and trainers available to develop one's vocal quality when needed. The quality of one's voice is related to its range of pitch.

Try This! Inflection

Your voice goes UP, and then your voice goes d o w n.

Pitch and Inflection

Identical to musical parlance, the **pitch** is the "highness" or "lowness" of the voice. Each of us has a range of**tone**. Vocal sounds are actually vibrations sent out from the vocal cords resonating through chambers in the body. The vibrations can literally be measured in terms of audio frequency in the same way music is measured. When the **pitch** is altered to convey a meaning (like raising the pitch at the end of a sentence that is a question), it is the inflection. **Inflections** are variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve the meaning.

In his writing "Poetics," Aristotle lists "Music" as an element of the Drama. Some scholars interpret that to include the musicalization of the spoken word with **dramatic inflection**. The meaning and effectiveness of a spoken line is greatly dependent on the "melody" of its inflection.

Though archaic, the study of **elocution** formalizes the conventions of inflection. In some contemporary cultures, inflection has been minimized because it sounds too "melodramatic" for the taste of the demographic group. It would be sensible to be aware of and avoid both extremes. With good animated inflection, a speaker is more interesting, and the inflection conveys energy and "aliveness" that compels the audience to listen.

When public speaking was known as elocution, sentences were "scored" like music, and spoken using formal rules. Sentences ending as a question went UP at the end. Sentences ending in a period, ended with a base note. And everyone had fun with exclamation points!

For most of music in history, including Opera, Broadway, and early Rock and Roll, songs were written so that the melody (raising and lowering the pitch) was consistent with what would be spoken. Many of today's songs, notably Rap songs, depend solely on rhythm. There is little if any inflection (melody) to enhance a lyric's meaning. Certain languages differ in their dependence on inflection. Japanese and German seem monotonic compared to Italian and French, which offer great variety of inflection.

> The human voice is the most beautiful instrument of all, but it is the most difficult to play. – Richard Strauss

"Ice-T" by Tino Jacobs. *CC-BY.*

Even someone one who is not a singer can be expressive with inflection and pitch. Like the "Think System" of Professor Harold Hill in the musical The Music Man. If you THINK varied pitch, you can SPEAK varied pitch. Think of pitch inflections as seasoning spices that can make the speech more interesting. Sing "Happy Birthday." You do not have to concentrate or analyze how to create the melody in your voice. Your memory and instinct take over. Notice how the pitch also provides an audible version of punctuation, letting the audience know if your sentence has ended, if it is a question, and so on. The melody lets the audience know that there is more to come (a comma) and when the phrase is ended (a period). Remember that in a speech, the audience does not have the written punctuation to follow, so you have to provide the punctuation with your inflection.

Try This! Vocal Variation

Find a listening partner. Using only the sounds of "la" ha," and "oh," covey the meaning of the following:1. It's the biggest thing I've ever seen!
2. I've fallen and can't get up!
3. I've got a crush on him/her.
4. That soup is disgusting and spoiled.
5. I got an "A" in my Speech Final!
If you cannot relay the meaning with just sounds, try a second time (each) with gestures and facial expressions until the listener understands. Then say the lines with the expressive inflections you have developed using only the sounds.

Those who do not use inflection, or use a range of pitch, are speaking in monotone. And, as the word implies, it can be monotonous, boring, and dull. A balance between melodramatic and monotonous would be preferred. The inflection should have a meaningful and interesting variety. Be careful not to turn a pattern of inflection into a repetitious sound. Think through each phrase and its musicalization separately.

Many speakers have developed the habit of ending each sentence as though it is a question. It may be becoming increasingly common. In the wake of the Valley Girl syndrome of the 1980's, a bad inflection habit has entered the speech pattern: Some speakers end a declarative sentence with the inflection of a question.

Do you know what I mean?

A word of caution: Inflection and varied pitch must be "organic," that is to say, natural for the speaker. You cannot fake it, or it sounds artificial and disingenuous. It is a skill that needs to develop over a period of time.

Rate of Speaking

Table 12.1: Finding the Right Pace for Your Speech	
If you speak too quickly…	**If you speak too slowly…**
the audience might get the impression you have nothing important to say.	the audience might think you are too tired to be presenting.
the audience has a difficult time catching up and comprehending what you are saying. They need time to digest the information. So plan on periodic pauses.	the audience can forget the first part of your sentence by the time you get to the last! (It happens!) And they lose interest.
the audience might think you really do not want to be there.	the audience might think you are wasting their time by taking longer than necessary to relay your message.
As a speaker, you cannot race with the audience, nor drag their attention down. Like Goldilocks, look for the pace that is "just right."	

In order to retain clarity of the speech with articulation and inflection, the speaker must be aware that there is a range of appropriate **tempo** for speaking. If the tempo is too slow, the speech might resemble a monotonous peal. If it is too fast, the articulation could suffer if consonants or vowels are dropped or rushed to keep up the speed. An audience could become frustrated with either extreme. The tempo needs to be appropriate to the speaker's style, but neither paced like a Gilbertian Lyric (as in "Gilbert and Sullivan") patter nor a funereal dirge. A comfortable and clear pace is the best. An ideal speaking rate will allow you to comfortably increase your pace to create a sense of excitement, or slow down to emphasize the seriousness of a topic.

> It is simple nonsense to speak of the fixed tempo of any particular vocal phrase. Each voice has its peculiarities. – Anton Seidl

Pauses Versus Vocalized Pauses

A text that is read has punctuation that the reader can see…miniature landmarks to define the text. When spoken, similar punctuation is needed for comprehension, and the speaker's responsibility is to offer the text with pauses. Space between phrases, properly planted, gives the audience the opportunity to understand the structure of the speaker's sentences and paragraphs. It also gives time for the audience to "digest" crucial phrases.

Generally, spoken sentences and paragraphs need to be simpler and shorter than what can be comprehended by reading. Pauses can help increase comprehension.

However, pauses that are filled with "uh's, "um's," etc., are called **vocalized pauses**, or **fillers**, and should be avoided. They can be distracting and annoying, and give the impression of a lack of preparation if used excessively. Even worse is the use of vernacular phrases like, "y'know" (a contraction of "Do You Know") which gives the impression of lack of education or lack of concern for the audience. The use of vocalized pauses may be the result of a habit that deserves an effort to be overcome. Avoid using phrases such as "Uh," "OK?", "y'know", "like…, I mean," "right?"

Vocal Projection

The volume produced by the vocal instrument is **projection**. Supporting the voice volume with good breathing and energy can be practiced, and helping a speaker develop the correct volume is a main task of a vocal trainer, teacher or coach. Good vocal support with good posture, breathing, and energy should be practiced regularly, long before a speech is delivered. There are numerous exercises devoted to developing projection capabilities.

While there is no need to shout, a speaker should project to be easily heard from the furthest part of the audience. Even if the speech is amplified with a microphone/sound system, one must speak with projection and energy. As with your rate of speech, you should speak at a volume that comfortably allows you to increase the volume of your voice without seeming to shout or decrease the volume of your voice and still be heard by all audience members.

Do not expect to walk up to the podium and have a full voice. Actors spend about a half-hour doing vocal warm-ups, and singers warm up much more. You might not have an opportunity to warm up immediately before your speech, but when you can, warm up with humming, yawning (loudly) or singing scales: all while breathing deeply and efficiently. It will loosen your voice, prevent irritation, and fire up your vocal energy.

Try This! Projection

Go to the room in which you are to speak. Have a friend sit as far away from the podium is possible. Rehearse your speech, talking loudly enough so your friend can hear you comfortably. That is the projection you will need. When you mentally focus on the distant listener, you will tend to project better.

One final note: If public speaking is or will be an important part of your career, it would be sensible to have an evaluation of your voice, articulation and projection done by an objective professional so you can take any remedial action that might be recommended. There are courses of study, private lessons, and professional voice coaches to work with your voice projection, tone, and pitch.

> Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning. – Maya Angelou

NONVERBAL ASPECTS OF DELIVERY

Personal Appearance

Here is the golden rule: Dress appropriately for the situation. You don't need to sport a power tie (the predictable red tie politicians wore in the 1980s), but you should be comfortable and confident knowing that you look good.

Women in Business Leadership Conf. *by UCLA Anderson.* *CC-BY-NC-SA.*

Table 12.2: Dressing Appropriately	
What to Wear:	What NOT to wear:
• A button-down shirt or blouse • Trousers (khaki or dark) or a skirt • A dress appropriate for a business setting • A nice sweater • Limited, tasteful jewelry • A suit or jacket may be appropriate • A tie or scarf (optional)	• T-shirts, sweatshirts, or sweatsuits • Sleeveless tops • Printed logos or sayings (unless appropriate to the speech) • Caps or hats • Torn jeans • Visible underwear • Noisy or dangling jewelry • Flip flops • Provocative clothing • Pockets full of keys or change

With the exception of wearing formal black-tie tuxedo to a hockey game, it is good practice to dress a bit more formal than less. Err on the side of formal. Most class speeches would be best in business casual (which can vary from place to place and in time). The culture or standards of the audience should be considered. For men, it is usually a button-down shirt and casual dress pants. For women, it may be skirt or slacks and blouse/shirt.

There are exceptions depending on the speech. A student once arrived in pajamas to deliver his 9 a.m. speech. At first, I thought he got up too late to dress for class. However, his speech was on Sleep Deprivation, and his costume was deliberate. What he wore contributed to his speech.

If you have long hair, be sure it is out of the way so it won't cover your face. Flipping hair out of your face is very distracting, so it is wise to secure it with clips, gel, or some other method. Be sure you can be seen, especially your eyes and your mouth, even as you glance down to the podium.

Think of it as an interview…just like in an interview, you will want to make a good first impression. The corporate culture of the business will determine the dress. Always dress at the level of the person conducting the interview. For example, a construction foreman (or project manager) will conduct an interview to hire you as a carpenter. Do not dress like a carpenter; dress like the project manager.

Actors know when they audition, the role is won by the time they step into the room. A speaker can launch success by stepping confidently to the podium.

Be tidy and clean. If you appear as though you took time to prepare because your speech is important, then your audience will recognize and respect what you have to say.

Movement and Gestures

Overall movement and specific gestures are integral to a speech. Body stance, gestures and facial expressions can be generally categorized as **body language.** Movement should be relaxed and natural, and not excessive. How you move takes practice. Actors usually have the advantage of directors helping to make decisions about movement, but a good objective listener or a rehearsal in front of a large mirror can yield productive observations.

Moving around the performance space can be a very powerful component of a speech; however, it should be rehearsed as part of the presentation. Too much movement can be distracting. This is particularly true if the movement appears to be a result of nervousness. Avoid fidgeting, stroking your hair, and any other nervousness-related movement.

"Barack Obama at Las Vegas Presidential Forum" by Center for American Progress Action Fund. CC-BY-SA.

Among the traditional common fears of novice speakers is not knowing what to do with one's hands. Sometimes the speaker relies on clutching to the podium or keeping hands in pockets. Neither is a good pose. From my own observation, hand gestures are very common in Italy. We Italians can be seen in conversation from across the street, and an observer can often tell what is being said. There is no need to imitate an Italian in delivering a speech, but hand movement and the energy that the movement represents, can help hold attention as well as help express the message.

An actor practices using his whole body for expression, and regularly practices physical exercises to keep the body and hands and arms relaxed and in motion. An actor's hand gestures are developed in rehearsal. A speaker's gestures should also be considered during practice.

During the period when elocution was taught, hand gestures were regimented like a sign language. This is nonsense. Like inflections, gestures and movement should be organic and spontaneous, not contrived. If there is a hint of artificiality in your presentation, you will sacrifice your credibility.

Try This! Gestures

Using only your hands, convey the following:

1. "It's OK."
2. "I give up."
3. "He's crazy."
4. "We will be victorious."

Facial Expressions

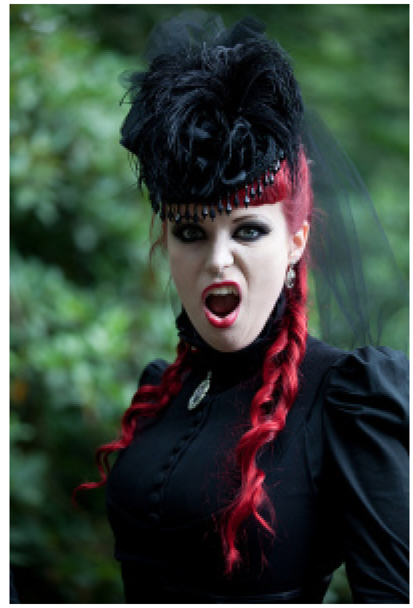
Most readers are very familiar with emoticons like these:

? ? :p ? ? :/

Emoticons were not casual inventions, but graphic depictions of facial expressions that convey various meanings of emotions. They are based on a nearly universal language of expression that we begin learning soon after birth. We smile, we frown, we roll our eyes, and we wink. We open eyes wide with astonishment. We raise our eyebrows…occasionally one at a time, in suspicion; both, in astonishment. Sometimes we pucker our lips, either to offer a kiss or express disapproval, disappointment, or grave concern.

> I pretty much try to stay in a constant state of confusion just because of the expression it leaves on my face. – Johnny Depp

Since facial expression is a valid form of communication, it is integral to delivering a speech. The face supports the text, and the speaker's commitment to the material is validated. The press scrutinizes a politician for every twitch of insincerity. Detectives have created a science of facial communication for interviewing suspects. Like inflections, gestures and movement: facial expressions should be organic and spontaneous, not contrived. If there is a hint of artificiality in your expression, you will sacrifice your credibility.



"Castefest 2011, Gothic" by Qsimple. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Try This! Facial Expressions

While looking in a mirror, try to express these thoughts without words:

1. "I am thrilled that I am getting a raise."
2. "I am worried about tomorrow."
3. "Lemons are too sour for me."
4. "I am suspicious about what he did."

After you have determined a facial expression for each, say the phrase. And see how well the verbal expression goes with the nonverbal expression.

Eye Contact

Next to clearly speaking an organized text, eye contact is another very important element of speaking. An audience must feel interested in the speaker, and know the speaker cares about them.

Whether addressing an audience of 1000 or speaking across a "deuce" (table for two), eye contact solidifies the relationship between the speaker and audience. Good eye contact takes practice. The best practice is to be able to scan the audience making each member believe the speaker is speaking to him or her.

However, there are some eye contact failures.

Head Bobber

This is a person who bobs his or her head looking down on the notes and up to the audience in an almost rhythmic pattern.

Balcony Gazer

A person who looks over the heads of his or her audience to avoid looking at any individual.

The Obsessor

A person who looks at one or two audience members or who only looks in one direction.

The best way to develop good eye contact is to have an objective listener watch and comment on the eye contact.

The eyes are called the windows to the soul, and the importance of eye contact in communication cannot be overemphasized. Ideally, a speaker should include 80% to 90% of the delivery time with eye contact.

Eye contact is so important that modern teleprompters are designed to allow the speaker to look at the audience while actually reading the speech. The Presidential Teleprompter (two angled pieces of glass functioning like a periscope) is used so the politician can "connect" to the audience without missing a single syllable. Audience members will be much more attentive and responsive if they believe the speech is directed to them.

With good eye contact, the speaker can also observe and gauge the attention and response of the audience. This is actually part of the feedback process of communication. The ideal is that the audience is not overly aware of the speaker using notes.

How do you develop good eye contact? First, practice the speech with a generous amount of eye contact. Second, know the speech well enough to only periodically (and quickly) glance at your notes. Third, prepare your notes so they can be easily read and followed without hesitation.

> There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure. – Colin Powell

SPEAKING CONTEXTS THAT AFFECT DELIVERY

Learning Objectives

- Understand how the physical setting of a speech is an element that calls for preparation.
- Examine some tips and strategies for common speaking situations.

The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at a gigantic civil rights rally on an August afternoon in 1963. His lectern was bristling with microphones placed there for news coverage and for recording the historic event. His audience, estimated to number a quarter of a million people, extended as far as the eye could see. He was the last speaker of the day, delivering his speech after more than a dozen civil rights leaders and world-famous performers such as Joan Baez, Mahalia Jackson, and Charlton Heston had occupied the stage. (((Note: Ross, S. (2007). Civil rights march on Washington. *Infoplease*. Retrieved from http://www.infoplease.com/spot/marchonwashington.html))) King gave us his speech in the assertive ringing tones of inspired vision. Nothing less would have worked that day.

Most of us will never speak to so many people at once. Even an appearance on television will probably command a much smaller audience than the crowd that heard King's speech. Even though you don't expect an audience of such size or a setting of such symbolic importance, you should still be prepared to adapt to the setting in which you will speak.

Our audiences, circumstances, and physical contexts for public speaking will vary. At some point in your life you may run for public office or rise to a leadership role in a business or volunteer organization. Or you may be responsible for informing coworkers about a new policy, regulation, or opportunity. You may be asked to deliver remarks in the context of a worship service, wedding, or funeral. You may be asked to introduce a keynote speaker or simply to make an important announcement in some context. Sometimes you will speak in a familiar environment, while at other times you may be faced with an unfamiliar location and very little time to get used to speaking with a microphone. These are contexts and situations we address in the following subsections.

Using Lecterns

A lectern is a small raised surface, usually with a slanted top, where a speaker can place notes during a speech. While a lectern adds a measure of formality to the speaking situation, it allows speakers the freedom to do two things: to come out from behind the lectern to establish more immediate contact with the audience and to use both hands for gestures.

However, for new speakers who feel anxious, it is all too tempting to grip the edges of the lectern with both hands for security. You might even wish you could hide behind it. Be aware of these temptations so you can manage them effectively and present yourself to your audience in a manner they will perceive as confident. One way to achieve this is by limiting your use of the lectern to simply a place to rest your notes. Try stepping to the side or front of the lectern when speaking with free hands, only occasionally standing at the lectern to consult your notes. This will enhance your eye contact as well as free up your hands for gesturing.

Speaking in a Small or Large Physical Space

If you are accustomed to being in a classroom of a certain size, you will need to make adjustments when speaking in a smaller or larger space than what you are used to.

A large auditorium can be intimidating, especially for speakers who feel shy and “exposed” when facing an audience. However, the maxim that “proper preparation prevents poor performance” is just as true here as anywhere. If you have prepared and practiced well, you can approach a large-venue speaking engagement with confidence. In terms of practical adjustments, be aware that your voice is likely to echo, so you will want to speak more slowly than usual and make use of pauses to mark the ends of phrases and sentences. Similarly, your facial expressions and gestures should be larger so that they are visible from farther away. If you are using visual aids, they need to be large enough to be visible from the back of the auditorium.

Limited space is not as disconcerting for most speakers as enormous space, but it has the advantage of minimizing the tendency to pace back and forth while you speak. We have all seen dramatic soliloquies in the movies and plays where an actor makes use of the space on the stage, but this is generally not a good strategy for a speech. A small space also calls for more careful management of notecards and visual aids, as your audience will be able to see up close what you are doing with your hands. Do your best to minimize fumbling, including setting up in advance or arriving early to decide how to organize your materials in the physical space. We will discuss visual aids further in Chapter 15 “Presentation Aids: Design and Usage”.

Speaking Outdoors

Outdoor settings can be charming, but they are prone to distractions. If you’re giving a speech in a setting that is picturesquely beautiful, it may be difficult to maintain the audience’s attention. If you know this ahead of time, you might plan your speech to focus more on mood than information and perhaps to make reference to the lovely view.

More typically, outdoor speech venues can pose challenges with weather, sun glare, and uninvited guests, such as ants and pigeons. If the venue is located near a busy highway, it might be difficult to make yourself heard over the ambient noise. You might lack the usual accommodations, such as a lectern or table. Whatever the situation, you will need to use your best efforts to project your voice clearly without sounding like you’re yelling.

Using a Microphone

Most people today are familiar with microphones that are built into video recorders and other electronic devices, but they may be new at using a microphone to deliver a speech. One overall principle to remember is that a microphone only amplifies, it does not clarify. If you are not enunciating clearly, the microphone will merely enable your audience to hear amplified mumbling.

Microphones come in a wide range of styles and sizes. Generally, the easiest microphone to use is the clip-on style worn on the front of your shirt. If you look closely at many television personalities and news anchors, you will notice these tiny microphones clipped to their clothing. They require very little adaptation. You simply have to avoid looking down—at your notes, for instance—because your voice will be amplified when you do so.

Lectern and handheld microphones require more adaptation. If they're too close to your mouth, they can screech. If they're too far away, they might not pick up your voice. Some microphones are directional, meaning that they are only effective when you speak directly into them. If there is any opportunity to do so, ask for tips about how to use a particular microphone and practice with it for a few minutes while you have someone listen from a middle row in the audience and signal whether you can be heard well. The best plan, of course, would be to have access to the microphone for practice ahead of the speaking date.

Often a microphone is provided when it isn't necessary. If the room is small or the audience is close to you, do not feel obligated to use the microphone. Sometimes an amplified voice can feel less natural and less compelling than a direct voice. However, if you forgo the microphone, make sure to speak loudly enough for all audience members to hear you—not just those in front.

Audience Size

A small audience is an opportunity for a more intimate, minimally formal tone. If your audience has only eight to twelve people, you can generate greater audience contact. Make use of all the preparation you have done. You do not have to revamp your speech just because the audience is small. When the presentation is over, there will most likely be opportunities to answer questions and have individual contact with your listeners.

Your classroom audience may be as many as twenty to thirty students. The format for an audience of this size is still formal but conversational. Depending on how your instructor structures the class, you may or may not be asked to leave time after your speech for questions and answers.

Some audiences are much larger. If you have an audience that fills an auditorium, or if you have an auditorium with only a few people in it, you still have a clearly formal task, and you should be guided as much as possible by your preparation.

Key Takeaways

- Not every speaking setting happens in a classroom. As such, different environments call for speakers to think through their basic speaking strategies.
- Speakers need to be prepared to deal with five common challenges in speaking contexts: using a lectern, large or small space, speaking in the outdoors, using a microphone, and audience size.

Exercises

1. Get permission from your instructor and announce a campus event to the class. Make sure your details are complete and accurate. How does your physical space affect the way you present the information?
2. Watch a speech that takes place indoors or outside. How do you think this speech would be different if the speech occurred in the other location? What changes would you recommend for the speaker?
3. If you were suddenly asked to give your next classroom speech in front of two hundred of your peers, how would adjust your speech? Why?

USING NOTES EFFECTIVELY

Learning Objectives

- Know how to use notecards to free you from your manuscript.
- Know how to use notecards to stay organized while you make audience contact.
- Understand how to develop effective notecards for a speech.

It's a great deal of work to prepare a good speech, and you want to present it effectively so that your audience will benefit as much as possible. We've already said that extemporaneous speaking provides the best opportunity for speaker-audience contact and that speaking extemporaneously means you do not have your full manuscript or outline with you. Instead, you will use notecards. The cards should have notes, not the full text of your speech. This can also be done with an autocue device—the TelePrompTer does not have to provide a full word-for-word script.

We have developed a system for creating highly effective notecards. Our system has been used effectively both in public speaking courses and in freshman composition courses. Surprisingly, the system consists of only five cards. For many people, this does not sound like nearly enough cards. We would make the case that you can do a good job with five cards, and we have seen many students do just that.

The Purpose of Speaker Notes

Using notes adds to your credibility as a speaker. If you depend on a full manuscript to get through your delivery, your listeners might believe you don't know the content of your speech. Second, the temptation to read the entire speech directly from a manuscript, even if you're only carrying it as a safety net, is nearly overwhelming. Third, well-prepared cards are more gracefully handled than sheets of paper, and they don't rattle if your hands tremble from nervousness. Finally, cards look better than sheets of paper. Five carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Key Tips for Using Notes

Plan on using just five cards, written on one side only. Get 4 × 6 cards. Use one card for the introduction, one card for each of your three main points, and one card for the conclusion.

Include Only Key Words

Your cards should include key words and phrases, not full sentences. The words and phrases should be arranged in order so that you can stay organized and avoid forgetting important points.

One exception to the key word guideline would be an extended or highly technical quotation from an authoritative source. If it is critically important to present an exact quotation, you may add one additional card that will contain the quotation together with its citation. If you plan to use such a quotation, make sure it has central importance in your speech.

Hold Your Notes Naturally

Notes are a normal part of giving a presentation. You do not need to conceal them from the audience; in fact, trying to hide and use your notes at the same time tends to be very awkward and distracting. Some instructors recommend that you avoid gesturing with your notes on the grounds that nervous shaking is more noticeable if you are holding your notes in your hand. If this is the case for you, practice gesturing with your free hand, or put your cards down if you need to use both hands. Other instructors recommend treating notecards as a natural extension of your hand, as they believe it is distracting to put your notes down and pick them up again. Whichever “rule” you follow, remember that the goal is for your use of notecards to contribute to your overall appearance of confidence and credibility.

Prepare Notecards to Trigger Recall

The “trick” to selecting the words to write on your cards is to identify the keywords that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the word “Fukushima” brings to mind the nuclear power plant meltdown that followed the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan in 2011, then that one word on your notecard should propel you through a sizable sequence of points and details. Once you have delivered that material, perhaps you’ll glance at your card again to remind yourself of the key word or phrase that comes next.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of five cards, written on one side only. Number the cards, and practice with them. Revise and refine them the way you would an outline. If you must, rewrite an entire card to make it work better, and test it the next time you practice.

Always practice with your notecards—and with any visual aids you plan to use. Practicing is also the best way to find out what kinds of things might go wrong with your notes in the presented speech and what steps you should take to make things go smoothly.

Write in Large Letters

You should be able to read something on your card by glancing, not peering at it. A few key words and phrases, written in large, bold print with plenty of white space between them, will help you. If the lighting in your speech location is likely to have glare, be sure to write your notes in ink, as pencil can be hard to read in poor lighting.

Using Notecards Effectively

If you use as much care in developing your five notecards as you do your speech, they should serve you well. If you lose your place or go blank during the speech, you will only need a few seconds to find where you were and get going again. For instance, if you know that you presented the introduction and the first main point, which centers on the Emancipation Proclamation, you can readily go to your second card and remind yourself that your next main point is about the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution.

In addition, the use of your notecards allows you to depart from the exact prepared wordings in your manuscript. In your recovery from losing your place, you can transpose a word or phrase to make your recovery graceful. It allows you to avoid feeling pressured to say every single word in your manuscript.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading words to your audience instead of telling them your meaning, and the visual aspect of your speech will be spoiled by your need to squint to read your cards.

Key Takeaways

- Good notecards keep you from reading to your audience.
- Good notecards are carefully based on key words and phrases to promote recall.

- Good notecards should enhance your relationship with listeners.

Exercises

1. Using the introduction to your speech, create a 4 × 6 notecard that includes the grabber, the thesis statement, and the preview. Test it by standing as you would during a speech and using it to guide you.
2. Answer these questions: Is it absolutely crucial to utter every word on your outline? Are there some words or phrases that are crucially important? How can you use your notecards to focus on the most important ideas?
3. Select key terms from your speech that you believe will trigger your recall of the sequence of main ideas in your speech. Use them as the basis of your next four notecards. Test the cards by practicing with them to see whether your selected terms are the ones you should use.

PRACTICING FOR SUCCESSFUL SPEECH DELIVERY

Learning Objectives

- Explain why having a strong conversational quality is important for effective public speaking.
- Explain the importance of eye contact in public speaking.
- Define vocalics and differentiate among the different factors of vocalics.
- Explain effective physical manipulation during a speech.
- Understand how to practice effectively for good speech delivery.

There is no foolproof recipe for good delivery. Each of us is unique, and we each embody different experiences and interests. This means each person has an approach, or a style, that is effective for her or him. This further means that anxiety can accompany even the most carefully researched and interesting message. Even when we know our messages are strong and well-articulated on paper, it is difficult to know for sure that our presentation will also be good.

We are still obligated to do our best out of respect for the audience and their needs. Fortunately, there are some tools that can be helpful to you even the very first time you present a speech. You will continue developing your skills each time you put them to use and can experiment to find out which combination of delivery elements is most effective for you.

What Is Good Delivery?

The more you care about your topic, the greater your motivation to present it well. Good delivery is a process of presenting a clear, coherent message in an interesting way. Communication scholar Stephen E. Lucas tells us:

> Good delivery…conveys the speaker's ideas clearly, interestingly, and without distracting the audience. Most audiences prefer delivery that combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation—directness, spontaneity, animation, vocal and facial expressiveness, and a lively sense of communication. (((Note: Lucas, S. E. (2009). *The art of public speaking* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, p. 244.)))

Many writers on the nonverbal aspects of delivery have cited the findings of psychologist Albert Mehrabian, asserting that the bulk of an audience's understanding of your message is based on nonverbal communication. Specifically, Mehrabian is often credited with finding that when audiences decoded a speaker's meaning, the speaker's face conveyed 55 percent of the information, the vocalics conveyed 38 percent, and the words conveyed just 7 percent. (((Note: Mehrabian, A. (1972). *Nonverbal communication*. Chicago, IL: Aldine-Atherton.))) Although numerous scholars, including Mehrabian himself, have stated that his findings are often misinterpreted, (((Note: Mitchell, O. (n.d.). Mehrabian and nonverbal communication [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/presentation-myths/mehrabian-nonverbal-communication-research))) scholars and speech instructors do agree that nonverbal communication and speech delivery are extremely important to effective public speaking.

In this section of the chapter, we will explain six elements of good delivery: conversational style, conversational quality, eye contact, vocalics, physical manipulation, and variety. And since delivery is only as good as the practice that goes into it, we conclude with some tips for effective use of your practice time.

Conversational Style

Conversational style is a speaker's ability to sound expressive and to be perceived by the audience as natural. It's a style that approaches the way you normally express yourself in a much smaller group than your classroom audience. This means that you want to avoid having your presentation come across as didactic or overly exaggerated. You might not feel natural while you're using a conversational style, but for the sake of audience preference and receptiveness, you should do your best to appear natural. It might be helpful to remember that the two most important elements of the speech are the message and the audience. You are the conduit with the important role of putting the two together in an effective way. Your audience should be thinking about the message, not the delivery.

Stephen E. Lucas defines conversational quality as the idea that "no matter how many times a speech has been rehearsed, it still *sounds* spontaneous" [emphasis in original]. (((Note: Lucas, S. E. (2009). *The art of public speaking* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill, p. 247.))) No one wants to hear a speech that is so well rehearsed that it sounds fake or robotic. One of the hardest parts of public speaking is rehearsing to the point where it can appear to your audience that the thoughts are magically coming to you while you're speaking, but in reality you've spent a great deal of time thinking through each idea. When you can sound conversational, people pay attention.

Eye Contact

Eye contact is a speaker's ability to have visual contact with everyone in the audience. Your audience should feel that you're speaking to them, not simply uttering main and supporting points. If you are new to public speaking, you may find it intimidating to look audience members in the eye, but if you think about speakers you have seen who did not maintain eye contact, you'll realize why this aspect of speech delivery is important. Without eye contact, the audience begins to feel invisible and unimportant, as if the speaker is just speaking to hear her or his own voice. Eye contact lets your audience feel that your attention is on them, not solely on the cards in front of you.

Sustained eye contact with your audience is one of the most important tools toward effective delivery. O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein note that eye contact is mandatory for speakers to establish a good relationship with an audience. (((Note: O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2001). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference.* Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.))) Whether a speaker is speaking before a group of five or five hundred, the appearance of eye contact is an important way to bring an audience into your speech.

Eye contact can be a powerful tool. It is not simply a sign of sincerity, a sign of being well prepared and knowledgeable, or a sign of confidence; it also has the power to convey meanings. Arthur Koch tells us that all facial expressions "can communicate a wide range of emotions, including sadness, compassion, concern, anger, annoyance, fear, joy, and happiness." (((Note: Koch, A. (2010). *Speaking with a purpose* (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, p. 233.)))

If you find the gaze of your audience too intimidating, you might feel tempted to resort to "faking" eye contact with them by looking at the wall just above their heads or by sweeping your gaze around the room instead of making actual eye contact with individuals in your audience until it becomes easier to provide real contact. The problem with fake eye contact is that it tends to look mechanical. Another problem with fake attention is that you lose the opportunity to assess the audience's understanding of your message. Still, fake eye contact is somewhat better than gripping your cards and staring at them and only occasionally glancing quickly and shallowly at the audience.

This is not to say that you may never look at your notecards. On the contrary, one of the skills in extemporaneous speaking is the ability to alternate one's gaze between the audience and one's notes. Rehearsing your presentation in front of a few friends should help you develop the ability to maintain eye contact with your audience while referring to your notes. When you are giving a speech that is well prepared and well rehearsed, you will only need to look at your notes occasionally. This is an ability that will develop even further with practice. Your public speaking course is your best chance to get that practice.

Effective Use of Vocalics

Vocalics, also known as paralanguage, is the subfield of nonverbal communication that examines how we use our voices to communicate orally. This means that you speak loudly enough for all audience members (even those in the back of the room) to hear you clearly, and that you enunciate clearly enough to be understood by all audience members (even those who may have a hearing impairment or who may be English-language learners). If you tend to be soft-spoken, you will need to practice using a louder volume level that may feel unnatural to you at first. For all speakers, good vocalic technique is best achieved by facing the audience with your chin up and your eyes away from your notecards and by setting your voice at a moderate speed. Effective use of vocalics also means that you make use of appropriate pitch, pauses, vocal variety, and correct pronunciation.

If you are an English-language learner and feel apprehensive about giving a speech in English, there are two things to remember: first, you can meet with a reference librarian to learn the correct pronunciations of any English words you are unsure of; and second, the fact that you have an accent means you speak more languages than most Americans, which is an accomplishment to be proud of.

If you are one of the many people with a stutter or other speech challenge, you undoubtedly already know that there are numerous techniques for reducing stuttering and improving speech fluency and that there is no one agreed-upon "cure." The Academy Award–winning movie *The King's Speech* did much to increase public awareness of what a person with a stutter goes through when it comes to public speaking. It also prompted some well-known individuals who stutter, such as television news reporter John Stossel, to go public about their stuttering. (((Note: Stossel, J. (2011, March 2). An Academy Award–winning movie, stuttering and me [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.humanevents.com/article.php?id=42081))) If you have decided to study public speaking in spite of a speech challenge, we commend you for your efforts and encourage you to work with your speech instructor to make whatever adaptations work best for you.

Volume

Volume refers to the loudness or softness of a speaker's voice. As mentioned, public speakers need to speak loudly enough to be heard by everyone in the audience. In addition, volume is often needed to overcome ambient noise, such as the hum of an air conditioner or the dull roar of traffic passing by. In addition, you can use volume strategically to emphasize the most important points in your speech. Select these points carefully; if you emphasize everything, nothing will seem important. You also want to be sure to adjust your volume to the physical setting of the presentation. If you are in a large auditorium and your audience is several yards away, you will need to speak louder. If you are in a smaller space, with the audience a few feet away, you want to avoid overwhelming your audience with shouting or speaking too loudly.

Rate

Rate is the speed at which a person speaks. To keep your speech delivery interesting, your rate should vary. If you are speaking extemporaneously, your rate will naturally fluctuate. If you're reading, your delivery is less likely to vary. Because rate is an important tool in enhancing the meanings in your speech, you do not want to give a monotone drone or a rapid "machine-gun" style delivery. Your rate should be appropriate for your topic and your points. A rapid, lively rate can communicate such meanings as enthusiasm, urgency, or humor. A slower, moderated rate can convey respect, seriousness, or careful reasoning. By varying rapid and slower rates within a single speech, you can emphasize your main points and keep your audience interested.

Pitch

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of a speaker's voice. Some speakers have deep voices and others have high voices. As with one's singing voice range, the pitch of one's speaking voice is determined to a large extent by physiology (specifically, the length of one's vocal folds, or cords, and the size of one's vocal tract). We all have a normal speaking pitch where our voice is naturally settled, the pitch where we are most comfortable speaking, and most teachers advise speaking at the pitch that feels natural to you.

While our voices may be generally comfortable at a specific pitch level, we all have the ability to modulate, or move, our pitch up or down. In fact, we do this all the time. When we change the pitch of our voices, we are using inflections. Just as you can use volume strategically, you can also use pitch inflections to make your delivery more interesting and emphatic. If you ordinarily speak with a soprano voice, you may want to drop your voice to a slightly lower range to call attention to a particular point. How we use inflections can even change the entire meaning of what we are saying. For example, try saying the sentence "I love public speaking" with a higher pitch on one of the words—first raise the pitch on "I," then say it again with the pitch raised on "love," and so on. "*I* love public speaking" conveys a different meaning from "I love *public* speaking," doesn't it?

There are some speakers who don't change their pitch at all while speaking, which is called monotone. While very few people are completely monotone, some speakers slip into monotone patterns because of nerves. One way to ascertain whether you sound monotone is to record your voice and see how you sound. If you notice that your voice doesn't fluctuate very much, you will need to be intentional in altering your pitch to ensure that the emphasis of your speech isn't completely lost on your audience.

Finally, resist the habit of pitching your voice "up" at the ends of sentences. It makes them sound like questions instead of statements. This habit can be disorienting and distracting, interfering with the audience's ability to focus entirely on the message. The speaker sounds uncertain or sounds as though he or she is seeking the understanding or approval of the listener. It hurts the speaker's credibility and it needs to be avoided.

The effective use of pitch is one of the keys to an interesting delivery that will hold your audience's attention.

Pauses

Pauses are brief breaks in a speaker's delivery that can show emphasis and enhance the clarity of a message. In terms of timing, the effective use of pauses is one of the most important skills to develop. Some speakers become uncomfortable very quickly with the "dead air" that the pause causes. And if the speaker is uncomfortable, the discomfort can transmit itself to the audience. That doesn't mean you should avoid using pauses; your ability to use them confidently will increase with practice. Some of the best comedians use the well-timed pause to powerful and hilarious effect. Although your speech will not be a comedy routine, pauses are still useful for emphasis, especially when combined with a lowered pitch and rate to emphasize the important point you do not want your audience to miss.

Vocal Variety

Vocal variety has to do with changes in the vocalics we have just discussed: volume, pitch, rate, and pauses. No one wants to hear the same volume, pitch, rate, or use of pauses over and over again in a speech. Your audience should never be able to detect that you're about to slow down or your voice is going to get deeper because you're making an important point. When you think about how you sound in a normal conversation, your use of volume, pitch, rate, and pauses are all done spontaneously. If you try to overrehearse your vocalics, your speech will end up sounding artificial. Vocal variety should flow naturally from your wish to speak with expression. In that way, it will animate your speech and invite your listeners to understand your topic the way you do.

Pronunciation

The last major category related to vocalics is pronunciation, or the conventional patterns of speech used to form a word. Word pronunciation is important for two reasons: first, mispronouncing a word your audience is familiar with will harm your credibility as a speaker; and second, mispronouncing a word they are unfamiliar with can confuse and even misinform them. If there is any possibility at all that you don't know the correct pronunciation of a word, find out. Many online dictionaries, such as the Wiktionary, provide free sound files illustrating the pronunciation of words.

Many have commented on the mispronunciation of words such as "nuclear" and "cavalry" by highly educated public speakers, including US presidents. There have been classroom examples as well. For instance, a student giving a speech on the Greek philosopher Socrates mispronounced his name at least eight times during her speech. This mispronunciation created a situation of great awkwardness and anxiety for the audience. Everyone felt embarrassed and the teacher, opting not to humiliate the student in front of the class, could not say anything out loud, instead providing a private written comment at the end of class.

One important aspect of pronunciation is articulation, or the ability to clearly pronounce each of a succession of syllables used to make up a word. Some people have difficulty articulating because of physiological problems that can be treated by trained speech therapists, but other people have articulation problems because they come from a cultural milieu where a dialect other than standard American English is the norm. Speech therapists, who generally guide their clients toward standard American English, use the acronym SODA when helping people learn how to more effectively articulate: substitutions, omissions, distortions, and additions.

- Substitutions occur when a speaker replaces one consonant or vowel with another consonant (*water* becomes *wudda*; *ask* becomes *ax*; *mouth* becomes *mouf*).
- Omissions occur when a speaker drops a consonant or vowel within a word (*Internet* becomes *Innet*; *mesmerized* becomes *memerized*; *probably* becomes *prolly*).
- Distortions occur when a speaker articulates a word with nasal or slurring sounds (*pencil* sounds like *mencil*; *precipitation* sounds like *persination*; *second* sounds like *slecond*).
- Additions occur when a speaker adds consonants or vowels to words that are not there (*anyway* becomes *anyways*; *athletic* becomes *athaletic*; *black* becomes *buhlack*; *interpret* becomes *interpretate*).

Another aspect of pronunciation in public speaking is avoiding the use of verbal surrogates or "filler" words used as placeholders for actual words (like *er*, *um*, *uh*, etc.). You might be able to get away with saying "um" as many as two or three times in your speech before it becomes distracting, but the same cannot be said of "like." We know of a student who trained herself to avoid saying "like." As soon as the first speech was assigned, she began wearing a rubber band on her left wrist. Each time she caught herself saying "like," she snapped herself with the rubber band. It hurt. Very quickly, she found that she could stop inflicting the snap on herself, and she had successfully confronted an unprofessional verbal habit.

Effective Physical Manipulation

In addition to using our voices effectively, a key to effective public speaking is physical manipulation, or the use of the body to emphasize meanings or convey meanings during a speech. While we will not attempt to give an entire discourse on nonverbal communication, we will discuss a few basic aspects of physical manipulation: posture, body movement, facial expressions, and dress. These aspects add up to the overall physical dimension of your speech, which we call self-presentation.

Posture

"Stand up tall!" I'm sure we've all heard this statement from a parent or a teacher at some point in our lives. The fact is, posture is actually quite important. When you stand up straight, you communicate to your audience, without saying a word, that you hold a position of power and take your position seriously. If however, you are slouching, hunched over, or leaning on something, you could be perceived as ill prepared, anxious, lacking in credibility, or not serious about your responsibilities as a speaker. While speakers often assume more casual posture as a presentation continues (especially if it is a long one, such as a ninety-minute class lecture), it is always wise to start by standing up straight and putting your best foot forward. Remember, you only get one shot at making a first impression, and your body's orientation is one of the first pieces of information audiences use to make that impression.

Body Movement

Unless you are stuck behind a podium because of the need to use a nonmovable microphone, you should never stand in one place during a speech. However, movement during a speech should also not resemble pacing. One of our authors once saw a speaker who would walk around a small table where her speaking notes were located. She would walk around the table once, toss her chalk twice, and then repeat the process. Instead of listening to what the speaker was saying, everyone became transfixed by her walk-and-chalk-toss pattern. As speakers, we must be mindful of how we go about moving while speaking. One common method for easily integrating some movement into your speech is to take a few steps any time you transition from one idea to the next. By only moving at transition points, not only do you help focus your audience's attention on the transition from one idea to the next, but you also are able to increase your nonverbal immediacy by getting closer to different segments of your audience.

Body movement also includes gestures. These should be neither overdramatic nor subdued. At one extreme, arm-waving and fist-pounding will distract from your message and reduce your credibility. At the other extreme, refraining from the use of gestures is the waste of an opportunity to suggest emphasis, enthusiasm, or other personal connection with your topic.

There are many ways to use gestures. The most obvious are hand gestures, which should be used in moderation at carefully selected times in the speech. If you overuse gestures, they lose meaning. Many late-night comedy parodies of political leaders include patterned, overused gestures or other delivery habits associated with a particular speaker. However, the well-placed use of simple, natural gestures to indicate emphasis, direction, size is usually effective. Normally, a gesture with one hand is enough. Rather than trying to have a gesture for every sentence, use just a few well-planned gestures. It is often more effective to make a gesture and hold it for a few moments than to begin waving your hands and arms around in a series of gestures.

Finally, just as you should avoid pacing, you will also want to avoid other distracting movements when you are speaking. Many speakers have unconscious mannerisms such as twirling their hair, putting their hands in and out of their pockets, jingling their keys, licking their lips, or clicking a pen while speaking. As with other aspects of speech delivery, practicing in front of others will help you become conscious of such distractions and plan ways to avoid doing them.

Facial Expressions

Faces are amazing things and convey so much information. As speakers, we must be acutely aware of what our face looks like while speaking. While many of us do not look forward to seeing ourselves on videotape, often the only way you can critically evaluate what your face is doing while you are speaking is to watch a recording of your speech. If video is not available, you can practice speaking in front of a mirror.

There are two extremes you want to avoid: no facial expression and overanimated facial expressions. First, you do not want to have a completely blank face while speaking. Some people just do not show much emotion with their faces naturally, but this blankness is often increased when the speaker is nervous. Audiences will react negatively to the message of such a speaker because they will sense that something is amiss. If a speaker is talking about the joys of Disney World and his face doesn't show any excitement, the audience is going to be turned off to the speaker and his message. On the other extreme end is the speaker whose face looks like that of an exaggerated cartoon character. Instead, your goal is to show a variety of appropriate facial expressions while speaking.

Like vocalics and gestures, facial expression can be used strategically to enhance meaning. A smile or pleasant facial expression is generally appropriate at the beginning of a speech to indicate your wish for a good transaction with your audience. However, you should not smile throughout a speech on drug addiction, poverty, or the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. An inappropriate smile creates confusion about your meaning and may make your audience feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, a serious scowl might look hostile or threatening to audience members and become a distraction from the message. If you keep the meaning of your speech foremost in your mind, you will more readily find the balance in facial expression.

Another common problem some new speakers have is showing only one expression. One of our coauthors competed in speech in college. After one of his speeches (about how people die on amusement park rides), one of his judges pulled him aside and informed him that his speech was “creepy.” Apparently, while speaking about death, our coauthor smiled the entire time. The incongruity between the speech on death and dying and the coauthor’s smile just left the judge a little creeped out. If you are excited in a part of your speech, you should show excitement on your face. On the other hand, if you are at a serious part of your speech, your facial expressions should be serious.

Dress

While there are no clear-cut guidelines for how you should dress for every speech you’ll give, dress is still a very important part of how others will perceive you (again, it’s all about the first impression). If you want to be taken seriously, you must present yourself seriously. While we do not advocate dressing up in a suit every time you give a speech, there are definitely times when wearing a suit is appropriate.

One general rule you can use for determining dress is the “step-above rule,” which states that you should dress one step above your audience. If your audience is going to be dressed casually in shorts and jeans, then wear nice casual clothing such as a pair of neatly pressed slacks and a collared shirt or blouse. If, however, your audience is going to be wearing “business casual” attire, then you should probably wear a sport coat, a dress, or a suit. The goal of the step-above rule is to establish yourself as someone to be taken seriously. On the other hand, if you dress two steps above your audience, you may put too much distance between yourself and your audience, coming across as overly formal or even arrogant.

Another general rule for dressing is to avoid distractions in your appearance. Overly tight or revealing garments, over-the-top hairstyles or makeup, jangling jewelry, or a display of tattoos and piercings can serve to draw your audience’s attention away from your speech. Remembering that your message is the most important aspect of your speech, keep that message in mind when you choose your clothing and accessories.

Self-Presentation

When you present your speech, you are also presenting yourself. Self-presentation, sometimes also referred to as poise or stage presence, is determined by how you look, how you stand, how you walk to the lectern, and how you use your voice and gestures. Your self-presentation can either enhance your message or detract from it. Worse, a poor self-presentation can turn a good, well-prepared speech into a forgettable waste of time. You want your self-presentation to support your credibility and improve the likelihood that the audience will listen with interest.

Your personal appearance should reflect the careful preparation of your speech. Your personal appearance is the first thing your audience will see, and from it, they will make inferences about the speech you’re about to present.

Variety

One of the biggest mistakes novice public speakers make is to use the same gesture over and over again during a speech. While you don’t want your gestures to look fake, you should be careful to include a variety of different nonverbal components while speaking. You should make sure that your face, body, and words are all working in conjunction with each other to support your message.

Practice Effectively

You might get away with presenting a hastily practiced speech, but the speech will not be as good as it could be. In order to develop your best speech delivery, you need to practice—and use your practice time effectively. Practicing does not mean reading over your notes, mentally running through your speech, or even speaking your speech aloud over and over. Instead, you need to practice with the goal of identifying the weaknesses in your delivery, improving upon them, and building good speech delivery habits.

When you practice your speech, place both your feet in full, firm contact with the floor to keep your body from swaying side to side. Some new public speakers find that they don't know what to do with their hands during the speech. Your practice sessions should help you get comfortable. When you're not gesturing, you can rest your free hand lightly on a lectern or simply allow it to hang at your side. Since this is not a familiar posture for most people, it might feel awkward, but in your practice sessions, you can begin getting used to it.

Seek Input from Others

Because we can't see ourselves as others see us, one of the best ways to improve your delivery is to seek constructive criticism from others. This, of course, is an aspect of your public speaking course, as you will receive evaluations from your instructor and possibly from your fellow students. However, by practicing in front of others before it is time to present your speech, you can anticipate and correct problems so that you can receive a better evaluation when you give the speech "for real."

Ask your practice observers to be honest about the aspects of your delivery that could be better. Sometimes students create study groups just for this purpose. When you create a study group of classroom peers, everyone has an understanding of the entire creative process, and their feedback will thus be more useful to you than the feedback you might get from someone who has never taken the course or given a speech.

If your practice observers seem reluctant to offer useful criticisms, ask questions. How was your eye contact? Could they hear you? Was your voice well modulated? Did you mispronounce any words? How was your posture? Were your gestures effective? Did you have any mannerisms that you should learn to avoid? Because peers are sometimes reluctant to say things that could sound critical, direct questions are often a useful way to help them speak up.

If you learn from these practice sessions that your voice tends to drop at the ends of sentences, make a conscious effort to support your voice as you conclude each main point. If you learn that you have a habit of clicking a pen, make sure you don't have a pen with you when you speak or that you keep it in your pocket. If your practice observers mention that you tend to hide your hands in the sleeves of your shirt or jacket, next time wear short sleeves or roll your sleeves up before beginning your speech. If you learn through practice that you tend to sway or rock while you speak, you can consciously practice and build the habit of *not* swaying.

When it is your turn to give feedback to others in your group, assume that they are as interested in doing well as you are. Give feedback in the spirit of helping their speeches be as good as possible.

Use Audio and/or Video to Record Yourself

Technology has made it easier than ever to record yourself and others using the proliferation of electronic devices people are likely to own. Video, of course, allows you the advantage of being able to see yourself as others see you, while audio allows you to concentrate on the audible aspects of your delivery. As we mentioned earlier in the chapter, if neither video nor audio is available, you can always observe yourself by practicing your delivery in front of a mirror.

After you have recorded yourself, it may seem obvious that you should watch and listen to the recording. This can be intimidating, as you may fear that your performance anxiety will be so obvious that everyone will notice it in the recording. But students are often pleasantly surprised when they watch and listen to their recordings, as even students with very high anxiety may find out that they "come across" in a speech much better than they expected.

A recording can also be a very effective diagnostic device. Sometimes students believe they are making strong contact with their audiences, but their cards contain so many notes that they succumb to the temptation of reading. By finding out from the video that you misjudged your eye contact, you can be motivated to rewrite your notecards in a way that doesn't provide the opportunity to do so much reading.

It is most likely that in viewing your recording, you will benefit from discovering your strengths and finding weak areas you can strengthen.

Good Delivery Is a Habit

Luckily, public speaking is an activity that, when done conscientiously, strengthens with practice. As you become aware of the areas where your delivery has room for improvement, you will begin developing a keen sense of what "works" and what audiences respond to.

It is advisable to practice out loud in front of other people several times, spreading your rehearsals out over several days. To do this kind of practice, of course, you need to have your speech be finalized well ahead of the date when you are going to give it. During these practice sessions, you can time your speech to make sure it lasts the appropriate length of time. A friend of ours was the second student on the program in an event where each student's presentation was to last thirty to forty-five minutes. After the first student had been speaking for seventy-five minutes, the professor in charge asked, "Can we speed this up?" The student said yes, and proceeded to continue speaking for another seventy-five minutes before finally concluding his portion of the program. Although we might fault the professor for not "pulling the plug," clearly the student had not timed his speech in advance.

Your practice sessions will also enable you to make adjustments to your notecards to make them more effective in supporting your contact with your audience. This kind of practice is not just a strategy for beginners; it is practiced by many highly placed public figures with extensive experience in public speaking.

Your public speaking course is one of the best opportunities you will have to manage your performance anxiety, build your confidence in speaking extemporaneously, develop your vocal skills, and become adept at self-presentation. The habits you can develop through targeted practice are to build continuously on your strengths and to challenge yourself to find new areas for improving your delivery. By taking advantage of these opportunities, you will gain the ability to present a speech effectively whenever you may be called upon to speak publicly.

Key Takeaways

- Conversational style is a speaker's ability to sound expressive while being perceived by the audience as natural. Conversational quality is a speaker's ability to prepare a speech and rehearse a speech but still sound spontaneous when delivering it.
- Eye contact helps capture and maintain an audience's interest while contributing to the speaker's credibility.
- Vocalics are the nonverbal components of the verbal message. There are six important vocalic components for a speaker to be aware of: volume (loudness or softness), pitch (highness or lowness), rate (fastness or slowness), pauses (use of breaks to add emphasis), vocal variety (use of a range of vocalic strategies), and pronunciation (using conventional patterns of speech formation).
- Physical manipulation is the use of one's body to add meaning and emphasis to a speech. As such, excessive or nonexistent physical manipulation can detract from a speaker's speech.
- Good delivery is a habit that is built through effective practice.

Exercises

1. Find a speech online and examine the speaker's overall presentation. How good was the speaker's delivery? Make a list of the aspects of delivery in this chapter and evaluate the speaker according to the list. In what areas might the speaker improve?

2. Record a practice session of your speech. Write a self-critique, answering the following questions: What surprised you the most? What is an area of strength upon which you can build? What is *one* area for improvement?

VIDEO: STORYTELLING

Storytelling is very powerful. Do not begin your speech with "Today, I am going to talk to you about ____". Hook your audience with a story.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/QINv6rebyTU

The best speeches involve someone's story:

NPPA 2011 TV BOP Photography: Feature 1st Place from NPPA video contests on Vimeo.

Don't be afraid of humor or controversy. It's o.k. to joke around even when your message is powerful. Humor can be a very effective way to tell the story.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/-KhMj6p21dU

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/3iIkOi3srLo

Tip: Words we are saying wrong:

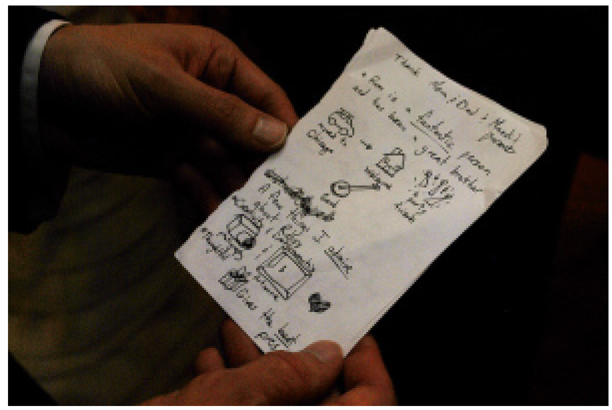
Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/zcThN1dZMe4

When planning live or video presentations, you need to be very mindful of color contrast. Read this very helpful article that will guide you in making better decisions when choosing color and brightness: "10 colour contrast checking tools to improve the accessibility of your design" from *456 Berea St*.

PREPARATION, PRACTICE, AND DELIVERY

Preparing Notes

Once you have created a comprehensive outline and have thought through your speech, you should be able to create your note cards or whatever you might be using (notes or an iPad for instance). Every speaker is a bit different, and different speech topics and organizational patterns may require different notation techniques.



"Best man's speech notes" by stacey shintani. *CC-BY-NC-SA.*

Your note cards (or cue sheets) must have enough information on them to be able to deliver the speech without missing details and organized in the precise order that you have planned. A common technique is to print the outline in a font that is large enough to be read from a distance.

You should be able to glance at the cards, get your bearings, and look back at the audience. If you are reading the cards word-for-word, there are too many words on them, unless it is an extended exact quote, or group of statistics that must be delivered precisely.

Be sure your notes or cards are numbered (e.g., boldly in the upper right hand corner), so you can keep them organized. Color-coding is often done to easily distinguish the cards at a glance. Losing your place can be very stressful to you and distracting to the audience.

Avoid writing or printing on two sides; flipping a page or card is distracting to the audience. The audience should not be aware of the notes. It is best to simply slide the cards aside to advance to the next card.

Rehearse your speech using the notes that you will bring to the podium. Be sure you can glance at the notes, get your information, and look up to have eye contact with the audience.

> All the real work is done in the rehearsal period. – Donald Pleasence

Figure 12.1: Rehearsal Checklist

- Rehearse a few days before you are to deliver your speech
- Use the note sheets or cards you will be using or delivery
- Practice with the presentation aids you will be using for delivery
- Practice with the presentation aids you will be using
- Time your speech and cut or expand it if needed
- Rehearse with a colleague or an audience if possible
- If you can, rehearse in the room with the podium you will use
- Plan what you will do with your hands
- Plan and practice your opening and closing carefully, so you can deliver them exactly

Rehearsing the Speech

Remember how to get to Carnegie Hall. Rehearse your speech—aloud and ideally with a colleague or fellow student as an audience. Rehearse in front of a mirror if needed. There are some students who record a rehearsal speech so they can get a real sense of what the audience will hear. If you are using presentation aids, rehearse with them for timing and familiarity so you only have to glance at the screen or easel. Time the speech to be sure it within the assigned time. Phrase the speech as you will phrase it in the actual delivery (and listen for the verbal fillers, awkward pauses, and other non- fluencies). Plan what to do with your hands.

You should also know exactly how your speech will begin and end. Regardless of how dependent on notes the speaker may be, here is one constant word of advice: know exactly how you are going to begin your speech. Not just an idea, but verbatim, with every inflection, every gesture, every eye contact with the audience. The first few sentences should be so ingrained, that you could perform it during an earthquake without batting an eye.

A memorized introduction accomplishes several goals. First, it gives you the opportunity to breathe, and realize it's not so bad to be up there after all! Second, it lets the audience know you are prepared. Third, it signals to the audience that what you are about to say is important. Finally, it gives you the opportunity for direct eye contact (because you are not reading) and commands the audience's attention. Eye contact is a signal to the audience that you care about them!

The conclusion of your speech is equally important. In show business parlance, the end of a song or a scene is called a "button." It is a "TAH-DAH" moment that lets the audience know you are finished, and that it is their turn to applaud. The ending impression your speech leaves with the audience is greatly affected by how effective the ending is. The content and structure notwithstanding, you should also know exactly how you will end (verbatim), so there is no hesitation, no stumbling, no tentative "I guess that's all" feeling. A confident and decisive beginning will draw the audience to you; a confident logical ending will be very effective in preserving a lasting impression on the audience.

> Stress is an important dragon to slay — or at least tame — in your life. – Marilu Henner

Managing Stress

As William Ball noted in his book for actors and directors, *A Sense of Direction*, getting in front of a group and speaking is people's greatest fear (greater than fear of death). Fear and stress result in psychological and physical manifestations that can affect a speech.

"Is it a bad sign when work starts handing these out?" by skittledog. CC-BY-NC-SA.

Stress physically causes muscles to tighten, often including vocal cords. This raises, and often limits, the vocal pitch of the speaker under stress. The tempo of the speech may also be affected. Novice speakers tend to rush as though to be anxious to "get it over with." It is a factor to remember in a corporate or business meeting: the speaker should speak slowly enough because what he has to say is important, and the audience should listen. Remember, as noted above, rushing gives the impression that the speaker thinks the message is not worth the time.

Stress can accelerate perspiration. It is wise to have a facial tissue or small towel handy for dabbing for comfort. Stress can also make the mouth and throat feel dry. Sipping water is a simple solution.

There are a myriad of solutions to relieving a speaker's stress: from hypnosis to imagining the audience to be naked. Among the simplest and most effective is to do a moderate amount of exercise prior to the speech, even as basic as walking. Exercising helps to naturally chemically relieve the tension; and helps deepen the breathing that supports the voice.

Simultaneously while exercising the body, it is a good idea to warm up the voice. The vocal cords are muscles, which should not be jump-started.

Physical exercises will likely help relaxing for better posture and hand and body gestures. As part of the relaxation process, actors "warm up" physically before performances and often do relaxation exercises to help concentration and relieve stress.

The best antidote for stress is to be well prepared and confident.

Delivering the Speech

You have taken all of the right steps before stepping up to the podium or lectern. You have selected a good topic. You have researched the topic. You have organized the best information in a compelling way. You have rehearsed your speech. You have received feedback on your rehearsal from an objective listener. You have carefully constructed your notes and practiced with them. You have planned and practiced your speech introduction and conclusion verbatim. You have checked out the room and the equipment. You did something to reduce your stress before your speech. You did vocal warm-ups. You chose the perfect outfit to wear. You made sure your gum was discarded and your hair pulled back. You arrived at least 15 minutes before your speech. You leapt to the podium with great enthusiasm when introduced.

Now you must deliver. If you look up the word "deliver," you will find it means more than to just "give." To "give" is a willingness to offer something without obligation or the expectation of something in return. To "give" also implies a pre-determined responsibility. You have a responsibility as a speaker to "deliver" information that will help your audience or enlighten them in some way. Speeches are delivered.

Figure 12.2: Steps for Effective Delivery
1. Approach the podium as you rehearsed. 2. Stand with confident posture. 3. Deliver your brilliant opening. 4. Realize you are a hit with the audience. 5. Breathe. 6. Spontaneously interject a humorous observation related to your topic. 7. Make all your points without hesitation, "*um*s," "*like*s," or "*uh*s."

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCES

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Accent	The prominence of a syllable in terms of loudness, pitch, and/or length.
Articulation	The act of producing clear, precise and distinct speech.
Body Language	Body stance, gestures and facial expressions.
Dialect	A variety of language, cant or jargon that is set apart from other varieties of the same language by grammar, vocabulary or patterns of speech sounds.

Diction	The accent, inflection, intonation and sound quality of a speaker's voice. Also known as enunciation.
Elocution	The formal study and practice of oral delivery, especially as it relates to the performance of voice and gestures.
Extemporaneous Delivery	Learning your speech well enough so that you can deliver it from a key word outline.
Impromptu Speeches	A speech delivered without previous preparation.
Inflections	Variations, turns and slides in pitch to achieve meaning.
Manuscript Delivery	Reading the text of a speech word for word.
Memorized Delivery	Learning a speech by heart and then delivering it without notes.
Performance	The execution of a speech in front of an audience.
Pitch	The highness or lowness of one's voice or of sound.
Pronunciation	Saying words correctly, with the accurate articulation, stress and intonation, according to conventional or cultural standards.
Regionalism	A speech form, expression or custom that is characteristic to a particular geographic area.
Tempo	The rate, pace, or rhythm of speech.
Timbre	The characteristic quality of the sound of one's voice.
Tone	The particular sound quality (e.g. nasal or breathy) or emotional expression of the voice.
Verbatim	To say with exactly the same words.
Vocalized Pauses	Verbal fillers in speech such as "um," "uh," "like," "and," or "you know."

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COMMUNICATING ACROSS CULTURES

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
After reading this chapter you should be able to: • Identify your own cultural identity. • Understand how communication, identity, and culture are related. • Describe research methodologies specific to the study of intercultural communication. • Identify cultural representations in popular culture artifacts.

In efforts to explain the world's population to young children, David J. Smith asks children to imagine the world as a small village so they can understand the vast population figures in a more comprehensible way. In 2012, the world's population was 7,050,000,000 (Smith 7). Instead of talking about numbers of this magnitude, he represents the world as 100 people, where one imaginary person represents 70,500,000 people from the real world. Using Smith's model, we can more easily examine what nationalities make up the world's population, what languages they speak, how old they are, and how these statistics involve wealth and education.

Here are some interesting facts from Smith's global village (8). Of the 100 people living in the village:

- 60 are from Asia
- 15 are from Africa
- 11 are from Europe
- 8 are from South and Central America (including Mexico) and the Caribbean
- 5 are from the United States and Canada
- 1 is from Oceania

So, how do these 100 people talk with one another? While there are nearly 6,000 languages spoken in this village, more than 50% of the villagers speak one of these eight (10):

- 27 speak a Chinese dialect (16 speak Mandarin)
- 9 speak Hindi
- 9 speak English
- 7 speak Spanish
- 4 speak Bengali
- 4 speak Arabic
- 3 speak Portuguese
- 3 speak Russian

To see a large scale of diversity around the world check out World Diversity Patterns!

Although there are 36 school-aged villagers (5-24 years), only 30 of them go to school, and there is only one teacher. Of the people old enough to read, 14 cannot read at all. Male villagers are taught to read more than females (Smith 21). While 68 villagers breathe clean air, the remaining 32 villagers breathe unhealthy air due to pollution (Smith 18). If each villager earned a similar annual income, each one would have $10,300 per year. Instead, the richest 10 people in the village earn more than $87,500 a year, the poorest 10 villagers earn less than $2 a day, while the remaining 80 earn somewhere in between. As the average annual cost of food and shelter in the village is more than $5,000, many people go without these basic necessities (Smith 22).

Moreover, it probably does not surprise you that the people with less money are also likely not to have electricity and education. Besides simple cultural differences such as what language one speaks or the foods they prefer; cultural identity impacts individuals' accessibility to certain resources such as shelter, electricity, running water, health care, education, and political and legal systems.

If we return to the United States from our look at the global village we see that according to Moore (62-63, 149-50):

- About 20 percent of young black men ages 16-24 are neither in school nor working. Compare this to 9 percent of young white men.
- Black women are four times more likely than white women to die in childbirth.
- Black levels of unemployment have been roughly twice those of white since 1954.
- Women hold only 13 seats in Congress.
- 496 of the top 500 companies are run by men.
- Women's earnings average 76 cents for every $1 earned by men—resulting in a lifetime loss of over $650,133.
- To make the same annual salary as her male counterpart, a woman would have to work the entire year PLUS an additional four months.
- The United States is one of the few countries in the world that puts to death both the mentally retarded and children. The other five countries in the world that execute their children are Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

Think about culture and communication as a reciprocal process: culture affects communication and communication affects culture. Both work together to shape how we identify as belonging to one culture or another, how we feel about belonging to a particular cultural group, how we communicate with other cultural groups, and how that group is regarded in the larger social system. In other words, what is the value and level of power afforded to various cultural groups? As you will see, this is often a reflection of the language used to refer to a particular group of people, or the relative value placed on their communication practices.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CULTURE?

Before going any further, let us spend some time discussing what we mean by culture. When you began reading this chapter what did you think we meant by the word culture? Your answer probably had something to do with people from different countries or of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. You are right—to a certain degree. Culture does include race, nationality, and ethnicity, but goes beyond those identity markers as well. The following are various aspects of our individual identity that we use to create membership with others to form a shared cultural identity: race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, and social class. In addition to explaining the above identities, we will also discuss ethnocentrism, privilege, advantage, disadvantage, power, whiteness, co-culture, and political correctness as these terms are relevant to understanding the interplay between communication and culture.

When we talk about culture we are referring to ***belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social arrangement***. Culture guides language use, appropriate forms of dress, and views of the world. The concept is broad and encompasses many areas of our lives such as the role of the family, individual, educational systems, employment, and gender.

Understanding Race

"When you begin to understand the biology of human variation, you have to ask yourself if race is a good way to describe that."–Janis Hutchinson, Biological Anthropologist

Race is often difficult to talk about, not because of the inherent complexity of the term itself, but because of the role that race plays in society. Race is what we call a loaded word because it can bring up strong emotions and connotations. Understandings of race fall into two camps: a biological versus a sociopolitical construction of what it means to belong to a particular racial group. A biological construction of race claims that "pure" races existed and could be distinguished by such physical features as eye color and shape, skin color, and hair. Moreover, these differences could be traced back to genetic differences. This theory has been debunked by numerous scientists and been replaced with the understanding that there are greater genetic differences within racial groups, not between them. In addition, there is no scientific connection with racial identity and cultural traits or behaviors.

Instead of biology, we draw on a sociopolitical understanding of what it means to be of a particular race. This simply means that it is not a person's DNA that places them into a particular racial grouping, but all of the other factors that create social relations—politics, geography, or migration. We can also examine the reality that the meanings of race have changed across time and space. As dramatized in the 2002 film, "Gangs of New York," the Irish were once considered a minority with little social or political status. Now, being Irish in America is considered part of the general majority group, white or Caucasian. Noting the change from the biological to the sociopolitical understanding, we refer to race as "a largely social—yet powerful— construction of human difference that has been used to classify human beings into separate value-based categories" (Orbe and Harris 9).

For additional information check out this website. The website "look[s] through the eyes of history, science, and lived experience, the RACE Project explains differences among people and reveals the reality – and unreality – of race."

Related to race are three other distinct concepts: racial prejudice, racial discrimination, and racism. Racial prejudice refers to the practice of holding false or negative beliefs of one racial group for the purpose of making another racial group (usually one's own) appear superior or normative. Racial discrimination is the outward manifestation of racial prejudice: it is when people act upon their negative beliefs about other races when communicating or setting policy. Note, it is possible to be prejudiced without acting upon those beliefs and that all races can discriminate against other races. The final concept, racism, combines racial prejudice with social power. Racism is institutional, rather than individual, meaning it occurs in large institutional contexts such as the representations of particular groups within media or the fact that racial minorities do not have equal access to educational or legal opportunities (Orbe and Harris 10). Racism often involves the unequal accessibility to resources and power.

Where Do You Come From?

Two other concepts that are often confused with race are ethnicity and nationality. Ethnicity refers to a person's or people's heritage and history, and involves shared cultural traditions and beliefs. A person may identify as Asian-American racially while their ethnicity is Chinese. Nationality refers to a people's nation-state of residence or where they hold citizenship. Most often nationality is derived from the country where one was born, but on occasion people give up their citizenship by birth and migrate to a new country where they claim national identity. For example, an individual could have been born and raised in another country but once they migrate to the United States and have American citizenship, their nationality becomes American.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

Are you male or female? Do you identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or transgendered? One's gender and sexual orientation are two additional ways to think about culture. Gender is discussed in more detail in Chapter 13, but for now think of it as the recognition that one is male, female, or androgynous. Gender is part of culture in that every society has particular gender roles and expectations for males and females. For example, in the United States, it is considered normal for the female gender to wear makeup, while it is often considered inappropriate for a male to do so. However, in some Native American tribes it was customary for the males to adorn themselves with paint for hunting and ceremonial rituals.

Sexual orientation refers to a person's preference for sexual or romantic relationships; one may prefer a partner of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both. Sexual orientation influences one's worldview or politics because while all societies include members who identify as gay or lesbian, these members do not always receive the same social or health benefits as heterosexual couples. However, this is changing. As of 2015, the Supreme Court of the Unites States made gay marriage legal in all 50 states. On top of these specific benefits, those with a nondominant sexual orientation might still have to contend on a daily basis that some people think they are deviant or somehow less than heterosexual people and couples. This may result in strained family relationships or discrimination in the workplace.

The Role of Money

You are probably familiar with the concept of class—what do the labels working class, middle-class, and upper-class bring to mind? Money? Economic standing is only one variable that influences class or socioeconomic standing. As the label suggests, one's socioeconomic status is influenced by monetary and social factors. In essence, socioeconomic standing is "your understanding of the world and where you fit in; it's composed of ideas, behaviors, attitudes, values, and language; class is how you think, feel, act, look, dress, talk, move, walk" (Langston 101). For example, in some middle class families children are expected to go to college just as their parents and grandparents had done. It may also be expected for the children to attend reasonably priced state colleges and universities as opposed to Ivy League Universities, which may be the norm in many upper-class families.

By now you are probably able to think of some other identity markers that shape a person's culture or worldview. How about spirituality or religion, profession, hobbies, political persuasion, age, abilities? These too are aspects of cultural identity. Spend some time thinking about how these aspects would influence a person's culture as we have done above.

We may often feel restrained by the constant need to work. We live in a money-centric society where every move we make involves thinking about the monetary gains or losses it will produce. Read Bruce E. Levine's article on this phenomena. How America's Obsession With Money Deadens Us

After reading the article, do you believe that we have become more money-centric? Why?

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Perhaps you may have noticed the theme of inequality as we have discussed topics like "unequal access to resources and benefits," racial discrimination, and racism. You may have also thought, "oh, my, this is going to be a touchy chapter to read and discuss in class" or "this is interesting and relevant, but I feel uncomfortable talking about this as I don't want to offend anyone." These are very common and understandable reactions and ones we hear when we teach this subject matter. Hopefully, your instructor has set up a safe, open, and respectful classroom environment to facilitate such discussions. The fact that you are self-reflective of your feelings and how to express them to others is a great start! We too want you to be able to discuss this material both in and out of your class in a productive and self-reflective manner. To facilitate that goal we have included some additional concepts— privilege, ethnocentrism, whiteness, and political correctness—that are useful when considering your own cultural identity, your place in society, and your communication with others.

Privilege

Hopefully, you have been thinking about your own cultural identity as you have been reading this chapter. If so, then you have been thinking about labels that define you culturally. Maybe you have defined yourself as female, Latina, and heterosexual. Or maybe you have labeled yourself as gay, white, working-class, and male. When we give ourselves labels such as these, often we ask ourselves, "Where do I fit in?" This is a good question to ask and demonstrates a recognition of the fact that you belong to more than one culture and that your cultures intersect in various ways. The most significant manifestation of these intersections is power—-the ability to influence others and control our lives. From the statistics given earlier in the chapter and from your own experiences, you should realize that some groups have more power than others. These people are what we refer to as the dominant group: white, male, Christian, middle-class, able-bodied, educated, and heterosexual. People whose cultural identities do not conform to this model are the nondominant groups and have less sociopolitical and economic power.

Peggy McIntosh uses the term privilege to refer to ***the power of dominant groups***. She defines privilege as an invisible knapsack of advantages that some people carry around. They are invisible because they are often not recognized, seen as normative (i.e., "that's just the way things are"), seen as universal (i.e., "everyone has them"), or used unconsciously. Below is a list of some of the privileges McIntosh identifies. Can you think of others?

1. I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area that I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can deal with my hair.
10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
12. I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.
13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color, who constitute the world's majority, without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge" I will be facing a person of my race.
19. If a traffic cop pulls me over, or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.
22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having coworkers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.
23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help my race will not work against me.
25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.
26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color that more or less match my skin.

McIntosh admits, "My perception is that colleges and universities are the main institutions that are raising awareness of the relationship between privilege and oppression, but that this awareness is needed throughout all public and private sectors of the United States; the ability to see privilege should be in the minds of all citizens" (195). As you think about privilege and the resulting advantages that some groups have over others, you should also keep in mind two facts. One, privilege is a relative concept that varies according to context. In some situations we may be more privileged than others, and in order to access some of that privilege one may decide to highlight or conceal parts of their identity. For example, unless a person tells you, you have no way of knowing their sexual orientation. Thus, a gay man might decide to "pass" as straight at a family reunion to avoid conflict from a heterosexist family. The fact that he can choose pass as an Asian man and cannot make the choice to pass as Latino is another example of privilege. Two, we may have aspects of our identities that are simultaneously advantaged and disadvantaged. The gay, white, working-class, male above is advantaged by the fact that he has light skin and is male, and is disadvantaged by the fact that he is gay and working-class.

Another example is from Nathan Pyle, a BuzzFeed staff member who wrote an article entitled, 10 Privileges I Have Complained About. Read the article and think about privileges you have complained about. Pyle states, "becoming self-aware of my privilege is a journey I'm still on." Perhaps we should all start becoming self-aware of our privileges in America.

Watch this video, **Students Learn A Powerful Lesson About Privilege**

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/2KlmvmuxzYE

Ethnocentrism

One of the first steps to communicating sensitively and productively about cultural identity is to be able to name and recognize one's identity and the relative privilege that it affords. Similarly important, is a recognition that one's cultural standpoint is not everyone's standpoint. Our views of the world, what we consider right and wrong, normal or weird, are largely influenced by our cultural position or standpoint: the intersections of all aspects of our identity. One common mistake that people from all cultures are guilty of is **ethnocentrism—-placing one's own culture and the corresponding beliefs, values, and behaviors in the center; in a position where it is seen as normal and right, and evaluating all other cultural systems against it.**

Ethnocentrism shows up in small and large ways: the WWII Nazi's elevation of the Aryan race and the corresponding killing of Jews, Gypsies, gays and lesbians, and other non Aryan groups is one of the most horrific ethnocentric acts in history. However, ethnocentrism shows up in small and seemingly unconscious ways as well. In American culture, if you decided to serve dog meat as appetizers at your cocktail party you would probable disgust your guests and the police might even arrest you because the consumption of dog meat is not culturally acceptable. However, in China "it is neither rare nor unusual" to consume dog meat (Wingfield-Hayes). In the Czech Republic, the traditional Christmas dinner is carp and potato salad. Imagine how your family might react if you told them you were serving carp and potato salad for Christmas. In the Czech Republic, it is a beautiful tradition, but in America, it might not receive a warm welcome. Our cultural background influences every aspect of our lives from the food we consume to the classroom. Ethnocentrism is likely to show up in Literature classes as well. Cultural bias dictates which "great works" students are going to read and study in the classroom. More often than not, these works represent the given culture (i.e., reading French authors in France and Korean authors in Korea). This ethnocentric bias has received some challenge in United States' schools as teachers make efforts to create a multicultural classroom by incorporating books, short stories, and traditions from non-dominant groups.

In the field of geography there has been an ongoing debate about the use of a Mercater map versus a Peter's Projection map. The arguments reveal cultural biases toward the Northern, industrialized nations.

To see this bias, follow this link.

Case In Point

The Greenland Problem
The Mercator projection creates increasing distortions of size as you move away from the equator. As you get closer to the poles the distortion

becomes severe. Cartographers refer to the inability to compare size on a Mercator projection as "the Greenland Problem." Greenland appears to be the same size as Africa, yet Africa's land mass is actually fourteen times larger. Because the Mercator distorts size so much at the poles it is common to crop Antarctica off the map. This practice results in the Northern Hemisphere appearing much larger than it really is. Typically, the cropping technique results in a map showing the equator about 60% of the way down the map, diminishing the size and importance of the developing countries.

Greenland is 0.8 million sq. miles and Africa is 11.6 million sq. miles, yet the often look roughly the same size on maps.

This was convenient, psychologically and practically, through the eras of colonial domination when most of the world powers were European. It suited them to maintain an image of the world with Europe at the center and looking much larger than it really was. Was this conscious or deliberate? Probably not, as most map users probably never realized the Eurocentric bias inherent in their world view. When there are so many other projections to choose from, why is it that today the Mercator projection is still such a widely recognized image used to represent the globe? The answer may be simply convention or habit. The inertia of habit is a powerful force.

Whiteness

If you are White, how would you describe your culture? When we ask this question to our students we find that White students are often uncomfortable with the question, feel guilty about self-identifying as White, or claim that White people do not have a culture. Gordon Alley-Young says, "The invisibility of whiteness and white privilege for many people is what makes it difficult to name and thus to disrupt" (312). These sentiments have lead an increasing amount of scholars in a variety of disciplines such as Sociology, Women's Studies, Anthropology, English, as well as Communication to study the concept of Whiteness. Orbe and Harris explain why exploring this concept is important by explaining that "[i]t helps us all view communication as a racialized process [which] sharpens our awareness of how racial categorization is used to reinforce old hierarchies in which some races are more superior than others [and that] whiteness studies also assign each person a role in race relations" (89).

> *view communication as a racialized process—meaning that our communication is structured by larger societal and racial dynamics. Second, understanding Whiteness sharpens our awareness of how racial*

categorization is used to reinforce old hierarchies in which some races are more superior than others. This helps us recognize how Whiteness can be used to signify dominance, privilege, and advantage in the United States. And, third, through studying and recognizing the effects of Whiteness, each person plays a role in race relations. White people can no longer sit on the sidelines and claim "it's a black problem" when discussing interracial conflict. (82-83)

Overall, it removes the White race from the often-unidentified "normative" group and provides a context for studying, talking about, and hopefully improving race relations.

The above discussion about privilege and Whiteness is not meant to suggest that those people with sociopolitical privilege should feel ashamed or guilty. This is often a trap that people fall into and it can shut down important thinking and conversations about intercultural communication. We want everyone to realize that they have a racial identity and thus are an important part of improving race relations. Race relations is not just a subject that concerns minorities—-it concerns everyone as we all play a part and benefit whether consciously or unconsciously.

Political Correctness

Case In Point

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/oAM2cLhBFzU

(EXPLICIT) **This video** focuses on what would happen to be "forced" to use PC language and adds a comedic and crude twist to the ongoing discussion of what is and is not PC.

Another claim or label that may be used to discount such difficult discussions is Political Correctness, or "PC" as it has been dubbed in the popular press. Opponents of multiculturalism and diversity studies try and dismiss such topics as "that's just PC." Luckily, some of the heated debate about PC have quieted in recent years but the history lingers. In short, political correctness refers to "the elimination of speech that often works to exclude, oppress, demean, or harass certain groups" (Orbe and Harris 58, Remar). The debate largely focused around competing interpretations of the First Amendment right to free speech and the Fourteenth Amendment's right to equal access to education. No matter what your position on this issue, we want to simply recognize two facts. One, that much of the PC debate and fury was largely misrepresented and hyped in the mainstream media by the use of extreme examples and a slippery-slope argument. Rush Limbaugh, for example, became famous for claiming that an awareness and sensitivity of language choice would lead to the "thought Police" or "PC police." Two, that words and labels have great power to create perceptions, realities and identities. Toward that aim, we will discuss the power of language in greater detail in the following section.

KNOWING WHERE WE BELONG

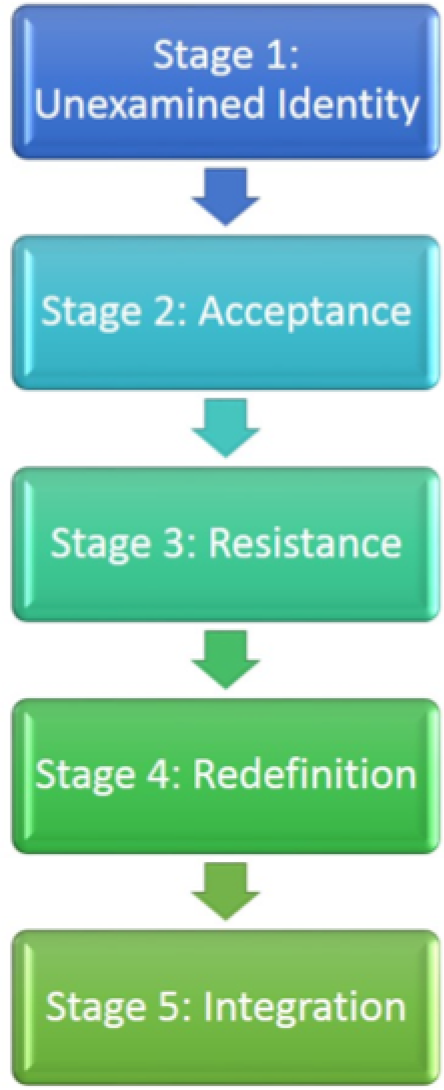
At this point, you are probably aware of the cultural groups to which you belong (i.e., "I am a Latino, middle-class, (almost) college-educated male"). Do you remember the process of coming to awareness of your cultural identity—when did you know you were white and what that meant? Was it during childhood, as a teenager, or reading this chapter? Has your understanding, or acceptance, of your racial heritage changed during the course of your lifetime? For most people it does. Just as Piaget organized the growth of children according to various stages of development, cultural scholars have similarly organized racial awareness along models and stages. Before explaining the various models, let us make a couple general comments about models. One, a model is not the thing it represents. Is the model car you played with as a child the same as the actual automobile? What were the differences? Size, time, maneuverability, details? These same kinds of differences exist between the model of racial identity development and the actual personal process. But just like the car model gives a fairly accurate picture of the actual automobile so do the racial identity models. Two, these models are general and not meant to fit perfectly to every individual's experience. With that said, let us examine the process of coming to an understanding of our racial identity.

To better understand this complex process, and in recognition of the above discussion regarding the distinctions in experiences for various cultural groups, we will present four racial identity models—-*Minority, Majority, Bi-racial, and Global Nomads.*

Minority Identity Development

Because people who identify as members of a minority group in the United States tend to stand out or get noticed as "other" or "different," they also tend to become aware of their identity sooner than individuals who are part of the majority group. Since White is still considered normative in the United States, White people may take their identity, and the corresponding privilege, for granted. While we are using the following four stages of development to refer to racial and ethnic identity development, they may also be useful when considering other minority aspects of our identity such as gender, class, or sexual orientation (Ponterotto and Pendersen). Moreover, there is no set age or time period that a person reaches or spends in a particular stage, and not everyone will reach the final stage.

- **Stage 1: Unexamined Identity**. As the name of this stage suggests, the person in stage one of Phinney's model has little or no concern with ethnicity. They may be too young to pay attention to such matters or just not see the relationship between racial identity and their own life. One may accept the values and beliefs of the majority culture even if they work against their own cultural group.
- **Stage 2: Conformity.** In stage two the individual moves from a passive acceptance of the dominant culture's value system to a more active one. They consciously make choices to assimilate or fit in with the dominant culture even if this means putting down or denying their own heritage. They may remain at this stage until a precipitating event forces them to question their belief system.
- **Stage 3: Resistance and Separation.** The move from stage two to stage three can be a difficult process as it necessitates a certain level of critical thinking and self-reflection. If you have ever tried to wrestle with aspects of your own belief system then you can imagine the struggle. The move may be triggered by a national event such as the case of "Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, was shot and killed on August 9, by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson, MO (Buchanan). Learn more about the case here. It may be fostered on a more individual scale such as enrolling in a Women's Studies class and learning about the specifics of women's history in America. Martin Luther King Jr. moved to this stage around age six after the mother of King's White neighborhood friends told them that he could not play with her children anymore because he was Black. A person in this stage may simply reject all of their previously held beliefs and positive feelings about the dominant culture with those of their own group, or they may learn how to critically examine and hold beliefs from a variety of cultural perspectives, which leads to stage four.
- **Stage 4: Integration.** The final stage is one where the individual reaches an achieved identity. They learn to value diversity; seeing race, gender, class, and ethnic relations as a complex process instead of an either/or dichotomy. Their aim is to end oppression against all groups, not just their own.



Majority Identity Development

The following model was developed by Rita Hardiman in 1994 and contains some similarities with Phinney's minority identity development model.

- **Stage 1: Unexamined Identity**. This stage is the same for both minority and majority individuals. While children may notice that some of their playmates have different colored skin, they do not fear or feel superior to them.
- **Stage 2: Acceptance**. The move to stage two signals a passive or active acceptance of the dominant ideology—either way the individual does not recognize that he or she has been socialized into accepting it. When a White person goes the route of **passive acceptance** they have **no conscious awareness of being White although they may hold some subtly racist assumptions** such as "[p]eople of color are culturally different, whereas Whites are individuals with no group identity, culture, or shared experience of racial privilege." Or, White art forms are "classical" whereas works of art by people of color are considered "ethnic art," "folk art," or "crafts" (Martin and Nakayama 132). People in this stage may minimize contact with minorities or act in a "let me help you" fashion toward them. If a White person in this stage follows the active acceptance path then they are conscious of their White identity and may act in ways that highlight it. Refusing to eat food from other cultures or watch foreign films are examples of the active acceptance path of this stage.

- Stage 3: Resistance. Just as the move from stage two to stage three in the minority development model required a great deal of critical thought, so does this juncture. Here the members of the majority group cease blaming the members of minority groups for their conditions and see socioeconomic realities as a result of an unjust and biased sociopolitical system. There is an overall move from seeing one's station in life as a purely individual event or responsibility to a more systemic issue. Here, people may feel guilty about being White and ashamed of some historical actions taken by some White people, they may try to associate with only people of color, or they may attempt to exorcise aspects of White privilege from their daily lives.
- Stage 4: Redefinition. In this stage, people attempt to redefine what it means to be White without the racist baggage. They are able to move beyond White guilt and recognize that White people and people of all cultures contain both racist and nonracist elements and that there are many historical and cultural events of which White people can be proud.
- Stage 5: Integration. In the last phase individuals are able to accept their Whiteness or other majority aspects of their identity and integrate it into other parts of their lives. There is a simultaneous self-acceptance and acceptance of others.

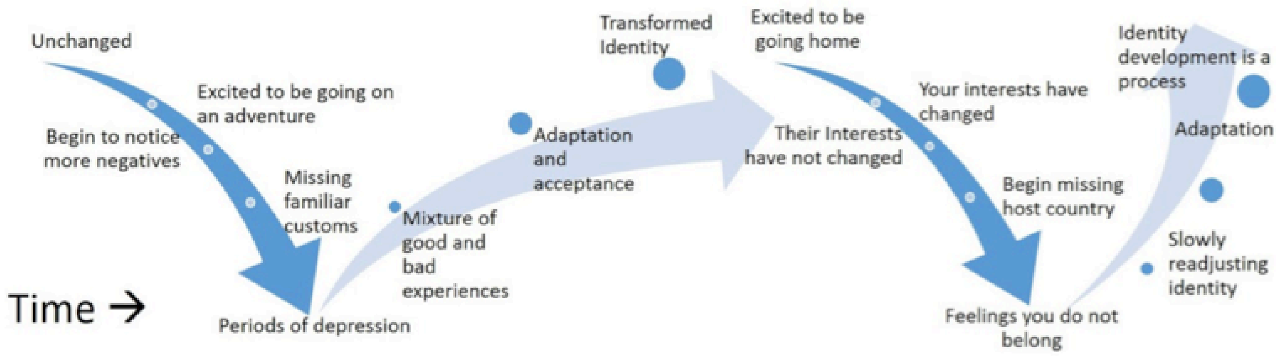
Bi- or Multiracial Identity Development

Originally, people thought that bi-racial individuals followed the development model of minority individuals, but given that we now know that race and the meanings about race are socially constructed, it makes sense to realize that a person of mixed racial ancestry is likely to be viewed differently (from both the dominant culture and the individual's own culture) than a minority individual. Thus, they are likely to experience a social reality unique to their experience. The following five-stage model is derived from the work of W.S. Carlos Poston.

- Stage 1: Personal Identity. Poston's first stage is much like the unexamined identity stage in the previous two models. Again, children are not aware of race as a value-based social category and derive their personal identity from individual personality features instead of cultural ones.
- Stage 2: Group Categorization. In the move from stage one to two, the person goes from no racial or cultural awareness to having to choose between one or the other. In a family where the father is Black and the mother is Japanese, the child may be asked by members of both families to decide if he or she is Black or Japanese. Choosing both is not an option in this stage.
- Stage 3: Enmeshment/Denial. Following the choice made in stage two, individuals attempt to immerse themselves in one culture while denying ties to the other. This process may result in guilt or feelings of distance from the parent and family whose culture was rejected in stage two. If these feelings are resolved then the child moves to the next stage. If not, they remain here.
- Stage 4: Appreciation. When feelings of guilt and anger are resolved the person can work to appreciate all of the cultures that shape their identity. While there is an attempt to learn about the diversity of their heritage, they will still identify primarily with the culture chosen in stage two.
- Stage 5: Integration. In the fifth and final stage the once fragmented parts of the person's identity are brought together to create a unique whole. There is integration of cultures throughout all facets of the person's life—dress, food, holidays, spirituality, language, and communication.

Global Nomads

People who move around a lot may develop a multicultural identity as a result of their extensive international travel. International teachers, business people, and military personnel are examples of global nomads (Martin and Nakayama 138). One of the earlier theories to describe this model of development was called the U-curve theory because the stages were thought to follow the pattern of the letter U. This model has since been revised in the form of a W, or a series of ups and downs; this pattern is thought to better represent the up and down nature of this process.



- Stage 1: Anticipation and Excitement. If you have ever planned for an international trip, what were some of the things you did to prepare? Did you do something like buy a guide book to learn some of the native customs, figure out the local diet to see if you would need to make any special accommodations, learn the language, or at least some handy phrases perhaps? All of these acts characterize stage one in which people are filled with positive feelings about their upcoming journey and try to ready themselves.
- Stage 2: Culture Shock. Once the excitement has worn off or you are confronted with an unexpected or unpleasant event, you may experience culture shock. This is the move from the top of the U or W to the bottom. Culture shock can result from physical, psychological, or emotional causes often correlating with an unpleasant and unfamiliar event. When individuals have spent most of their lives in a certain country, they will most likely experience culture shock when they travel overseas. The differences in cultural language, customs, and even food may be overwhelming to someone that has never experienced them before.

Case In Point
Digital nomads travel the world while you rot in your office.

Todd Wasserman explains the benefits of the increased presence that digital technologies have in our lives. People have realized that they can do their work from anywhere that provides wifi, thus creating a new population of individuals that opt to travel the world while doing the same work that they could have been doing in a home office. To find out more, click here.

- Stage 3: Adaptation. The final stage at the top of the U and W is a feeling of comfortableness: being somewhat familiar with the new cultural patterns and beliefs. After spending more time in a new country and learning its cultural patterns and beliefs, individuals may feel more welcomed into the society by accepting and adapting to these cultural differences.

After exploring the identity development models for minority, majority, bi-racial individuals, and global nomads, we hope you have some understanding that a person's identity development is a process, occurs in stages, and is specific to the individual and cultural groups. We also hope you noticed that identity development is a social process—it occurs within our relationships with other people and the larger society. Not surprisingly, language is a key factor in shaping our own self-perception as well as the attitudes and beliefs we hold about other cultural groups. In the next section, we will explore the role that language plays in intercultural communication.

Language Shapes Cultural Perception

Saying that language plays a vital role in intercultural communication and relationships probably seems obvious to you at this point. But do you know how and why? Let us now turn to a more detailed explanation of the power of language. Specifically, we will discuss ascription and avowal, the Sapir-Wharf hypothesis, labels and stereotypes, and reclaiming.

As you have been reflecting on your own identity, do you think it matches up with how others see you? The way people present themselves is referred to as the avowal process. The opposite of that is ascription, how others see us: the qualities or attributes that are ascribed to us. Part of your avowed identity is probably that of a college student and you hope that others see you this way too. Perhaps one of your hobbies is fashion and you enjoy paying attention to your clothes. You may then see yourself as fashionable and stylish. But do others? Might some of your classmates think you trendy, superficial, or fiscally irresponsible? The qualities that others may ascribe to you based on your fashion sense may in turn affect how you see yourself. This is yet another way that identity is shaped through communication in a social context.

In Part I of this book you were introduced to the idea that language shapes reality; the vocabulary we use to discuss an idea or person influences how we think about our subject. Likewise, if we have no words for a phenomenon then we are discouraged from talking about it or bringing it into our reality. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf believed that the structure of language was a necessary component for producing thought. You have probably heard that Eskimos have numerous words for snow. How many do you have? Snow. Ice. If you ski or snowboard then you probably have a few more. Powder. Moguls. Depending on the extent of your snow vocabulary you can look at the frozen water and perceive it in numerous ways. But if your vocabulary is limited then so is the way you can think and talk about snow. If you have studied languages such as Spanish or French then you are familiar with the concepts of a formal and informal "you." Depending on the relationship between you and your audience you will use a different word for "you" and consequently conjugate your verbs accordingly. If you are talking with a child, for example, you would use the informal version, but if you were speaking with someone of higher social status such as your Professor you would use the formal "you." As you speak and write, this language structure demands that you be consciously aware of social relations. This awareness then becomes part of your social reality.

If you have ever been on the receiving end of a stereotype or derogatory label in reference to your culture, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, or other aspect of your identity, then you are acutely aware of the power of language. You know that such language is not a neutral conveyor of ideas, but is designed to alter and shape the way the audience thinks about a particular person or group. Think about the list of terms that historically have been used to refer to persons of African descent—African, Colored, Negro, Black, Afro-American, African American, and the harshest, the N-word. When you read each term, what are the different images or connotations connected with them? Do they bring up different historical periods, varying degrees of sociopolitical power, a variety of relationships to the dominant group? The range of emotions and images that each of these terms produces is further testament to the subjectivity of language as well as its temporal nature.

A more recent linguistic strategy among historically oppressed groups is called reclaiming. When a group reclaims a word they are attempting to take it back from the dominant group. If the dominant group has used a word or phrase as an insult then the oppressed group reclaims it for their own, positive meaning. Can you think of some examples? How about "bitch," "queer," "nigga," or "cunt"? Hopefully, you are thinking, "hey, those words may still be insulting to some people; they're not necessarily positive." True. Part of the process in reclaiming is that only certain people can use them in a reclaimed fashion, most simply, the members of the oppressed groups at which the term was designed to hurt. If a woman is walking down the street and a man yells out, "Hey Bitch, watch where you're going!" that is not reclaiming as the term is used as an insult. However, the magazine, BITCH: A Feminist Response to Popular Culture, is reclaiming this term. Here is a YouTube Video where the Bitch Media's co-founder Andi Zeisler talk about the the word.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/1q-jWBgkNU8

Case In Point

Language shapes more than our cultural perspective, it also shapes our senses! See how in this article from the New York Times, ***Can't Place That Smell? You Must Be American: How Culture Shapes Our Senses***

Also, visit the website www.bitchmedia.org to learn more. Can all words be reclaimed? Here is one perspective about the word "slut" from Feministing, "an online community run by and for young feminists" (www.feministing.com). A Few Words About Reclaiming 'Slut'

HOW SCHOLARS STUDY INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Theoretical Approaches and Concepts

By now you should be familiar with the three general research approaches—social science, interpretive, and critical. Thus, this chapter will highlight a few specific approaches within these three general categories that have particular relevance to the study if intercultural communication.

Social Science

Describe and predict behavior. These are the goals of the social scientist. One particular theory useful for this kind of research is **Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)** that was developed by colleagues of Giles. This model focuses on the **ways in which individuals adjust their communication with others.** When you tell the story of a college party to a friend or to a parent do you tell it the same way? Do you leave out or highlight certain details? The kinds of decisions you make when telling a story reflect the ways in which you accommodate your communication to your specific audience. In general, there are two types of accommodation: convergence and divergence. When we converge our communication we make it more like the person or persons with whom we are speaking. We attempt to show our similarity with them through our speech patterns. When we diverge, we attempt to create distance between our audience and ourselves. Here, we want to stress our difference from others or our uniqueness. Using social scientific approaches as applied to communication accommodation theory, researchers may attempt to define, describe and predict what sorts of verbal and nonverbal acts can produce the desired convergent or divergent effects.

Interpretive

Like the social scientists, interpretive scholars want to describe behavior, but because of the importance of the individual context, they do not assume accurate and generalizable predictions can be made. As they are particularly relevant to intercultural communication research, we will discuss the following two methodologies in this section—ethnography and co-cultural research.

Since interpretivists believe in the subjective experience of each cultural group, it makes sense that they would select to study intercultural communication as used in particular speech communities. A **speech community**, according to Hymes is a ***"community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety"*** (54). This method is also referred to ethnography. A prolific ethnographer, Gerry Philipsen has identified four assumptions of this method:

1. Members of speech communities create meanings.
2. Each distinct culture possesses a unique speech code.
3. The rules for interpreting actions and meanings are limited to a given culture and cannot be universally applied.
4. Within each speech community there are specific procedures and sources for assigning meaning.

Using ethnography guided by these four assumptions, researchers are able to understand culture, its participants, and its communication on its own terms.

Critical Cultural

Originating in the legal arena, **Critical Race Theory** explores ***the role of race in questions of justice, equal access, and opportunity***. Borrowing from the work of Matsuda et.al, Orbe and Harris summarize six key assumptions helpful for understanding critical race theory (125-6).

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is an integral part of the United States.
2. Critical race theory rejects dominant legal and social claims of neutrality, objectivity, and color blindness.
3. Critical race theory rejects a purely historical approach for studying race for a contextual/historical one to study interracial communication.
4. Critical race theory recognizes the importance of perspectives that arise from co-cultural standpoints.
5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary and borrows from Marxism, feminism, critical/cultural studies, and postmodernism.
6. Critical race theory is actively focused on the elimination of the interlocking nature of oppression based on race, gender, class, and sexual orientation.

As this methodology is inherently complex and multifaceted it lends itself to producing a rich understanding of interracial and intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication and You

The best way to experience intercultural communication is to immerse yourself into a culture. While you are in college take advantage of the study abroad programs your school has to offer. Here is a list of websites that offer students information on studying abroad.
http://www.ciee.org/study-abroad/
http://www.studyabroad.com

It may be difficult to adjust to a new culture but here are some tips from the Huffington Post to make your study abroad trip run smoothly: 13 Mistakes Study Abroad Students Make

A method focused solely on the interests of Africans is referred to as Afrocentricity. The foremost scholar in this field is Molefi Kete Asante and this functions as an interdisciplinary approach to questions of race relations. Instead of assuming a Eurocentric frame as normative for understanding the world and its people, this perspective embraces “African ways of knowing and interpreting the world” (Orbe and Harris 156). Similarly, there are also Asiacentric frameworks for understanding intercultural communication.

Important Concepts for Understanding Intercultural Communication

If you decide to take a class on intercultural communication you will learn a great deal about the similarities and differences across cultural groups. Since this chapter is meant to give you an overview or taste of this exciting field of study we will discuss four important concepts for understanding communication practices among cultures.

High and Low Context

Think about someone you are very close to—a best friend, romantic partner, or sibling. Have there been times when you began a sentence and the other person knew exactly what you were going to say before you said it? For example, in a situation between two sisters, one sister might exclaim, “Get off!” (which is short for “get off my wavelength”). This phenomenon of being on someone’s wavelength is similar to what Hall describes as high context. In high context communication the meaning is in the people, or more specifically, the relationship between the people as opposed to just the words. When we have to rely on the translation of the words to decipher a person’s meaning then this is said to be low context communication. The American legal system, for example, relies on low context communication.

While some cultures are low or high context, in general terms, there can also be individual or contextual differences within cultures. In the example above between the two sisters, they are using high context communication, however, America is considered a low context culture. Countries such as Germany and Sweden are also low context while Japan and China are high context.

Speech Styles

Other variations in communication can be described using Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey’s four communication styles. We find it is helpful to think about these descriptors as a continuum rather than polar opposites because it allows us to imagine more communicative options for speakers. They are not fixed into one style or another but instead, people can make choices about where to be on the continuum according to the context in which they find themselves.

This first continuum has to do with the explicitness of one’s talk, or how much of their thoughts are communicated directly through words and how much is hinted at. Direct speech is very explicit while indirect speech is more obscure. If I say, “Close the window” my meaning is quite clear. However, if I were to ask, “Is anyone else cold in here?” or, “Geez, this room is cold,” I might also be signaling indirectly that I want someone to close the window. As the United States is typically a direct culture, these latter statements might generate comments like, “Why didn’t you just ask someone to shut the window?” or “Shut it yourself.” Why might someone make a choice to use a direct or indirect form of communication? What are some of the advantages or disadvantages of each style? Think about the context for a moment. If you as a student were in a meeting with the President of your university and you were to tell them to “Shut the window,” what do you think would happen? Can you even imagine saying that? An indirect approach in this context may appear more polite, appropriate, and effective.

Remember the fairy tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears? As Goldilocks tasted their porridge, she exclaimed, “this is too hot, this one is too cold, but this one is just right.” This next continuum of communication styles can be thought of this way as well. The elaborate style uses more words, phrases, or metaphors to express an idea than the other two styles. It may be described as descriptive, poetic or too wordy depending on your view. Commenting on a flower garden an American (Exact/Succinct) speaker may say, "Wow, look at all the color variations. That's beautiful." An Egyptian (Elaborate) speaker may go into much more detail about the specific varieties and colors of the blossoms, "This garden invokes so many memories for me. The deep purple irises remind me of my maternal grandmother as those are her favorite flowers. Those pink roses are similar to the ones I sent to my first love." The succinct style in contrast values simplicity and silence. As many mothers usually tell their children, "If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all." Cultures such as Buddhism and the Amish value this form. The exact style is the one for Goldilocks as it falls between the other two and would be in their words, "just right." It is not overly descriptive or too vague to be of use.

Remember when we were talking about the French and Spanish languages and the fact that they have a formal and informal "you" depending on the relationship between the speaker and the audience? This example also helps explain the third communication style: the personal and contextual. The contextual style is one where there are structural linguistic devices used to mark the relationship between the speaker and the listener. If this sounds a bit unfamiliar, that is because the English language has no such linguistic distinctions; it is an example of the personal style that enhances the sense of "I." While the English language does allow us to show respect for our audience such as the choice to eliminate slang or the use of titles such as Sir, Madame, President, Congressperson, or Professor, they do not inherently change the structure of the language.

The final continuum, instrumental/affective, refers to who holds the responsibility for effectively conveying a message: the speaker or the audience? The instrumental style is goal- or sender-orientated, meaning it is the burden of the speaker to make themselves understood. The affective style is more receiver-orientated thus, places more responsibility on the listener. Here, the listener should pay attention to verbal, nonverbal, and relationship clues in an attempt to understand the message. Asian cultures such as China and Japan and many Native American tribes are affective cultures. The United States is more instrumental. Think about sitting in your college classroom listening to your professor lecture. If you do not understand the material where does the responsibility reside? Usually it is given to the professor as in statements such as "My Math Professor isn't very well organized." Or "By the end of the Econ. lecture all that was on the board were lines, circles, and a bunch of numbers. I didn't know what was important and what wasn't." These statements suggest that it is up to the professor to communicate the material to the students. As the authors were raised in the American educational system they too were used to this perspective and often look at their teaching methods when students fail to understand the material. A professor was teaching in China and when her students encountered particular difficulty with a certain concept she would often ask the students, "What do you need—more examples? Shall we review again? Are the terms confusing?" Her students, raised in a more affective environment responded, "No, it's not you. It is our job as your students to try harder. We did not study enough and will read the chapter again so we will understand." The students accepted the responsibility as listeners to work to understand the speaker.

Collectivist versus Individualistic

In addition to the four speaking styles that characterize cultures so do value systems. One of particular importance to intercultural communication is whether the culture has a collectivistic or individualistic orientation. When a person or culture has a collective orientation they place the needs and interests of the group above individual desires or motivations. In contrast, the self or one's own personal goals motivate those cultures with individualistic orientations. Thus, each person is viewed as responsible for their own success or failure in life. From years of research, Geert Hofstede organized 52 countries in terms of their orientation to individualism. Look Here to see the results.

When looking at Hofstede's research and that of others on individualism and collectivism, it is important to remember is that no culture is purely one or the other. Again, think of these qualities as points along a continuum rather than fixed positions. Individuals and co-cultures may exhibit differences in individualism/collectivism from the dominant culture and certain contexts may highlight one or the other. Also remember that it can be very difficult to change one's orientation and interaction with those with different value orientations can prove challenging. In some of your classes, for example, does the Professor require a group project as part of the final grade? How do students respond to such an assignment? In our experience we find that some students enjoy and benefit from the collective and collaborative process and seem to learn better in such an environment. These students have more of a collective orientation. Other students, usually the majority, are resistant to such assignments citing reasons such as "it's difficult to coordinate schedules with four other people" or "I don't want my grade resting on someone else's performance." These statements reflect an individual orientation.

Where Intercultural Communication Occurs

Thus far, we have shared with you a bit about what intercultural communication is, some important concepts, and how scholars study this phenomenon. Now we want to spend the final part of the chapter looking at a major context for intercultural communication—-the media. There are other contexts as well, such as interpersonal relationships and organizations, but we will leave these to your own investigation or in a class devoted to intercultural communication.

Media

Looking at texts or media artifacts (these are specific television shows, films, books, magazines, musical artists, etc.) is both a fun and important area of study for intercultural communication. Since most people spend much of their free time taking in some form of media, such as going to the movies with friends or turning on the T.V. at the end of a stressful day, it is an arena that has a great deal of influence and impact over its audience. As you also remember, the media is also the location and source for much of the critical cultural research.

Specifically, what critical theorists tend to look at are the artifacts of popular, or pop culture? At the time this book first came out, bands such as Creed and Wilco; the television programs Friends, West Wing, and Sex and the City; and the films Bowling for Columbine and The Two Towers were all pop culture artifacts. Now, popular bands, television shows, and movies are very different. Popular culture is defined as "those systems or artifacts that most people share and that most people know about" (Brummett 21). So, while you may not listen to or watch the examples listed, chances are that you are at least aware of them and have a basic idea of the plot or content. Popular culture is distinct from high culture, which includes events such as the ballet or opera, visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art or the L'ouvre, or listening to classical music at the symphony. These activities, unlike the artifacts mentioned earlier all require something to have access. Namely money. Attending the ballet or opera takes considerably more money than purchasing songs on iTunes.

The fact that most of us participate to some degree in consuming popular culture is one reason to study it. Another is that it is an area of struggle for representation—-specifically about cultural identity issues. By looking at the numbers and characterizations of ethnic minorities in television and film we can see the dominant culture's attitudes about them. This is because the dominant culture is the group in control of media outlets and represents groups in particular ways. Representation refers to ***the portrayal, depiction, or characterization of particular cultural groups***. A related term is that of symbolic annihilation which refers to ***the fact that "women and minorities are underrepresented in media content and that when they are represented they are marginalized, trivialized, or victimized"*** (Valdiva 243).

Let us walk through an analysis of a scene in the 2001 film, Spiderman, to illustrate these concepts.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/_iOC5ajR51g

The female character, Mary Jane, is walking home from work one dark and rainy night. She has neither an umbrella nor proper rain gear so her white shirt and clothes are drenched and cling to her. (Prior to this scene she has been portrayed as the "girl next door" with little or no sexuality.) Her path home takes her through an alleyway where she is quickly surrounded by a group of men of color. One of the men pulls a knife and there is the threat of rape or other violent attack. She does not attempt to fight back but is frozen with fear. But as is the case with superheroes, Spiderman arrives just in the nick of time to save the damsel in distress. After he saves her, she and Spiderman, who, while hanging upside down from a building, share their first kiss.

So, what is going on in this scene? Can you identify examples of representation or symbolic annihilation? There are issues concerning both gender and race in this scene. First, she is portrayed as weak, unable to take care of herself, and in need of a man to save her. This is characteristic of images of women in film. Second, in terms of race, the "good guys" or "innocent victims" are White and the potential attackers are nonwhite. This too represents a stereotyped portrayal of young men of color as criminals or gang members. Finally, and perhaps the most dangerous message in this scene, is the equation of female sexuality, violence, and romance. As her white shirt clings to her, her breasts are revealed in a sexual manner, next she is almost attacked, and then she is sweetly and romantically kissing Spiderman. If you were nearly raped by a group of strangers would you be feeling romantic? Thus, this short scene illustrates how images (we did not even discuss the dialogue) work to unfairly and inaccurately portray groups of people.

By looking to the media scholars can discover what images of various cultural groups are prevalent in a society and the stories that are told about various cultures. As active citizens we can make choices about what media images we decide to consume, accept, or reject. As knowledgeable communicators we can critique the images we see rather than accept constructed and artificial media images as normative or “just the way things are.” For as you learned in the first section of the book, language, symbols, and images are not neutral, but are subjective interpretations of a person’s or group of people’s interpretation of reality.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

After reading this chapter, you should have a greater understanding of how culture influences communication. We began with an overview and description of the various aspects of personal identity and how they work together to determine a person’s and co-cultures relative power and privilege. Next, we traced the process of coming to an understanding of one’s individual identity through the use of the identity models for minorities, Bi-racial individuals, Majority members, and those whom identify as global nomads. Turning to specific communication styles we discussed the differences between high and low context cultures and the continuums of direct/indirect, elaborate/exact/succinct, personal/contextual, and instrumental/affective styles. Finally, we examined a particular site for intercultural communication—the media. We hope this chapter has increased your knowledge base as well as your enthusiasm and interest in this exciting area of the Communication discipline. Moreover, we encourage you to think about the importance of culture when studying the other sub-disciplines of communication such as gender, organizational, interpersonal, rhetorical theory, rhetorical criticism, and health communication.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways that you see to support Hofstede’s claim that the U.S. is the most individualistic society? Are there ways in which we display attributes of collectivism?
2. Describe a situation in which you attempted to diverge or converge you communication with others? What did you do? What were you attempting to accomplish by doing so? What was the result?
3. What are some examples of representation and symbolic annihilation can you locate and analyze in contemporary texts of popular culture?

KEY TERMS

- Afrocentricity
- Critical race theory
- Collectivism/Individualism
- Communication Styles
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Ethnocentrism
- Gender
- High and low context
- Identity
- Popular Culture

- Privilege
- Race
- Representation
- Symbolic Annihilation
- Whiteness

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION STUDY GUIDE

Culture: belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social arrangement.

Culture guides language use, appropriate forms of dress, and views of the world.

The concept is broad and encompasses many areas of our lives such as the role of the family, individual, educational systems, employment, and gender.

Racial prejudice refers to the practice of holding false or negative beliefs of one racial group for the purpose of making another racial group (usually one's own) appear superior or normative.

Racial discrimination is the outward manifestation of racial prejudice: it is when people act upon their negative beliefs about other races when
communicating or setting policy.

Racism, combines racial prejudice with social power. It is institutional, rather than individual, meaning it occurs in large institutional contexts such as the representations of particular groups within media or the fact that racial minorities do not have equal access to educational or legal opportunities. It often involves the unequal accessibility to resources and power.

Understanding Race

• Race fall into two camps: a biological versus a sociopolitical construction

biological	sociopolitical
"pure" races existed and could be distinguished by such physical features as eye color and shape, skin color, and hair.	it is not a person's DNA that places them into a particular racial grouping, but all of the other factors that create social relations—politics, geography, or migration.
traced back to genetic differences	what it means to be of a particular race

no scientific connection with racial identity and cultural traits or behaviors	meanings of race have changed across time and space.

- **Ethnicity** refers to a person's or people's heritage and history, and involves shared cultural traditions and beliefs.
- **Nationality** refers to a person's nation-state of residence or where he/she holds citizenship.
- **Gender** is part of culture in that every society has particular gender roles and expectations for males and females.
- **Sexual orientation** refers to a person's preference for sexual or romantic relationships; one may prefer a partner of the same sex, the opposite sex, or both.
- **Power** is the ability to influence others and control our lives.
- The **dominant group** in the US is white, male, Christian, middle-class, able-bodied, educated, and heterosexual. Those who fall into this category are deemed privilege based on their power
- **Nondominant groups** are people who do not conform or fit into the dominant group and have less sociopolitical and economic power.
- **Ethnocentrism**—placing one's own culture and the corresponding beliefs, values, and behaviors in the center; in a position where it is seen as normal and right, and evaluating all other cultural systems against it.

Minority Identity Development	**Majority Identity Development**	**Bi- or Multiracial Identity Development**
Stage 1: Unexamined Identity.	Stage 1: Unexamined Identity	Stage 1: Personal Identity
Stage 2: Conformity	Stage 2: Acceptance.	Stage 2: Group Categorization
Stage 3: Resistance and Separation.	Stage 3: Resistance	Stage 3: Enmeshment/Denial
Stage 4: Integration	Stage 4: Redefinition	Stage 4: Appreciation
	Stage 5: Integration	Stage 5: Integration.

- **High Context**: the meaning of the communication is in the people, or more specifically, the relationship between the people as opposed to just the words.
- **Low Context**: When we have to rely on the translation of the words to decipher a person's meaning
- **Collectivist**: When a person or culture places the needs and interests of the group above individual desires or motivations.
- **Individualistic**: The self or one's own personal goals motivate these cultures. Each person is viewed as responsible for his or her own success or failure in life.

Key Terms

- Afrocentricity
- Critical race theory
- Collectivism/Individualism
- Communication Styles
- Culture
- Ethnicity
- Ethnocentrism

- Gender
- High and low context
- Identity
- Popular Culture
- Privilege
- Race
- Representation
- Symbolic Annihilation
- Whiteness

A PDF of this Intercultural Communication Study Guide can be downloaded here.

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION SELF-CHECK

This self-check quiz, covering material from this module, is optional and unscored. You will not be graded on any of the self-check quizzes in the course, but they will help you prepare for Exams. Quizzes will vary in length. They will consist of Multiple Choice and True/False questions.

- Click "Check Your Understanding" to begin.
- Select your answer, then choose one of the three "Maybe"/"Probably"/"Definitely" options to see if you were correct.
- Click "Next" to move to the next question.

Visit this page in your course online to check your understanding.

GENDER COMMUNICATION

GENDER COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES
After reading this chapter you should be able to: • Understand the difference between sex and gender. • Identify the multiplicity of feminisms. • Discuss prominent theories used in the study of gender and communication. • Identify the major theorists in gender and communication research. • Identify the various methods used to study gender communication. • Describe masculine and feminine speaking styles. • Recognize the impact of gender on nonverbal communication. • Know the problems with and the future directions of this area of communication studies.

Have you ever been told that you "throw like a girl," "run like a girl," or "fight like a girl"? Was it an insult? A compliment? We have been taught that throwing like a girl is the equivalent of throwing poorly. We use a variety of channels of communication (language, books, tv, clothing, etc.) to teach children what it means to be a "girl" or a "boy". We limit these identities to separate categories we are not usually supposed to mix. We are taught that men are supposed to be more athletic than women, and even play in different leagues! In almost every professional sport like football, baseball, and basketball the men's league is seen as more competitive and more popular. The company Always decided to examine the phrase "like a girl" and how children of different ages would respond! The results were not what you would expect!

So what happens when a girl is able to throw a 70 mile per hour fastball and win The World Series for her team? Ideas about gender are continually being challenged. Mo'ne Davis was the first girl to pitch a shutout in the Little League World Series in August 2014 and is showing everyone what it means to throw like a girl. Known as America's favorite pastime, baseball used to be reserved for men only. Currently, Davis is being recognized because of her rare talent, but also because of her gender (Wallace). With Davis as a role model, we hope to see many more examples of transformations of traditional gender roles! For more information on Mo'ne, check out this link! This example highlights one of the key characteristics of gender—-that it is fluid. Gender roles of a given culture are always changing.

Like in sports, people of all genders are taking on new roles in all different ways! This picture depicts females on the field during a competitive game of lacrosse at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California.

In this chapter, we want to look at the ways in which gender has been constructed in our society and the ways in which we communicate about the idea of gender.

Gender communication is a specialization of the communication field that focuses on the ways we, as gendered beings, communicate. Gender research might look at roles for people of different genders in academia, sports, media, or politics. For example, research in this area could examine the similarities and differences in the conversations that take place in the comment section of a Youtube video created by Bethany Mota verses one created by Philip DeFranco. Researchers could also look at how people of different genders have been represented throughout history. Gender communication is also a field that strives to change the way we talk about people, in order to make a more empathetic and safe space for our entire community. For example, the word "queer" used to be a slur for people who were homosexual. Now we see the LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual) community has reclaimed the word queer to mean any person who is not straight. It is now a self proclamation and one that can be empowering for many people.

In this chapter, we want to make a distinction between sex and gender before providing an overview of this specialization's areas of research, main theories and theorists, and highlights from research findings about feminine and masculine communication styles. While we are taking a communication lens to the study of gender, we need to acknowledge the contributions made by other academic disciplines such as women's studies, linguistics, and psychology (Stephen, 2000).

As with other specializations in communication, definitions of gender abound (Gamble & Gamble; Gilbert; Howard & Hollander; Lorber; Vannoy). Ivy and Backlund define **gender communication** as, '**"communication about and between men and women"'** (4). Central to this definition are the terms about and between, and men and women. *About* addresses the attention this specialization pays to how the sexes are "discussed, referred to, or depicted, both verbally and nonverbally." *Between* addresses how members of each sex communicate interpersonally with others of the same, as well as the opposite, sex (Ivy & Backlund 4). We find this problematic because it limits the discussion about gender to only men and women. For our purposes, we will be adapting the Ivy and Backlund definition and instead using the definition: communication about and between people of all genders. This new definition is more inclusive of the large number of gender identities that are present in our community. For example gender queer, transgender, and a-gender. We will discuss and define some of these identities later in the chapter, for a more in-depth exploration of these identities, check out this article from the Huffington Post.

In our society, we use the gendered terms women and men instead of male and female. What's the difference between these two sets of terms? One pair refers to the biological categories of male and female. The other pair, men and women, refers to what are now generally regarded as socially constructed concepts that convey the cultural ideals or values of masculinity and femininity. For our purposes, gender is, "the social construction of masculinity or femininity as it aligns with designated sex at birth in a specific culture and time period. Gender identity claims individuality that may or may not be expressed outwardly, and may or may not correspond to one's sexual anatomy" (Pettitt). This definition is important because it discusses the separation between sex and gender as well as the idea that gender is socially constructed.

This basic difference is important, but it's most important that you know something else about these two sets of terms. One set has fixed meaning and the other set maintains fluid or dynamic meaning. Because they refer to biological distinctions, the terms male and female are essentially fixed. That is, their meanings are generally unchanging (as concepts if not in reality, since we do live in an age when it's medically possible to change sexes). Conversely, because they are social constructions, the meanings of the gendered terms masculine and feminine are dynamic or fluid. Why? Because their meanings are open to interpretation: Different people give them different meanings. Sometimes, even the same person might interpret these terms differently over time. For example, as a teenager a girl may portray her femininity by wearing make-up. Eventually, she may decide to forego this traditional display of femininity because her sense of herself as a woman may no longer need the validation that a socially prescribed behavior, such as wearing make-up, provides. We use the terms fluid and dynamic to describe the social construction of gender because they will change based on the time, place, and culture a person lives in. For example, did you know that high heels were first invented for men to make them look taller? These days, if a man wears high heels, he would be described as "feminine." This is an example of how our ideas of gender can change over time.

THE INTERPLAY OF SEX AND GENDER

A quick review of some biological basics will lay a good foundation for a more detailed discussion of the interplay between sex and gender in communication studies.

Sex

As you may recall from a biology or health class, a fetus's sex is determined at conception by the chromosomal composition of the fertilized egg. The most common chromosome patterns are XX (female) and XY (male). After about seven weeks of gestation, a fetus begins to receive the hormones that cause sex organs to develop. Fetuses with a Y chromosome receive androgens that produce male sex organs (prostate) and external genitalia (penis and testes). Fetuses without androgens develop female sex organs (ovaries and uterus) and external genitalia (clitoris and vagina). In cases where hormones are not produced along the two most common patterns, a fetus may develop biological characteristics of each sex. These people are considered intersexuals.

Case In Point
According to the Intersex Society of North America
"Intersex" is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that

it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of her cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY.

Though we speak of intersex as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn't always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until she or he reaches the age of puberty, or finds himself an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) ever knowing.
Which variations of sexual anatomy count as intersex? In practice, different people have different answers to that question. That's not surprising, because intersex isn't a discreet or natural category.

What does this mean? Intersex is a socially constructed category that reflects real biological variation. To better explain this, we can liken the sex spectrum to the color spectrum. There's no question that in nature there are different wavelengths that translate into colors most of us see as red, blue, orange, yellow. But the decision to distinguish, say, between orange and red-orange is made only when we need it—like when we're asking for a particular paint color. Sometimes social necessity leads us to make color distinctions that otherwise would seem incorrect or irrational, as, for instance, when we call certain people "black" or "white" when they're not especially black or white as we would otherwise use the terms.

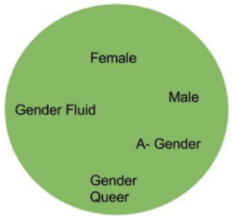
In the same way, nature presents us with sex anatomy spectrums. Breasts, penises, clitorises, scrotums, labia, gonads—all of these vary in size and shape and morphology. So-called "sex" chromosomes can vary quite a bit, too. But in human cultures, sex categories get simplified into male, female, and sometimes intersex, in order to simplify social interactions,

express what we know and feel, and maintain order.
So nature doesn't decide where the category of "male" ends and the category of "intersex" begins, or where the category of "intersex" ends and the category of "female" begins. Humans decide. Humans (today, typically doctors) decide how small a penis has to be, or how unusual a combination of parts has to be, before it counts as intersex. Humans decide whether a person with XXY chromosomes or XY chromosomes and androgen insensitivity will count as intersex.

In our work, we find that doctors' opinions about what should count as "intersex" vary substantially. Some think you have to have "ambiguous genitalia" to count as intersex, even if your inside is mostly of one sex and your outside is mostly of another. Some think your brain has to be exposed to an unusual mix of hormones prenatally to count as intersex—so that even if you're born with atypical genitalia, you're not intersex unless your brain experienced atypical development. And some think you have to have both ovarian and testicular tissue to count as intersex.

Rather than trying to play a semantic game that never ends, we at ISNA take a pragmatic approach to the question of who counts as intersex. We work to build a world free of shame, secrecy, and unwanted genital surgeries for anyone born with what someone believes to be non-standard sexual anatomy. By the way, because some forms of intersex signal underlying metabolic concerns, a person who thinks she or he might be intersex should seek a diagnosis and find out if she or he needs professional healthcare.

As you know, hormones continue to affect us after birth—throughout our entire lives, in fact. For example, hormones control when and how much women menstruate, how much body and facial hair we grow, and the amount of muscle mass we are capable of developing. Although the influence of hormones on our development and existence is very real, there is no strong, conclusive evidence that they alone determine gender behavior. The degree to which personality is influenced by the interplay of biological, cultural, and social factors is one of the primary focal points of gender studies.



Interested in the different genders on the chart? Go to the following links!

Gender Fluid

A-Gender

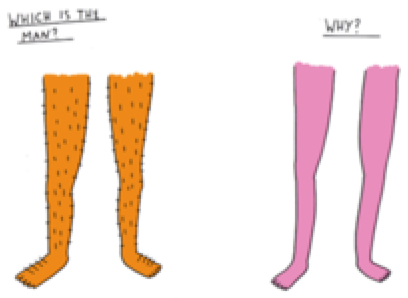
Gender

Compared with sex, which biology establishes, gender doesn't have such a clear source of influence. Gender is socially constructed because it refers to what it means to be a woman (feminine) or a man (masculine). Traditionally, masculine and feminine characteristics have been taught as complete opposites when in reality there are many similarities. Gender has previously been thought of as a spectrum, as a line; this implies the drastic separation of genders. A better way to think about gender is a circle, where all genders can exist in relation to each other.

One expression of gender is known as androgyny, the term we use to identify gendered behavior that lies between feminine and masculine—-the look of indeterminate gender. Gender can be seen as existing in a fluid circle because feminine males and masculine females are not only possible but common, and the varying degrees of masculinity and femininity we see (and embody ourselves) are often separate from sexual orientation or preference. The circle chart illustrates how all genders exist on a sort of plane. They are not arranged in a straight line, with female on one end, and male on the other. There are no set borders to any one gender, and there is open space for people to define themselves however they uniquely identify.

The Social Construction of Gender

In this section, we will discuss how gender is dynamic, social, symbolic, and cultural. Gender is dynamic, not just because it exists on a plane, but because its meanings change over time within different cultural contexts. For example, in 1907, women in the United States did not have the legal right to vote, let alone the option of holding public office. Although a few worked outside the home, women were expected to marry and raise children. A woman who worked, did not marry, and had no children was considered unusual, if not an outright failure. Now, of course, women have the right to vote and are considered an important voting block. There are many women who are members of local and state governing bodies as well as the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, even though they aren't representative in government of their 51 percent of the population. Similarly, men were also prescribed to fill a role by society one hundred years ago: marriage and wage earner. Men were discouraged from being too involved in the raising of children, let alone being stay-at-home dads. Increasingly, men are accepted as suitable child-care providers and have the option to stay home and raise children.



As a social construct, gender is learned, symbolic, and dynamic. We say that gender is learned because we are not born knowing how to act masculine or feminine, as a man or a woman, or even as a boy or a girl. Just as we rely on others to teach us basic social conventions, we also rely on others to teach us how to look and act like our gender. Whether that process of learning begins with our being dressed in clothes traditionally associated with our sex (blue for males and pink for females), or being discouraged from playing with a toy not associated with our sex (dolls for boys, guns for girls), the learning of our genders begins at some point. Once it's begun (usually within our families), society reinforces the gender behaviors we learn. Despite some parents' best efforts to not impose gender expectations on their children, we all know what is expected of our individual gender.

Gender is symbolic. It is learned and expressed through language and behavior. Language is central to the way we learn about gender and enact it through communicative acts because language is social and symbolic. Remember what we learned in chapter two, that language is symbolic because the word "man" isn't a real man. It is a symbol that identifies the physical entity that is a human male. So, when a mother says to her children, "Be a good girl and help me bake cookies," or "Boys don't cry" children are learning through symbols (language) how to "be" their gender. The toys we are given, the colors our rooms are painted, and the after-school activities in which we are encouraged to participate are all symbolic ways we internalize, and ultimately act out, our gender identity.

Case In Point

The franchise, Dick's Sporting Goods, received much backlash after 12 year old McKenna Peterson brought attention to the lack of females in their Fall 2014 Basketball catalog. The issue was brought to the corporation's attention when Mckenna's father posted a picture of her letter to the company to his Twitter account. McKenna writes, "There are NO girls in the catalog! Oh, wait, sorry. There IS a girl in the catalog on page 6. SITTING in the STANDS. Women are…mentioned once…for some shoes. And there are cheerleaders on some coupons. It’s hard enough for girls to break through in this sport as it is, without you guys excluding us from your catalog.” Dick’s CEO, Ed Stack, has since apologized to McKenna and admitted it was a mistake to not have female athletes, and promises that they will be featured in next year’s issue. However, Dick’s might communicate inclusivity to female athletes if they redid their recently released catalog to include female athletes now, because we know that women play ball the same as men and don’t just sit on the sidelines. You can read more about this story at here.

Finally, gender communication is cultural. Meanings for masculinity and femininity, and ways of communicating those identities, are largely determined by culture. A culture is made up of belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social system. How we communicate our gender is influenced by the values and beliefs of our particular culture. What is considered appropriate gender behavior in one culture may be looked down upon in another. In America, women often wear shorts and tank tops to keep cool in the summer. Think back to summer vacations to popular American tourist destinations where casual dress is the norm. If you were to travel to Rome, Italy to visit the Vatican, this style of dress is not allowed. There, women are expected to dress in more formal attire, to reveal less skin, and to cover their hair as a display of respect. Not only does culture influence how we communicate gender identities, it also influences the interpretation, understanding, or judgment of the gender displays of others (Kyratzis & Guo; Ramsey). Additionally, popular media, such as commercials and catalogs can dictate how culture communicates gender roles.

FEMINISM VERSUS FEMINISMS

If you have a gender communication course on your campus you may have heard students refer to it as a “women’s class,” or even more misinformed, as a course in “male bashing.” When professors that teach this course hear such remarks, they are often saddened and frustrated: sad because those descriptors define the course as an unsafe place for male students, and frustrated because there is often a common misconception that only females are gendered. Courses in gender and communication serve as powerful places for both female and male students to learn about their own gender constructions and its influence on their communication with others.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the popular misconception that gender is exclusively female is that it has somehow been linked with the other f-word—-feminism. What sorts of images or thoughts come to mind when you hear or read the word feminism? Are they positive or negative? Where did you learn them? Is this a label you would use to define yourself? Why or why not?

Just as gender is not synonymous with biological sex, it is also not synonymous with feminism. As we stated earlier, gender refers to the socially constructed definitions of what it means to be female or male in a given culture. Feminism is a socio-political and philosophical position about the relationships between men, women and power. As a result, there is not one kind of feminism (Lotz; Bing; Marine), thus this section is entitled feminisms. Just as members of republican, democratic, green, and independent political parties disagree and agree about values, causes of social conditions, and policy, so do feminists. Below we provide brief descriptions of thirteen types of feminism. These are not all the feminisms that exist but some of the most common in which you may have already come into contact.

- Liberal Feminism. Liberal Feminism is one of the most common types of feminism and is institutionalized in the organization, the National Organization of Women (NOW). Basic beliefs of this position are that women and men are alike in important ways and should receive equal treatment. Accordingly, supporters work for causes such as "equal pay for equal work," gender equity in political representation, as well as equality in other social, professional, and civic causes. This is movement is often referred to as second wave feminism.
- Radical Feminism. Growing out of a discontentment with their treatment in New Left political movements of the 1960's, many women began addressing issues of oppression on a systematic level. They argued that oppression of women is a platform on which all other forms (race, class, sexual orientation) of oppression are based. Communication strategies such as "consciousness raising" and "rap groups," and positions such as the "personal is political" grew out of this movement.
- Ecofeminism. Coming into consciousness in 1974, Ecofeminism unites feminist philosophy with environmental and ecological ideas and ethics. Ecofeminists see the oppression of women as one example of an overall oppressive ideology. Thus, supporters of this position are not just concerned with ending oppression of women but changing the value structure that supports oppression of the earth (i.e. deforestation), oppression of children (i.e. physical and sexual abuse), and oppression of animals (i.e. eating meat.).
- Marxist Feminism. Stemming from the work of Karl Marx, Marxist feminism focuses on the economic forces that work to oppress women. Specifically, Marxist feminists question how a capitalist system supports a division of labor that privileges men and devalues women. If you thought that women were catching up to men economically, think again. The U.S. census found that the salary gap between men and women is not improving. In 2014 women earned 78 cents for every dollar men made – the yearly wage difference could be about $39,157 for women and $50,033 for men. This is a classic example of economic oppression of women in our society.
- Socialist Feminism. Extending Marxist feminist thought, Socialist Feminists believe that women's unpaid labor in the home is one of the fundamental causes of sexism and oppression of women. Moreover, patriarchy, the system of sex oppression is connected with other forms of oppression, such as race and class.
- Womanist. One criticism of liberal and radical feminism is that these two movements have been largely a movement for and about white women. These movements have often failed to address issues such as the interlocking nature of race, class, and sex oppression. Womanists, then, connect issues of race and sex when working against oppression.
- Lesbian Feminism. This type of feminism is connected with one's sexual orientation. Important issues for this feminist perspective include fighting for marriage and adoption rights, fair and safe treatment in the workplace, and women's health issues for gay and lesbian couples.
- Separatist Feminism. Instead of fighting against the patriarchal system, this position maintains that patriarchal systems of oppression cannot be changed. Thus, the best way to deal with patriarchy is to leave it. Separatists work toward the formation of women-centered communities that are largely removed from the larger society.
- Power Feminism. Power Feminism emerged in the 1990's and urges women not to be victims. Power is derived not by changing a patriarchal structure but by gaining success and approval from traditionally male dominated activities. Although it labels itself feminist, this position is actually contradictory to some very basic feminist tenants. Instead of recognizing the interplay of cultural institutions and sexual oppression, Power Feminism takes a "blame the victim" position and asserts that if women are denied opportunity then it is their fault.
- Revalorist Feminism. Those who are Revalorist Feminists are dedicated to uncovering women's history through writings, art, and traditional activities such as sewing. Once uncovered, they can be incorporated into educational curriculum, used as a basis for reevaluating existing theoretical and methodological

perspectives, and receive a more positive or accepted place in society. Their approach is to move women's positions, ideas, and contributions from the margin to the center.

- Structural Feminism. Unlike Liberal Feminists who contend that women and men are alike in important ways, Structural Feminism holds that men and women are not alike due to different cultural experiences and expectations. These different experiences produce dissimilar characteristics. Because women can bear children, for example, they are more nurturing and caring.
- Third Wave Feminism. Third Wave Feminism believes the best way to change patriarchy is to not replicate the strategies of second wave feminism, although it is vital to acknowledge their contributions. Instead, a feminist agenda should focus more on practice than theory, foster positive connections and relationships between women and men, and be inclusive of diversity issues and diverse people.
- Post Feminism. Post Feminism suggests that feminism has made sufficient progress at eliminating sexism in our society. There is a move away from sex (women and men) and a focus on the human experience. Though its members aren't in 100% agreement of the meaning, they generally agree that feminism is over and we have reached equality. However, there is much disagreement about post feminism because many women and men experience inequality daily.

Just as there are many women's movements, did you know that there are men's movements too? Men's movements also vary in their goals and philosophies. Some men's movements are strong supporters of feminist positions while others resist feminist movements and seek to return to a time where sex roles were clearly defined and distinct. Just as women can consider themselves feminists, many men consider themselves as feminists too!

- Pro-Feminist Men. Pro-feminist men are the most closely aligned with the Liberal Feminist position. They share the belief that women and men are alike in important ways, thus, should have access to equal opportunities in work, politics, and the home. They do not stop at challenging the traditional roles for women. They also work for expanding the roles and opportunities of men. The ability to express emotions, to seek nurturing relationships, and to fight against cultural sexism are all concerns of Pro-Feminist Men. The organization NOMAS (National Organization for Men Against Sexism) represents this group of men.
- Free Men. Compared to Pro-Feminist men, Free Men – represented by organizations such as NOM (National Organization of Men), the National Coalition for Free Men, and MR, Inc. (Men's Rights, Incorporated) – seek to restore the macho and independent image of men in culture. While they may acknowledge that women do suffer gender and sex oppression, the oppression leveled at men is far greater. Arguing that feminism has emasculated men, Free Men want women to return to roles of subordination and dependence.
- Mythopoetic. Founded by poet, Robert Bly, this group of men is a combination of the previous two perspectives. Although they believe that the man's role is limiting and damaging to both men and women, they argue that there was a time when this was not the case. Masculinity, they claim, was originally tied to connection with the earth and it was the advent of technology, resulting in modernization and industrialization, and feminism that ripped men from their roots.
- Promise Keepers. Strongly aligned with a Christian belief system, Promise Keepers urge men to dedicate themselves to God and their families. They ask men to take a servant leadership role in their families, being involved in their homes as well as in work contexts.
- Million Man March. Like the Womanists who believe that a majority of feminisms do not adequately address issues of race and class oppression, many African-American males do not feel represented in the majority of men's movements. Thus, on October 18, 1995, the leader of the nation of Islam, Minister Louis Farrakhan, organized the Million Man March to bring African American men together in Washington, D.C. Like, the Promise Keepers, this group asked men to dedicate themselves spiritually with the belief that this will help strengthen families. Since the march, two decades ago, people gather to observe the Holy Day of Atonement and reflect on the messages spoken that day and the ideas they wish to spread.
- Walk a Mile in Her Shoes. This annual event raises awareness of sexualized violence against women–by men. It was founded in 2001 by Frank Baird as a mile walk for men in women's heels. The idea is to get men to walk the walk and then talk the talk to end sexualized violence. It is not only an event to raise awareness of violence against women but to offer resources to those needed and ultimately creating a united gender movement.

With the different groups or philosophical positions all communicating aspects of gender, the next section examines how gender is related to communication. Specifically we discuss what we study, gender development theories, prominent scholars in this specialization, and research methods used to study gender and communication.

THEORIES OF GENDER DEVELOPMENT

We said earlier that gender is socially learned, but we did not say specifically just what that process looks like. Socialization occurs through our interactions, but that is not as simple as it may seem. Below we describe five different theories of gender development.

- **Psychodynamic**. Psychodynamic theory has its roots in the work of Viennese Psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. This theory sees the role of the family, the mother in particular, as crucial in shaping one's gender identity. Boys and girls shape their identity in relation to that of their mother. Because girls are like their mothers biologically they see themselves as connected to her. Because boy are biologically different or separate from their mother, they construct their gender identity in contrast to their mother. When asked about his gender identity development, one of our male students explained, "I remember learning that I was a boy while showering with my mom one day. I noticed that I had something that she didn't." This student's experience exemplifies the use of psychodynamic theory in understanding gender development.
- **Symbolic Interactionism**. Symbolic Interactionism (George Herbert Mead) is based specifically on communication. Although not developed specifically for use in understanding gender development, it has particular applicability here. Because gender is learned through communication in cultural contexts, communication is vital for the transformation of such messages. When young girls are told to "sit up straight like a lady" or boys are told "gentlemen open doors for others," girls and boys learn how to be gendered (as masculine and feminine) through the words (symbols) told to them by others (interaction).
- **Social Learning**. Social Learning theory is based on outward motivational factors that argue that if children receive positive reinforcement they are motivated to continue a particular behavior. If they receive punishment or other indicators of disapproval they are more motivated to stop that behavior. In terms of gender development, children receive praise if they engage in culturally appropriate gender displays and punishment if they do not. When aggressiveness in boys is met with acceptance, or a "boys will be boys" attitude, but a girl's aggressiveness earns them little attention, the two children learn different meanings for aggressiveness as it relates to their gender development. Thus, boys may continue being aggressive while girls may drop it out of their repertoire.
- **Cognitive Learning.** Unlike Social Learning theory that is based on external rewards and punishments, Cognitive Learning theory states that children develop gender at their own levels. The model, formulated by Kohlberg, asserts that children recognize their gender identity around age three but do not see it as relatively fixed until the ages of five to seven. This identity marker provides children with a schema (A set of observed or spoken rules for how social or cultural interactions should happen.) in which to organize much of their behavior and that of others. Thus, they look for role models to emulate maleness or femaleness as they grow older.
- **Standpoint**. Earlier we wrote about the important role of culture in understanding gender. Standpoint theory places culture at the nexus for understanding gender development. Theorists such as Collins and Harding recognize identity markers such as race and class as important to gender in the process of identity construction. Probably obvious to you is the fact that our culture, and many others, are organized hierarchically—some groups of people have more social capital or cultural privilege than others. In the dominant U.S. culture, a well-educated, upper-middle class Caucasian male has certain sociopolitical advantages that a working-class African American female may not. Because of the different opportunities available to people based on their identity markers (or standpoints), humans grow to see themselves in particular ways. An expectation common to upper middle-class families, for example, is that children will grow up and attend college. As a result of hearing, "Where are you going to college"? as opposed to "Are you going to college"? these children may grow up thinking that college attendance is the norm. From their class standing, or standpoint, going to college is presented as the norm. Contrast this to children of the economically elite who may frame their college attendance around the question of "Which Ivy League school should I attend?" Or, the first generation college student who may never have thought they would be in the privileged position of sitting in a university classroom. In all of these cases,

the children begin to frame their identity and role in the society based on the values and opportunities offered by a particular standpoint.

WHAT DO WE STUDY WHEN WE STUDY GENDER COMMUNICATION?

Let's take a moment to describe in more detail many of the specific areas of gender and communication study discussed in this chapter. You know by now that the field of Communication is divided up into specializations such as interpersonal, organizational, mass media. Within these particular contexts gender is an important variable, thus, much of the gender research can also be integrated into most of these specializations.

Gender and Interpersonal Communication

There are many kinds of personal relationships central to our lives wherein gender plays an important role. The most obvious one is romantic relationships. Whether it takes place in the context of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, or heterosexual relationships, the gender of the couple will have an impact on communication in the relationship as well as relational expectations placed on them from the culture at large. After a man and woman marry, for example, a common question for family and friends to ask is, "So, when are you having a baby?" The assumption is when not if. Since gay and lesbian couples must go outside their relationship for the biological maternal or paternal role, they may be less likely to be asked such a question.

Other interpersonal relationships occur in families and friendships where gender is a consistent component. You may have noticed growing up that the boys and girls in your household received different treatment around chores or curfews. You may also notice that the nature of your female and male friendships, while both valuable, manifest themselves differently. These are just a couple of examples that gender communication scholars study regarding how gender impacts interpersonal relationships.

Gender and Organizational Communication

While Liberal Feminist organizations such as NOW have made great strides for women in the workplace, gender continues to influence the organizational lives of both men and women. Issues such as equal pay for equal work, maternity and paternity leave, sexual harassment, and on-site family care facilities all have gender at their core. Those who study gender in these contexts are interested in the ways gender influences the policies and roles people play in organizational contexts. See the Case In Point for information on the current wage-gap in organizations.

Case In Point
The Wage-Gap Widens
According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (a nonpartisan group), the wage gap between the sexes is widening, not getting better. In 2012 women earned 81 cents to every dollar earned by their male counterparts. In 2013 that fell to 78 cents. The disparity is even greater

when kids are involved, citing the GAO's research, Strasburg explains, "Men with kids earn 2.1 percent more, on average, than men without kids. Women with kids earn 2.5 percent less than women without kids" (14). The cause of the disparity is a complex one—-involving economics, education, science, public relations, and social gender roles. If women, for example, are expected to take on a more passive role in the public sphere, they may feel less inclined to negotiate for a higher salary or ask for a raise.

Gender and Mass Communication

A particular focal point of gender and communication focuses on ways in which males and females are represented in culture by mass media. The majority of this representation in the 21st century occurs through channels of mass media—-television, radio, films, magazines, music videos, video games, and the internet. From the verbal and nonverbal images sold to us as media consumers, we learn the "proper" roles and styles of being male and female in American culture. During World War II, for example, there was a shortage of workers in factories because many of the workers (men) were being sent overseas to fight. Needing to replace them to keep the factories in business, the media launched a campaign to convince women that the best way they could support the war effort was to go out and get a job. Thus, we saw a large influx of women in the workplace. All was fine until the war ended and the men returned home. When they wanted their jobs back they discovered that they were already filled—-by women! The media once again launched a campaign to convince women that their proper place was now back in the home raising children. Thus, many women left paid employment and returned to a more traditional role (This phenomenon is depicted in the film, Rosie the Riveter).

As media and technology increases in sophistication and presence, they become new sites of gender display and performance. More examples of this can be seen in the increase of women filling leadership roles and men portrayed in nurturing, home environments in television and advertising (Krolokke). The comedy series, "Up All Night," that ran on NBC from September 2011 to December 2012 reflects this idea. The mom, Reagan, goes back to work as a talk show producer after having a baby while husband, Chris stays at home with their newborn. However, there is still a serious lack of strong female roles in the media. Fortunately for women, one Oscar winning actress, Reese Witherspoon has decided to do something about this. In 2012, Witherspoon "grew increasingly frustrated by the answers she got to her question, 'What are you developing for women?'" (Riley). In her search for a production with a female lead she recalls discovering only "one studio that had a project for a female lead over 30," and thought, "'I've got to get busy.' After 'getting busy', Witherspoon, along with female Australian producer Bruna Papandrea, started Pacific Standard Production Company that focuses on producing films with a strong female lead. Since the company's start, Witherspoon and Papandrea have produced two films, "Gone Girl," based on the novel by Gillian Flynn, and "Wild", the best-selling memoir by Cheryl Strayed; both released in December 2014. To read more about Witherspoon and her pursuit for women roles read the article by the Columbus Dispatch.

ARE THERE REALLY DIFFERENCES IN GENDER COMMUNICATION STYLES?

Many of us have had conversations with others about how different the “other” gender communicates. Countless books have been written claiming they have the answer for understanding the opposite gender. But what have we really learned about gendered ways of communicating? This section talks about language, the purpose of communication, patterns of talk, and nonverbal communication in relation to our gender.

Language

We have already discussed that one way language obscures women’s contributions to academic scholarship is by erasing the name from the ideas generated. Below we will discuss three other ways in which the English language demonstrates a positive bias toward the masculine and a negative bias toward the feminine.

- Generic “He”

It is likely that you have been told when you write or speak to use what is referred to as gender-neutral language. This is an attempt to get away from the generic “he” and move toward inclusive pronouns. For example, using “he” when we mean “he or she.” Using gender-neutral language tells us to select the latter option. Another popular way this issue presents itself is with the use of titles that contain gender markers. Words such as “policeman,” “fireman,” “mailman,” and “chairman”; all suggest that the people who hold these positions are male. Over time it has become more common to replace the above titles with gender neutral ones such as “police officer,” “firefighter,” “mail carrier,” and “chairperson.” The linguistic change has two main implications: 1) We don’t know the gender of the person being discussed, and 2) Both males and females can perform these jobs. Since we have learned that language influences perception and constructs our reality, it is important to use language responsibly to reflect nonsexist attitudes (Beal; McConnell and Fazio; Mucchi-Faina; O Barr; Parks; Stringer & Hopper). In recent years, our language has been progressing even further. Instead of simply using she/he and men/women, we recognize that not every person will identify within those categories. Now we see it is more appropriate to use the term “people of all genders” to be more inclusive.

- Defining Men and Women

A second way in which language is biased against the feminine is the way it is used to define women. One such way is to use descriptions based on accomplishments or actions to define males, while defining females in terms of physical features or their relationships to men. As First Lady, Michelle Obama received a lot of press coverage about her choice of clothing for public events. Her personal accomplishments with our nation’s school system as a political figure were either downplayed or used against her as evidence that she was not properly filling the role of First Lady. Another way language is used to define men and women is through the slang terms commonly used to refer to one sex or another. What are some common ones you hear on your campus and within your circle of friends? Are women “chicks?” Are men “dudes?” What about explicit sexual references to women as a “piece of ass” or men as “dicks?” These are just some ways in which sexual terms are used to define us. Numerous studies have shown that there are many more sexual terms used for women than men. Stanley (1977) found that there were 220 terms for sexually promiscuous women and 22 similar terms for men.

Case In Point
Vagina Isn’t a Dirty Word
While driving in the car with our two young girls, the four year old asked, “If boys have a penis, then what do girls have”? We were taken aback by the question since they were able to name the correct body part for

male genitalia but not their own. We told them that girls and women have a vagina. They smiled and then started screaming, “Vagina, Vagina, I have a vagina!” over and over again. We both laughed, saying Eve Ensler would be so proud.

Eve Ensler is the playwright of The Vagina Monologues, a collection of over 200 interviews of women of diverse sexual orientations, racial, class, age, religious, and professional backgrounds. Her play has become an international hit and is performed every year on college campuses and local theatres. It has spawned the V-Day movement which seeks to end sexual violence against women and girls.

One of the key themes in the play is communication, specifically how we communicate about vaginas. In one monologue the woman explains, “Let’s just start with the word “vagina.” It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: “Hurry nurse, bring me the vagina.” “Vagina.” “Vagina.” Doesn’t matter how many times you say it, it never sounds like a word you want to say. It’s a totally ridiculous, completely unsexy word. If you use it during sex, trying to be politically correct—“Darling, could you stroke my vagina?”—you kill the act right there.”

By reclaiming the word “vagina” through challenging the connotation that it is a dirty, unsexy, or clinical term, Ensler attempts to create a positive way of thinking about “vaginas”: an accurate and loving way to refer to girls and women. Her efforts and success demonstrate the power of language to name and create reality.

- Naming Reality’

The final way language influences the ways we understand gender is in the reality it creates for us. In the same way that the term “fireman” suggests that only males can do this job, creating terms to name experiences (or not having such terms) defines what we can or cannot experience. Undoubtedly, you are familiar with the term “sexual harassment” and may be familiar with your campus policy for reducing its occurrence. Did you know that this term did not come into existence until 40 years ago? Did sexual harassment occur prior to 40 years ago? Of course it did! The point is that until there was a term for such behavior (emerging in 1974) there was no way for women (as they are the most common victims/survivors of this behavior) to either talk about what was happening to them or to fight against it. Imagine the difficulty inherent in trying to create a policy or law to prohibit behavior when there is no term for such behavior! With the advent of the term and the publicity about this issue generated by the bravery of Anita Hill when she testified against current Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, most organizations have policies to protect employees from sexual harassment. Without the language, this would have been impossible to accomplish: “the development of a vocabulary with which to accurately describe one’s experiences is an important process during which one needs to reflect on the political implications of that experience” (DeFrancisco & Palczewski 119).

The use of a generic or universal he, the use of nonparallel descriptors for different genders, and the lack of vocabulary are just some of the ways language influences our experiences as one gender or another. See if you can think of other examples.

Purpose of Communication

Starting in childhood, girls and boys are generally socialized to belong to distinct cultures and thus, speak in ways particular to their own gender’s rules and norms (Fivush; Johnson; Tannen). This pattern of gendered socialization continues throughout our lives. As a result, men and women often interpret the same conversation differently. Culturally diverse ways of speaking can cause miscommunication between members of each culture or speech community. These cultural differences are seen in the simple purpose of communication.

For those socialized in a feminine community, the purpose of communication is to create and foster relational connections with other people (Johnson; Stamou). On the other hand, the goal for men’s communication is to establish individuality. This is done in a number of ways such as indicating independence, showing control, and entertaining or performing for others.

Although our previous discussion of feminist movements for women and men indicates that gender roles are changing, traditional roles still influence our communication behaviors. Because men have traditionally been expected to work outside the home to provide financial support for the family, they need to demonstrate their individual competence as this is often the criterion for raises and promotions. Conversely, because women have been expected to work inside the home to provide childcare, household duties, and other social functions the need to create interpersonal bonds is crucial. Thus, it is important to understand the cultural reasons and pressures for the differences in communication, rather than judge one against the other devoid of context.

Patterns of Talk

One way to think of gender communication is in terms of co-cultures or speech communities. A speech community is a “community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech” (Hymes 54). Muted group theory (Kramerae) explains the societal differentiation of gender and its corresponding language development. This develops on two levels:

1. Women (and members of other subordinate groups) are not as free or as able as men are to say what they wish, when and where they wish, because the words and the norms for their use have been formulated by the dominant group, men.
2. Women’s perceptions differ from those of men because women’s subordination means they experience life differently. However, the words and norms for speaking are not generated from or fitted to women’s experiences (1).

Thus, when discussing patterns of talk we conceptualize them as occurring in different speech communities or co-cultures based on historical, cultural and economic expectations of a given co-culture. For the different genders, we develop different patterns of talk based on expectations placed on us.

- Feminine Speech Community

When cultures have different goals for their communication, this results in unique communication strategies and behaviors. When the goal is connection, members of a feminine speech community are likely to engage in the following six strategies—equity, support, conversational “maintenance work,” responsiveness, a personal style, and tentativeness.

Showing equity in conversation means showing that you are similar to others. To do this one might say, “That happened to me too,” or “I was in a similar situation.” Showing support conversationally involves the expression of sympathy, understanding, and emotions when listening or responding to others. Sotirin suggests "women use bitching to cope with troubles by reaffirming rapport; men address troubles as problems of status asymmetry and respond with solutions. The characterization minimizes the political import of women's bitching; it's not political but interpersonal; not transformative but cathartic" (20). Have you ever felt as if you were the one in the conversation who had to keep the conversation moving? This is conversational maintenance at work. This work is performed by asking questions and trying to elicit responses from others. A typical family dinner conversation might begin with one of the parents asking their children, "What happened in school today?" The purpose is to initiate dialogue and learn about others to fulfill the purpose of communication—to maintain connection with others.

When listening to others we often respond in various ways to show that we are attentive and that we care about what the other person is saying. Responsiveness includes asking probing questions such as, "How did you feel when that happened?" or, "Wow, that's interesting, I've never thought of that before." Displaying a personal style refers to all the small details, personal references, or narratives that a person uses to explain her/his ideas. A professor explaining the stages of friendship development might supplement the model with how a particular friendship developed in their life.

The final quality, tentativeness, involves a number of strategies and has invoked a multiplicity of interpretations. A student might say, "This is probably a stupid question, but…" as a way of qualifying her/his question. Turning statements into questions is another way of showing tentativeness. This is done with tag questions or intonation. Tag questions are phrases tacked onto the end of a sentence. In the statement, "I liked the film, didn't you?" the "didn't you?" is the tag. If you have studied French, this is similar to the use of "n'est pas." When we use our voice to make a statement into a question (intonation) we make the last syllable raise. For example, if your roommate asks you, "what do you want for dinner?" you could say "pizza" to make it a question ("pizza?") or a statement ("pizza.") Another way to show tentativeness is through verbal hedges such as, "I sort of think I was too sensitive."

As you read the types of tentativeness, what were your reactions? How do you feel when someone communicates this way? Generally, scholars have offered four explanations for tentativeness. First, is that this style represents a lack of power, self-confidence, or assuredness on the part of the speaker. Lakoff theorized that the powerlessness in speech mirrored women's powerlessness in the culture. Wood theorized that tentativeness is a strategy to maintain communication and connection. A final interpretation is that to understand tentativeness we must examine the context in which such speech occurs. The relative power between two speakers may cause the one with less power to communicate tentatively to the other. Do you use markers of tentativeness when speaking with those in power such as your boss, teachers, or parents?

- Masculine Speech Community

When the goal is independence, members of this speech community are likely to communicate in ways that exhibit knowledge, refrain from personal disclosure, are abstract, are focused on instrumentality, demonstrate conversational command, are direct and assertive, and are less responsive. Showing knowledge in conversation gives speakers the opportunity to present themselves as competent and capable. If someone has a problem at work one might respond, "You should do this …" or "The best way to deal with that is …" This strategy is sometimes referred to as a "communication tool box." While some may interpret this as bossy, responding in a manner that tries to fix a problem for someone you care about makes a lot of sense.

The next two features—minimal personal disclosure and abstractness—are related. When we refrain from personal disclosure we reveal minimal or no personal information. While giving a lecture on communication anxiety in a public speaking class, a professor may use examples from famous people rather than revealing her/his own experiences. Likewise, when we speak in less personal terms our conversation tends to become more abstract. Think back to the traditional roles for men and women for a moment. Since men typically have been more involved in the public rather than the private sphere, it makes sense that their communication would be more abstract and less personal.

A masculine communication style tends to be focused on instrumental tasks. This is particularly true in the case of same sex friendships. Like the "tool box" or a problem solving approach to communication, when talk is instrumental it has a specific goal or task. It is used to accomplish something. Take baseball or football, for example. The talk that is used in these activities is strategic. In the case of male friendships it is more likely that men will get together to do something. Whether the activity is rock climbing, going to lunch, or helping someone move, the conversation is instigated by a particular activity. While female friends also like to engage in activities together, they are much more likely to get together "just to talk."

Conversational command refers to the ability to control or manage conversation. This can be done by controlling which topics are discussed, interrupting, or being the one to control the turn taking in conversation. A popular stereotype is that women talk a lot, but most research shows that men talk more than women. More talk time is another way to demonstrate conversational command.

Directness is another feature of masculine communication. This refers to the use of more authoritative language and minimal use of tentativeness. Finally, men generally perform “minimal response cues” (Parlee). Response cues include saying, “mmm” or “go on” while nodding when listening to others. Fewer verbal indicators of sympathy, empathy, or understanding are likely to characterize this style of talk. While members of this speech community may be less likely to verbally express sympathy or other similar emotions, this is not the same as saying the members of the community do not feel such emotions. People of different genders feel and care for others in a variety of ways. The difference is how they are communicated, not if they are communicated.

As you were reading about the feminine and masculine speech communities you were probably thinking to yourself, “Hey, I am a woman but I have a lot of masculine communication traits,” or “I know some men who speak in a more feminine style.” As you think, reflect more on these ideas you will realize that all of us are capable of speaking, and do speak, the language of multiple gender cultures. Again, this is one of the reasons it is important to make a distinction between gender and sex. Our gender construction and the contexts in which we speak play a large role in the ways we communicate and express our gender identity. Both men and women may make conscious choices to speak more directly and abstractly at work, but more personal at home. Such strategic choices indicate that we can use our knowledge about various communication styles or options to make us successful in many different contexts.

Differences between Feminine and Masculine Speech Communities		
	Feminine Speech Community	**Masculine Speech Community**
Goal:	Connection	Independence
Characteristics:	Equity	Exhibit Knowledge
	Support	No Personal Disclosure
	Maintenance Work	Abstract
	Responsive	Instrumental Tasks
	Personal Style	Conversational Command
	Tentativeness	Direct
		Less Responsive

Nonverbal Communication

Because you know how important nonverbal communication is to the production of meaning you may have wondered about the gendered nature of nonverbal communication. Below we discuss seven areas of nonverbal communication and the role of gender in each. We will discuss: Artifacts, Personal Space and Proxemics, Haptics, Kinesics, Paralanguage, Physical Attributes, and Silence

- Artifacts

Earlier in the chapter we mentioned the pink and blue blankets used to wrap girl and boy babies after birth. These are examples of artifacts that communicate gender. Simply speaking, personal artifacts are objects that humans use to communicate self-identity. The jewelry we choose to wear (or not wear) communicates something about our personal tastes and social roles. Our clothes indicate a preference for certain designers or fashions, or may be used to subvert dominant fashion trends and expectations. An American male who wears a skirt or sarong may be trying to challenge the cultural norm that says pants and shorts are the only appropriate clothes for men.

Artifacts that are an early influence on gender construction are the toys we are given as children. What are typical girl and boy toys and what kind of play do they inspire? You are probably thinking of dolls for girls and cars and trucks for boys. Just walk through the aisles of your local toy store and you will have no difficulty discovering the "girl" aisle (it's pink) and the boy aisle (it's darker colors). Typically toys for boys are more action-oriented and encourage competition. Girls' toys, on the other hand, encourage talk (Barbies talk to each other and role play) and preparation for traditional female roles (playing house). If you think products (toys) are only gendered at a young age, pay close attention when you watch television commercials and look through magazines. What kinds of products do women typically sell? What do men sell? How are gender-neutral products (cigarettes for example) sold to both women and men?

- Personal Space and Proxemics

As you recall, the study of space and our use of it (proxemics) has two important dimensions. First, we understand space as our personal space, or the bubble in which we feel comfortable. When someone stands or sits too close to you, you may react by pulling away and describe the interaction as "they invaded my space." Second, space can be thought of in terms of the kinds of physical spaces we have access to. Were some rooms in the family home off limits to you as a child? Relative to both kinds of space is power. People with more power in society are able to invade the space of those with less power with few repercussions. Those with more power also have access to more and better spaces. For example, the upper-class often own multiple homes in desirable locations such as the beach or high-priced urban areas.

What does all of this have to do with gender? Go back to the creation of power and ask yourself, "Which gender in American society holds the most power?" While there are exceptions, most of the time the masculine gender holds the most powerful positions in our culture. Thus, males typically have access to greater space. In the homes of many heterosexual couples, the father has a den and a garage that was for his use only. Mothers are often limited to shared space such as the kitchen and living areas. Not only is there a lack of private space, but also the tasks associated with each (cooking in the kitchen) are work as opposed to the hobbies that take place in the garage (rebuilding cars). What are some ways that space was gendered in your family?

- Haptics

People of all genders in our culture use touch to communicate with others. However, there are differences in both the types of touch used and in the messages conveyed (Lee & Guerrero; Guerrero). Women are more likely to use touch to express support or caring, such as touching someone on the shoulder or giving them a hug. Men are more likely to use touch to direct actions of another. The relative power of men to women, coupled with a greater level of social power that can manifest itself in unwanted closeness or touching, have been linked with the problems of sexual harassment and domestic violence (May; McLaughlin). However, men do not use touch only to show control. Men use touch to display affection and desire to romantic partners, to communicate caring and closeness to children, and to show support to friends. Since men are culturally sanctioned for showing caring through touch, especially to other men, a choice to do so is a conscious choice to challenge gender stereotypes for men. Another strategy for touch between men is to create contexts in which it is acceptable such as wrestling, play punching or fighting, or football.

- Kinesics

Like haptics, men and women use body language differently and to convey different meanings. Coinciding with cultural messages, men use their bodies to signal strength and control while women use theirs to communicate approachability and friendliness. Women, for example, smile more often than men and Caucasian women do this more than African-American women (Halberstadt & Saitta). Whether the cause is social or biological, men tend to take up more space and encroach on others' space more often than females.

- Paralanguage

Consistent with a communication goal of maintaining and fostering relationships with others, women tend to use more listening noises or back-channeling. Such noises are "mmm," "ah," and "oh" and are often accompanied by nodding the head. Often they mean, "I am listening and following what you are saying. Keep going." While men also make listening noises, they do so less frequently and often the meaning is "I agree." Hopefully, you can see how this could cause some miscommunication between the sexes. Likewise, being aware of this difference can reduce miscommunication. For example, when two people (Courtney and Juan) talk, Juan will often ask Courtney, "are you saying 'mm hmm" because you agree, or are you just listening?" In doing so, he is trying to determine which gendered approach to listening paralanguage Courtney is employing.

- Physical Attributes

Another area of nonverbal communication that has gendered implications is physical attributes—the most common one for gender being body size and shape. If you were socialized in America you probably know how men and women are "supposed" to look. Men should be larger and physically strong while women should be smaller—very thin. These cultural pressures cause both men and women to engage in dangerous behaviors in an attempt to achieve an ideal physical body. Women are more likely to engage in dieting to become thin and men are more likely to weight-lift to excess, or take steroids, to increase muscle mass. The cultural messages for both sexes are physically and emotionally dangerous. Too severe dieting or steroid use can permanently damage the physical body and too much attention to appearance can harm one's self esteem and take time away from pursuing other activities such as school, career, hobbies, and personal relationships.

- Silence

A final area of nonverbal communication that has had large implications on gender is silence. Throughout history women have been silenced in all cultures across the world and this continues today. In chapter 4, we were introduced to one of the early Greek female rhetoricians, Aspasia. We don't know much about her and her work because women have been systematically left out of our traditional history lessons. Women's work has often been discredited, published under a male pseudo name, or males have passed it off as their own work. More recently, there's a great episode of Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey entitled, "Sisters of the Sun," that demonstrates women making large strides in the study of stars in our galaxy, yet they are rarely mentioned in our history books. Historically, achievements of females have been silenced.

This systematic silencing of women has lead many women to hesitate against speaking out against sexual assault, harassment, violence, or rape that they have experienced. They are often silenced due to uneven power dynamics, the fear of victim blaming, threats, and a countless number of forces. Fortunately, technological and social media efforts of today are working to break this silence. In October 2014, a new hash tag on Twitter was trending in the US and Canada that reads #BeenRapedNeverReported. Rape victims tweet about past experiences they felt they could not talk about and include the hashtag. One tweet reads, "Ive #beenrapedneverreported because he was military, and I am a vocal feminist slut. Who would the media believe? Not me. #DoubleStandards." You can access the full article here.

In another instance Jatindra Dash reports, women in India who suffer from domestic violence tend to keep quiet because they are "scared of … [their] husband, mistrustful of the police and worried what … family and neighbors would think." India is trying to combat this silence with an ATM-like machine that allows people to report their testimony into a microphone that the police station receives, contacts the person who reports it, and may make an arrest. You can read about this new kiosk here. Today's technology and media may just help disrupt the long history of silence faced by women either placed on them by others or by themselves.

GENDER COMMUNICATION SUMMARY

Summary

In this chapter you have been exposed to the specialization of gender and communication. You learned that gender communication is "the social construction of masculinity or femininity as it aligns with designated sex at birth in a specific culture and time period. Gender identity claims individuality that may or may not be expressed outwardly, and may or may not correspond to one's sexual anatomy" (Pettitt). It is important to remember as we discuss gender and communication that there is a difference between sex and gender. Sex refers to the biological distinctions that make us male or female. Gender is the socially constructed enactment of what it means to be a man or a woman. We are generally born as either male or female, but taught how to be men and women.

People of all identities are gendered and experience their genders in a variety of ways. As a result of how gender is manifested, many feminist, men, and other activist groups have formed for the purpose of banding together with others who understand gender in similar ways. We discussed 12 types of feminism and five different men's groups that focus on various approaches for understanding and enacting gender. There are a variety of theories that seeks to explain how we form gender. Remember that theories are simply our best representations of something. Thus theories of gender development such as Psychodynamic theory, Social Interactionism, Social Learning theory, Cognitive Learning theory, and Standpoint theory are all attempts to explain the various ways we come to understand and enact our genders.

Like with many other specializations in the field of Communication, gender communication applies to a variety of other specializations. Interpersonal communication, organizational communication, and mass communication are specializations that are particularly ripe for exploring the impact of gender and communication. Gender communication research continues to explore gender in these contexts, thus helping redefine how gender is understood and behaved.

We explored differences in gender communication styles by looking at language, the purpose of communication, patterns of talk, and nonverbal communication. While impossible to come to a definitive conclusion, gender and communication studies generally promotes the idea that the differences in gender communication are socially learned and are thus fluid and dynamic. Males and females learn to communicate in both masculine and feminine styles and make strategic choices about which style is more effective for a given context.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways that your gender was communicated or taught to you by your parents? Other family members? Your school? Friends? Church?
2. Do you see gendered patterns of interaction in your romantic relationships?
3. Did you know there were so many/if any Men's movements, all with different goals, before reading this chapter? What does our limited knowledge of men's movements imply?
4. What ways do you break traditional gender roles?
5. Do you feel drawn to any of the types of feminisms listed in the chapter? Why or why not?

KEY TERMS

- androgyny
- cognitive learning
- culture
- ecofeminism
- feminine speech community
- feminism
- free men
- gender
- gender communicated
- gendered
- lesbian feminism
- liberal feminism
- marxist feminism
- masculine speech community
- million man march
- muted group theory
- mythopoetic
- power feminism
- pro-feminist men

- promise keepers
- psychodynamic
- psychological theories
- radical feminism
- revalorist feminism
- separatist feminism
- sex
- socialist feminism
- social learning
- speech community
- standpoint theory
- structural feminism
- symbolic interactionism
- third-wave feminism
- womanist

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ELEMENTS OF AN EXCELLENT DEMONSTRATION SPEECH

You will prepare a 4 to 5 minute speech showing the audience how to do something. The speech must include visual aids. Your topic must be appropriate for your audience. You topic must be approved.

I. Nature of a Demonstration Speech: In a demonstration speech, you inform your audience by showing them…

1. How to make something (e.g., food; crafts; household decorations; technological gear);
2. How to complete a process (e.g., playing a game or sport, or inspecting, maintaining, or repairingsomething); or
3. How something works (e.g., part of a car; a machine; computer software)

II. Selecting a Topic: It's best to choose something which…

1. You know well
2. Can be shown within reliable time boundaries
3. Isn't highly technical and doesn't include too many steps
4. Can easily be shown to a large group
5. Will expand listeners' knowledge

III. Organization:

1. Organize the body of your speech into 2-5 main points which correspond to parts of your process- -rather than in a long series of steps
2. Provide clear "signposts" for each main step in the process

IV. Preparation:

1. Arrange and test any AV equipment beforehand
2. Practice repeatedly so you can handle items easily
3. Lay everything out ahead of time and make sure the entire audience can see your work area

V. Presentation:

1. Be as clear as possible; use simple language; explain jargon; define acronyms
2. Use easy-to-follow, step-by-step processes, and large, visible visuals
3. Avoid obstructions; make sure everyone in the room can see you without having to strain
4. Speak at a pace which your audience can easily follow, keeping in mind that you may beintroducing them to terms and concepts which are new to them
5. Speak to your audience rather than to your objects, using the T-T-T method (touch/turn/talk); maintain eye contact

VI. Momentum

1. Talk while you demonstrate; avoid "dead air time"

2. Be prepared to add extra commentary if part of your process takes longer than expected (e.g., ifsomething you're stirring doesn't thicken quickly)
3. If what you're demonstrating normally takes more than 5 minutes, go through just enough steps togive the idea, then show the finished product
4. Pass out handouts before or after your speech unless people really need to read or see somethingin writing during the presentation itself
5. If you'll be using a volunteer or needing a helper with equipment, identify that person up ahead oftime

VII. After your presentation:

1. Be prepared to answer any questions
2. Quickly clear your items away so the next speaker can get ready

50 WISE SPEAKERS

50 Wise Public Speakers is a wonderful resource put together by Phil Vendetti at Clover Park Technical College in Tacoma, WA. Phil interviewed 50 prominent speakers, and his public speaking students edited the interviews and wrote transcripts for accessibility purposes.

- In the category section, you can search for speakers by genre.
- In the Questions section, you can search for topics like "overcoming stage fright."
- In the speakers section, you can search by name.

This wonderful trailer the students put together will give you an overview of the project:

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/g2xuOCadUPw

Everything about the project is shared under a CC BY Open Educational License.

Here is a link to the website:
http://www.cptc.edu/fifty-wise/

A PRIMER ON COMMUNICATION STUDIES

How did humans develop the ability to communicate? Are humans the only creatures on earth that communicate? What purpose does communication serve in our lives? Answers to these historical, anthropological, and social-scientific questions provide part of the diversity of knowledge that makes up the field of communication studies. As a student of communication, you will learn that there is much more to the field than public speaking, even though the origins of communication studies are traced back thousands of years to ancient Greek philosophers and teachers like Plato and Aristotle who were the first to systematically study and write about speech. Communication students and scholars also study basic communication processes like nonverbal communication, perception, and listening, as well as communication in various contexts, including interpersonal, group, intercultural, and media communication.

Communication has been called the most practical of the academic disciplines. Even the most theoretical and philosophical communication scholars are also practitioners of communication, and even though you have likely never taken another communication studies class, you have a lifetime of experience communicating. This experiential knowledge provides a useful foundation and a starting point from which you can build the knowledge and practice the skills necessary to become a more competent and ethical communicator. I always inform my students that I consider them communication scholars while they are taking my class, and I am pleased to welcome you to the start of your communication studies journey. Whether you stay on this path for a semester or for much longer, studying communication has the potential to enrich your life in many ways. I want this book to be a dialogue, so I encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments, or suggestions you may have as you read. You can visit http://www.richardgjonesjr.com to find links to many communication resources.

Communication: History and Forms

Learning Objectives

1. Define communication.
2. Discuss the history of communication from ancient to modern times.
3. List the five forms of communication.
4. Distinguish among the five forms of communication.
5. Review the various career options for students who study communication.

Before we dive into the history of communication, it is important that we have a shared understanding of what we mean by the word *communication*. For our purposes in this book, we will define **communication** as the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal symbols and signs that are influenced by multiple contexts. This definition builds on other definitions of communication that have been rephrased and refined over many years. In fact, since the systematic study of communication began in colleges and universities a little over one hundred years ago, there have been more than 126 published definitions of communication. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *The Functions of Human Communication: A Theoretical Approach* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1976), 23.))) In order to get a context for how communication has been conceptualized and studied, let's look at a history of the field.

From Aristotle to Obama: A Brief History of Communication

While there are rich areas of study in animal communication and interspecies communication, our focus in this book is on human communication. Even though all animals communicate, as human beings we have a special capacity to use symbols to communicate about things outside our immediate temporal and spatial reality. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 43.))) For example, we have the capacity to use abstract symbols, like the word *education*, to discuss a concept that encapsulates many aspects of teaching and learning. We can also reflect on the past and imagine our future. The ability to think outside our immediate reality is what allows us to create elaborate belief systems, art, philosophy, and academic theories. It's true that you can teach a gorilla to sign words like *food* and *baby*, but its ability to use symbols doesn't extend to the same level of abstraction as ours. However, humans haven't always had the sophisticated communication systems that we do today.

Some scholars speculate that humans' first words were onomatopoetic. You may remember from your English classes that *onomatopoeia* refers to words that sound like that to which they refer—words like *boing*, *drip*, *gurgle*, *swoosh*, and *whack*. Just think about how a prehistoric human could have communicated a lot using these words and hand gestures. He or she could use *gurgle* to alert others to the presence of water or *swoosh* and *whack* to recount what happened on a hunt. In any case, this primitive ability to communicate provided an evolutionary advantage. Those humans who could talk were able to cooperate, share information, make better tools, impress mates, or warn others of danger, which led them to have more offspring who were also more predisposed to communicate. (((Note: Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 27.))) This eventually led to the development of a "Talking Culture" during the "Talking Era." During this 150,000 year period of human existence, ranging from 180,000 BCE to 3500 BCE, talking was the only medium of communication, aside from gestures, that humans had. (((Note: Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36.)))

The beginning of the "Manuscript Era," around 3500 BCE, marked the turn from oral to written culture. This evolution in communication corresponded with a shift to a more settled, agrarian way of life. (((Note: Marshall T. Poe, *A History of Communications: Media and Society from the Evolution of Speech to the Internet* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 61–73.))) As hunter-gatherers settled into small villages and began to plan ahead for how to plant, store, protect, and trade or sell their food, they needed accounting systems to keep track of their materials and record transactions. While such transactions were initially tracked with actual objects that symbolized an amount—for example, five pebbles represented five measures of grain—symbols, likely carved into clay, later served as the primary method of record keeping. In this case, five dots might equal five measures of grain.

During this period, villages also developed class systems as more successful farmers turned businessmen prospered and took leadership positions. Religion also became more complex, and a new class of spiritual leaders emerged. Soon, armies were needed to protect the stockpiled resources from others who might want to steal it. The emergence of elite classes and the rise of armies required records and bookkeeping, which furthered the spread of written symbols. As clergy, the ruling elite, and philosophers began to take up writing, the systems became more complex. The turn to writing didn't threaten the influential place of oral communication, however. During the near 5,000-year period of the "Manuscript Era," literacy, or the ability to read and write, didn't spread far beyond the most privileged in society. In fact, it wasn't until the 1800s that widespread literacy existed in the world.

The end of the "Manuscript Era" marked a shift toward a rapid increase in communication technologies. The "Print Era" extended from 1450 to 1850 and was marked by the invention of the printing press and the ability to mass-produce written texts. This 400-year period gave way to the "Audiovisual Era," which only lasted 140 years, from 1850 to 1990, and was marked by the invention of radio, telegraph, telephone, and television. Our current period, the "Internet Era," has only lasted from 1990 until the present. This period has featured the most rapid dispersion of a new method of communication, as the spread of the Internet and the expansion of digital and personal media signaled the beginning of the digital age.

The evolution of communication media, from speaking to digital technology, has also influenced the field of communication studies. To better understand how this field of study developed, we must return to the "Manuscript Era," which saw the production of the earliest writings about communication. In fact, the oldest essay and book ever found were written about communication. (((Note: James C. McCroskey, "Communication Competence: The Elusive Construct," in *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 260.))) Although this essay and book predate Aristotle, he is a logical person to start with when tracing the development of the communication scholarship. His writings on communication, although not the oldest, are the most complete and systematic. Ancient Greek philosophers and scholars such as Aristotle theorized about the art of rhetoric, which refers to speaking well and persuasively. Today, we hear the word *rhetoric* used in negative ways. A politician, for example, may write off his or her opponent's statements as "just rhetoric." This leads us to believe that *rhetoric* refers to misleading, false, or unethical communication, which is not at all in keeping with the usage of the word by ancient or contemporary communication experts. While rhetoric does refer primarily to persuasive communication messages, much of the writing and teaching about rhetoric conveys the importance of being an ethical *rhetor*, or communicator. So when a communicator, such as a politician, speaks in misleading, vague, or dishonest ways, he or she isn't using rhetoric; he or she is being an unethical speaker.

The study of rhetoric focused on public communication, primarily oratory used in discussions or debates regarding laws and policy, speeches delivered in courts, and speeches intended to praise or blame another person. The connections among rhetoric, policy making, and legal proceedings show that communication and citizenship have been connected since the study of communication began. Throughout this book, we will continue to make connections between communication, ethics, and civic engagement.

Ancient Greek rhetoricians like Aristotle were followed by Roman orators like Cicero. Cicero contributed to the field of rhetoric by expanding theories regarding the five canons of rhetoric, which include invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory. *Invention* refers to the use of evidence and arguments to think about things in new ways and is the most studied of the five canons. *Arrangement* refers to the organization of speech, *style* refers to the use of language, and *delivery* refers to the vocal and physical characteristics of a speaker. *Memory* is the least studied of the five canons and refers to the techniques employed by speakers of that era to retain and then repeat large amounts of information. The Age of Enlightenment in the 1700s marked a societal turn toward scientific discovery and the acquisition of knowledge, which led to an explosion of philosophical and scientific writings on many aspects of human existence. This focus on academic development continued into the 1900s and the establishment of distinct communication studies departments.

Communication studies as a distinct academic discipline with departments at universities and colleges has only existed for a little over one hundred years. (((Note: William Keith, "On the Origins of Speech as a Discipline: James A. Winans and Public Speaking as Practical Democracy," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2008): 239–58.))) Although rhetoric has long been a key part of higher education, and colleges and universities have long recognized the importance of speaking, communication departments did not exist. In the early 1900s, professors with training and expertise in communication were often housed in rhetoric or English departments and were sometimes called "professors of speech." During this time, tension began to build between professors of English who studied rhetoric as the written word and professors of speech who studied rhetoric as the spoken word. In 1914, a group of ten speech teachers who were members of the National Council of Teachers of English broke off from the organization and started the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking, which eventually evolved into today's National Communication Association. There was also a distinction of focus and interest among professors of speech. While some focused on the quality of ideas, arguments, and organization, others focused on coaching the performance and delivery aspects of public speaking. (((Note: William Keith, "On the Origins of Speech as a Discipline: James A. Winans and Public Speaking as Practical Democracy," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2008): 240.))) Instruction in the latter stressed the importance of "oratory" or "elocution," and this interest in reading and speaking aloud is sustained today in theatre and performance studies and also in oral interpretation classes, which are still taught in many communication departments.

The formalization of speech departments led to an expanded view of the role of communication. Even though Aristotle and other ancient rhetoricians and philosophers had theorized the connection between rhetoric and citizenship, the role of the communicator became the focus instead of solely focusing on the message. James A. Winans, one of the first modern speech teachers and an advocate for teaching communication in higher education, said there were "two motives for learning to speak. Increasing one's chance to succeed and increasing one's power to serve." (((Note: William Keith, "On the Origins of Speech as a Discipline: James A. Winans and Public Speaking as Practical Democracy," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2008): 253.))) Later, as social psychology began to expand in academic institutions, speech communication scholars saw places for connection to further expand definitions of communication to include social and psychological contexts.

Today, you can find elements of all these various aspects of communication being studied in communication departments. If we use President Obama as a case study, we can see the breadth of the communication field. Within one department, you may have fairly traditional rhetoricians who study the speeches of President Obama in comparison with other presidential rhetoric. Others may study debates between presidential candidates, dissecting the rhetorical strategies used, for example, by Mitt Romney and Barack Obama. Expanding from messages to channels of communication, scholars may study how different media outlets cover presidential politics. At an interpersonal level, scholars may study what sorts of conflicts emerge within families that have liberal and conservative individuals. At a cultural level, communication scholars could study how the election of an African American president creates a narrative of postracial politics. Our tour from Aristotle to Obama was quick, but hopefully instructive. Now let's turn to a discussion of the five major forms of communication.

Forms of Communication

Forms of communication vary in terms of participants, channels used, and contexts. The five main forms of communication, all of which will be explored in much more detail in this book, are intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication. This book is designed to introduce you to all these forms of communication. If you find one of these forms particularly interesting, you may be able to take additional courses that focus specifically on it. You may even be able to devise a course of study around one of these forms as a communication major. In the following we will discuss the similarities and differences among each form of communication, including its definition, level of intentionality, goals, and contexts.

Intrapersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself using internal vocalization or reflective thinking. Like other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication is triggered by some internal or external stimulus. We may, for example, communicate with our self about what we want to eat due to the internal stimulus of hunger, or we may react intrapersonally to an event we witness. Unlike other forms of communication, intrapersonal communication takes place only inside our heads. The other forms of communication must be perceived by someone else to count as communication. So what is the point of intrapersonal communication if no one else even sees it?

Intrapersonal communication serves several social functions. Internal vocalization, or talking to ourselves, can help us achieve or maintain social adjustment. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 51.))) For example, a person may use self-talk to calm himself down in a stressful situation, or a shy person may remind herself to smile during a social event. Intrapersonal communication also helps build and maintain our self-concept. We form an understanding of who we are based on how other people communicate with us and how we process that communication intrapersonally. The shy person in the earlier example probably internalized shyness as a part of her self-concept because other people associated her communication behaviors with shyness and may have even labeled her “shy” before she had a firm grasp on what that meant. We also use intrapersonal communication or “self-talk” to let off steam, process emotions, think through something, or rehearse what we plan to say or do in the future. As with the other forms of communication, competent intrapersonal communication helps facilitate social interaction and can enhance our well-being. Conversely, the breakdown in the ability of a person to intrapersonally communicate is associated with mental illness. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 55.)))

Sometimes we intrapersonally communicate for the fun of it. I’m sure we have all had the experience of laughing aloud because we thought of something funny. We also communicate intrapersonally to pass time. I bet there is a lot of intrapersonal communication going on in waiting rooms all over the world right now. In both of these cases, intrapersonal communication is usually unplanned and doesn’t include a clearly defined goal. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 28.))) We can, however, engage in more intentional intrapersonal communication. In fact, deliberate self-reflection can help us become more competent communicators as we become more mindful of our own behaviors. For example, your internal voice may praise or scold you based on a thought or action.

Of the forms of communication, intrapersonal communication has received the least amount of formal study. It is rare to find courses devoted to the topic, and it is generally separated from the remaining four types of communication. The main distinction is that intrapersonal communication is not created with the intention that another person will perceive it. In all the other levels, the fact that the communicator anticipates consumption of their message is very important.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another. Interpersonal communication builds, maintains, and ends our relationships, and we spend more time engaged in interpersonal communication than the other forms of communication. Interpersonal communication occurs in various contexts and is addressed in subfields of study within communication studies such as intercultural communication, organizational communication, health communication, and computer-mediated communication. After all, interpersonal relationships exist in all those contexts.

Interpersonal communication can be planned or unplanned, but since it is interactive, it is usually more structured and influenced by social expectations than intrapersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is also more goal oriented than intrapersonal communication and fulfills instrumental and relational needs. In terms of instrumental needs, the goal may be as minor as greeting someone to fulfill a morning ritual or as major as conveying your desire to be in a committed relationship with someone. Interpersonal communication meets relational needs by communicating the uniqueness of a specific relationship. Since this form of communication deals so directly with our personal relationships and is the most common form of communication, instances of miscommunication and communication conflict most frequently occur here. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *Speech Communication: Concepts and Behaviors* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1972), 56.))) Couples, bosses and employees, and family members all have to engage in complex interpersonal communication, and it doesn't always go well. In order to be a competent interpersonal communicator, you need conflict management skills and listening skills, among others, to maintain positive relationships.

Group Communication

Group communication is communication among three or more people interacting to achieve a shared goal. You have likely worked in groups in high school and college, and if you're like most students, you didn't enjoy it. Even though it can be frustrating, group work in an academic setting provides useful experience and preparation for group work in professional settings. Organizations have been moving toward more team-based work models, and whether we like it or not, groups are an integral part of people's lives. Therefore the study of group communication is valuable in many contexts.

Group communication is more intentional and formal than interpersonal communication. Unlike interpersonal relationships, which are voluntary, individuals in a group are often assigned to their position within a group. Additionally, group communication is often task focused, meaning that members of the group work together for an explicit purpose or goal that affects each member of the group. Goal-oriented communication in interpersonal interactions usually relates to one person; for example, I may ask my friend to help me move this weekend. Goal-oriented communication at the group level usually focuses on a task assigned to the whole group; for example, a group of people may be tasked to figure out a plan for moving a business from one office to another.

You know from previous experience working in groups that having more communicators usually leads to more complicated interactions. Some of the challenges of group communication relate to task-oriented interactions, such as deciding who will complete each part of a larger project. But many challenges stem from interpersonal conflict or misunderstandings among group members. Since group members also communicate with and relate to each other interpersonally and may have preexisting relationships or develop them during the course of group interaction, elements of interpersonal communication occur within group communication too.

Public Communication

Public communication is a sender-focused form of communication in which one person is typically responsible for conveying information to an audience. Public speaking is something that many people fear, or at least don't enjoy. But, just like group communication, public speaking is an important part of our academic, professional, and civic lives. When compared to interpersonal and group communication, public communication is the most consistently intentional, formal, and goal-oriented form of communication we have discussed so far.

Public communication, at least in Western societies, is also more sender focused than interpersonal or group communication. It is precisely this formality and focus on the sender that makes many new and experienced public speakers anxious at the thought of facing an audience. One way to begin to manage anxiety toward public speaking is to begin to see connections between public speaking and other forms of communication with which we are more familiar and comfortable. Despite being formal, public speaking is very similar to the conversations that we have in our daily interactions. For example, although public speakers don't necessarily develop individual relationships with audience members, they still have the benefit of being face-to-face with them so they can receive verbal and nonverbal feedback.

Mass Communication

Public communication becomes **mass communication** when it is transmitted to many people through print or electronic media. Print media such as newspapers and magazines continue to be an important channel for mass communication, although they have suffered much in the past decade due in part to the rise of electronic media. Television, websites, blogs, and social media are mass communication channels that you probably engage with regularly. Radio, podcasts, and books are other examples of mass media. The technology required to send mass communication messages distinguishes it from the other forms of communication. A certain amount of intentionality goes into transmitting a mass communication message since it usually requires one or more extra steps to convey the message. This may involve pressing “Enter” to send a Facebook message or involve an entire crew of camera people, sound engineers, and production assistants to produce a television show. Even though the messages must be intentionally transmitted through technology, the intentionality and goals of the person actually creating the message, such as the writer, television host, or talk show guest, vary greatly. The president’s State of the Union address is a mass communication message that is very formal, goal oriented, and intentional, but a president’s verbal gaffe during a news interview is not.

Mass communication differs from other forms of communication in terms of the personal connection between participants. Even though creating the illusion of a personal connection is often a goal of those who create mass communication messages, the relational aspect of interpersonal and group communication isn’t inherent within this form of communication. Unlike interpersonal, group, and public communication, there is no immediate verbal and nonverbal feedback loop in mass communication. Of course you could write a letter to the editor of a newspaper or send an e-mail to a television or radio broadcaster in response to a story, but the immediate feedback available in face-to-face interactions is not present. With new media technologies like Twitter, blogs, and Facebook, feedback is becoming more immediate. Individuals can now tweet directly “at” (@) someone and use hashtags (#) to direct feedback to mass communication sources. Many radio and television hosts and news organizations specifically invite feedback from viewers/listeners via social media and may even share the feedback on the air.

The technology to mass-produce and distribute communication messages brings with it the power for one voice or a series of voices to reach and affect many people. This power makes mass communication different from the other levels of communication. While there is potential for unethical communication at all the other levels, the potential consequences of unethical mass communication are important to consider. Communication scholars who focus on mass communication and media often take a critical approach in order to examine how media shapes our culture and who is included and excluded in various mediated messages.

“Getting Real”

What Can You Do with a Degree in Communication Studies?

You’re hopefully already beginning to see that communication studies is a diverse and vibrant field of study. The multiple subfields and concentrations within the field allow for exciting opportunities for study in academic contexts but can create confusion and uncertainty when a person considers what they might do for their career after studying communication. It’s important to remember that not every college or university will have courses or concentrations in all the areas discussed next. Look at the communication courses offered at your school to get an idea of where the communication department on your campus fits into the overall field of study. Some departments are more general, offering students a range of courses to provide a well-rounded understanding of communication. Many departments offer concentrations or specializations within the major such as public relations, rhetoric, interpersonal communication, electronic media production, corporate communication. If you are at a community college and plan on transferring to another school, your choice of school may be determined by the course offerings in the department and expertise of the school’s communication faculty. It would be unfortunate for a student interested in public relations to end up in a department that focuses more on rhetoric or broadcasting, so doing your research ahead of time is key.
Since communication studies is a broad field, many students strategically choose a concentration and/or a minor that will give them an advantage in the job market. Specialization can definitely be an advantage, but don’t forget about the general skills you gain as a communication major. This book, for example, should help you build communication competence and skills in interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, group communication, and public speaking, among others. You can also use your school’s career services office to help you learn how to “sell” yourself as a communication major and how to translate what you’ve learned in your classes into useful information to include on your resume or in a job interview.
The main career areas that communication majors go into are business, public relations / advertising, media, nonprofit, government/law, and education. (((Note: What Can I Do with This Major? “Communication Studies,” accessed May 18, 2012, http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/communication-studies.))) Within each of these areas there are multiple career paths, potential employers, and useful strategies for success. For more detailed information, visit http://whatcanidowiththismajor.com/major/communication-studies.

- **Business.** Sales, customer service, management, real estate, human resources, training and development.
- **Public relations / advertising.** Public relations, advertising/marketing, public opinion research, development, event coordination.
- **Media.** Editing, copywriting, publishing, producing, directing, media sales, broadcasting.
- **Nonprofit.** Administration, grant writing, fund-raising, public relations, volunteer coordination.
- **Government/law.** City or town management, community affairs, lobbying, conflict negotiation / mediation.
- **Education.** High school speech teacher, forensics/debate coach, administration and student support services, graduate school to further communication study.

1. Which of the areas listed above are you most interested in studying in school or pursuing as a career? Why?
2. What aspect(s) of communication studies does/do the department at your school specialize in? What concentrations/courses are offered?
3. Whether or not you are or plan to become a communication major, how do you think you could use what you have learned and will learn in this class to "sell" yourself on the job market?

Key Takeaways

- Getting integrated: Communication is a broad field that draws from many academic disciplines. This interdisciplinary perspective provides useful training and experience for students that can translate into many career fields.
- Communication is the process of generating meaning by sending and receiving symbolic cues that are influenced by multiple contexts.
- Ancient Greeks like Aristotle and Plato started a rich tradition of the study of rhetoric in the Western world more than two thousand years ago. Communication did not become a distinct field of study with academic departments until the 1900s, but it is now a thriving discipline with many subfields of study.
- There are five forms of communication: intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass communication.
    - Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself and occurs only inside our heads.
    - Interpersonal communication is communication between people whose lives mutually influence one another and typically occurs in dyads, which means in pairs.
    - Group communication occurs when three or more people communicate to achieve a shared goal.
    - Public communication is sender focused and typically occurs when one person conveys information to an audience.
    - Mass communication occurs when messages are sent to large audiences using print or electronic media.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: Review the section on the history of communication. Have you learned any of this history or heard of any of these historical figures in previous classes? If so, how was this history relevant to what you were studying in that class?
2. Come up with your own definition of communication. How does it differ from the definition in the book? Why did you choose to define communication the way you did?

3. Over the course of a day, keep track of the forms of communication that you use. Make a pie chart of how much time you think you spend, on an average day, engaging in each form of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, public, and mass).

The Communication Process

Learning Objectives

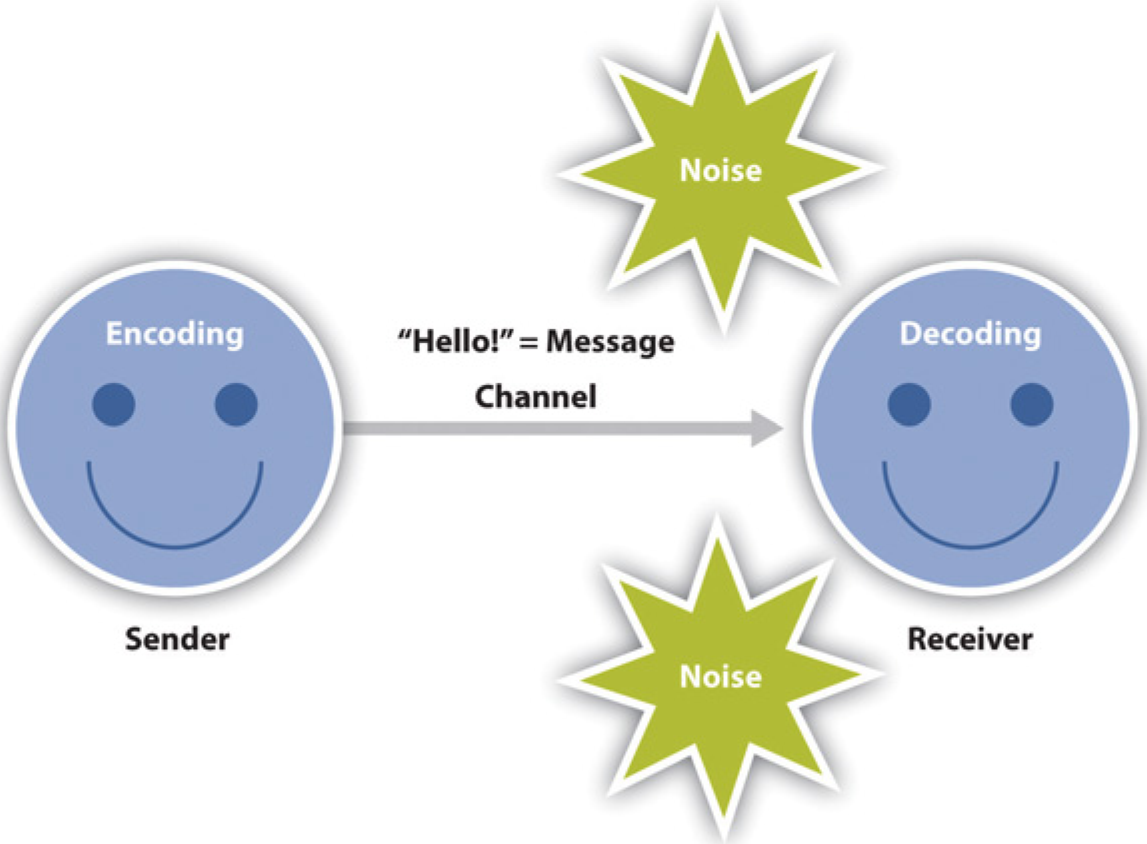
1. Identify and define the components of the transmission model of communication.
2. Identify and define the components of the interaction model of communication.
3. Identify and define the components of the transaction model of communication.
4. Compare and contrast the three models of communication.
5. Use the transaction model of communication to analyze a recent communication encounter.

Communication is a complex process, and it is difficult to determine where or with whom a communication encounter starts and ends. Models of communication simplify the process by providing a visual representation of the various aspects of a communication encounter. Some models explain communication in more detail than others, but even the most complex model still doesn't recreate what we experience in even a moment of a communication encounter. Models still serve a valuable purpose for students of communication because they allow us to see specific concepts and steps within the process of communication, define communication, and apply communication concepts. When you become aware of how communication functions, you can think more deliberately through your communication encounters, which can help you better prepare for future communication and learn from your previous communication. The three models of communication we will discuss are the transmission, interaction, and transaction models.

Although these models of communication differ, they contain some common elements. The first two models we will discuss, the transmission model and the interaction model, include the following parts: participants, messages, encoding, decoding, and channels. In communication models, the **participants** are the senders and/or receivers of messages in a communication encounter. The **message** is the verbal or nonverbal content being conveyed from sender to receiver. For example, when you say "Hello!" to your friend, you are sending a message of greeting that will be received by your friend.

The internal cognitive process that allows participants to send, receive, and understand messages is the encoding and decoding process. **Encoding** is the process of turning thoughts into communication. As we will learn later, the level of conscious thought that goes into encoding messages varies. **Decoding** is the process of turning communication into thoughts. For example, you may realize you're hungry and encode the following message to send to your roommate: "I'm hungry. Do you want to get pizza tonight?" As your roommate receives the message, he decodes your communication and turns it back into thoughts in order to make meaning out of it. Of course, we don't just communicate verbally—we have various options, or channels for communication. Encoded messages are sent through a **channel**, or a sensory route on which a message travels, to the receiver for decoding. While communication can be sent and received using any sensory route (sight, smell, touch, taste, or sound), most communication occurs through visual (sight) and/or auditory (sound) channels. If your roommate has headphones on and is engrossed in a video game, you may need to get his attention by waving your hands before you can ask him about dinner.

Transmission Model of Communication



Sender encodes and sends message to receiver. Receiver decodes message through noise.

The transmission model of communication describes communication as a linear, one-way process in which a sender intentionally transmits a message to a receiver. (((Note: Richard Ellis and Ann McClintock, *You Take My Meaning: Theory into Practice in Human Communication* (London: Edward Arnold, 1990), 71.))) This model focuses on the sender and message within a communication encounter. Although the receiver is included in the model, this role is viewed as more of a target or end point rather than part of an ongoing process. We are left to presume that the receiver either successfully receives and understands the message or does not. The scholars who designed this model extended on a linear model proposed by Aristotle centuries before that included a speaker, message, and hearer. They were also influenced by the advent and spread of new communication technologies of the time such as telegraphy and radio, and you can probably see these technical influences within the model. (((Note: Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*(Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1949), 16.))) Think of how a radio message is sent from a person in the radio studio to you listening in your car. The sender is the radio announcer who encodes a verbal message that is transmitted by a radio tower through electromagnetic waves (the channel) and eventually reaches your (the receiver's) ears via an antenna and speakers in order to be decoded. The radio announcer doesn't really know if you receive his or her message or not, but if the equipment is working and the channel is free of static, then there is a good chance that the message was successfully received.

Since this model is sender and message focused, responsibility is put on the sender to help ensure the message is successfully conveyed. This model emphasizes clarity and effectiveness, but it also acknowledges that there are barriers to effective communication. Noise is anything that interferes with a message being sent between participants in a communication encounter. Even if a speaker sends a clear message, noise may interfere with a message being accurately received and decoded. The transmission model of communication accounts for environmental and semantic noise. Environmental noise is any physical noise present in a communication encounter. Other people talking in a crowded diner could interfere with your ability to transmit a message and have it successfully decoded. While environmental noise interferes with the transmission of the message, **semantic noise** refers to noise that occurs in the encoding and decoding process when participants do not understand a symbol. To use a technical example, FM antennae can't decode AM radio signals and vice versa. Likewise, most French speakers can't decode Swedish and vice versa. Semantic noise can also interfere in communication between people speaking the same language because many words have multiple or unfamiliar meanings.

Although the transmission model may seem simple or even underdeveloped to us today, the creation of this model allowed scholars to examine the communication process in new ways, which eventually led to more complex models and theories of communication that we will discuss more later. This model is not quite rich enough to capture dynamic face-to-face interactions, but there are instances in which communication is one-way and linear, especially computer-mediated communication (CMC). As the following "Getting Plugged In" box explains, CMC is integrated into many aspects of our lives now and has opened up new ways of communicating and brought some new challenges. Think of text messaging for example. The transmission model of communication is well suited for describing the act of text messaging since the sender isn't sure that the meaning was effectively conveyed or that the message was received at all. Noise can also interfere with the transmission of a text. If you use an abbreviation the receiver doesn't know or the phone autocorrects to something completely different than you meant, then semantic noise has interfered with the message transmission. I enjoy bargain hunting at thrift stores, so I just recently sent a text to a friend asking if she wanted to go thrifting over the weekend. After she replied with "What?!?" I reviewed my text and saw that my "smart" phone had autocorrected *thrifting* to *thrusting*! You have likely experienced similar problems with text messaging, and a quick Google search for examples of text messages made funny or embarrassing by the autocorrect feature proves that many others do, too.

"Getting Plugged In"

Computer-Mediated Communication

When the first computers were created around World War II and the first e-mails exchanged in the early 1960s, we took the first steps toward a future filled with computer-mediated communication (CMC). (((Note: Crispin Thurlow, Laura Lengel, and Alice Tomic, *Computer Mediated Communication: Social Interaction and the Internet* (London: Sage, 2004), 14.))) Those early steps turned into huge strides in the late 1980s and early 1990s when personal computers started becoming regular features in offices, classrooms, and homes. I remember getting our first home computer, a Tandy from Radio Shack, in the early 1990s and then getting our first Internet connection at home in about 1995. I set up my first e-mail account in 1996 and remember how novel and exciting it was to send and receive e-mails. I wasn't imagining a time when I would get dozens of e-mails a day, much less be able to check them on my cell phone! Many of you reading this book probably can't remember a time without CMC. If that's the case, then you're what some scholars have called "digital natives." When you take a moment to think about how, over the past twenty years, CMC has changed the way we teach and learn, communicate at work, stay in touch with friends, initiate romantic relationships, search for jobs, manage our money, get our news, and participate in our democracy, it really is amazing to think that all that used to take place without computers. But the increasing use of CMC has also raised some questions and concerns, even among those of you who are digital natives. Almost half of the students in my latest communication research class wanted to do their final research projects on something related to social media. Many of them were interested in studying the effects of CMC on our personal lives and relationships. This desire to study and question CMC may stem from an anxiety that people have about the seeming loss or devaluing of face-to-face (FtF) communication. Aside from concerns about the digital cocoons that many of us find ourselves in, CMC has also raised concerns about privacy, cyberbullying, and lack of civility in online interactions. The following questions will help you begin to see the influence that CMC has in your daily communication.

1. In a typical day, what types of CMC do you use?
2. What are some ways that CMC reduces stress in your life? What are some ways that CMC increases stress in your life? Overall, do you think CMC adds to or reduces your stress more?
3. Do you think we, as a society, have less value for FtF communication than we used to? Why or why not?

Interaction Model of Communication

The **interaction model of communication** describes communication as a process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending messages and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. (((Note: Wilbur Schramm, *The Beginnings of Communication Study in America* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1997).))) Rather than illustrating communication as a linear, one-way process, the interaction model incorporates feedback, which makes communication a more interactive, two-way process. **Feedback** includes messages sent in response to other messages. For example, your instructor may respond to a point you raise during class discussion or you may point to the sofa when your roommate asks you where the remote control is. The inclusion of a feedback loop also leads to a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter. Rather than having one sender, one message, and one receiver, this model has two sender-receivers who exchange messages. Each participant alternates roles as sender and receiver in order to keep a communication encounter going. Although this seems like a perceptible and deliberate process, we alternate between the roles of sender and receiver very quickly and often without conscious thought.

The interaction model is also less message focused and more interaction focused. While the transmission model focused on how a message was transmitted and whether or not it was received, the interaction model is more concerned with the communication process itself. In fact, this model acknowledges that there are so many messages being sent at one time that many of them may not even be received. Some messages are also unintentionally sent. Therefore, communication isn't judged effective or ineffective in this model based on whether or not a single message was successfully transmitted and received.

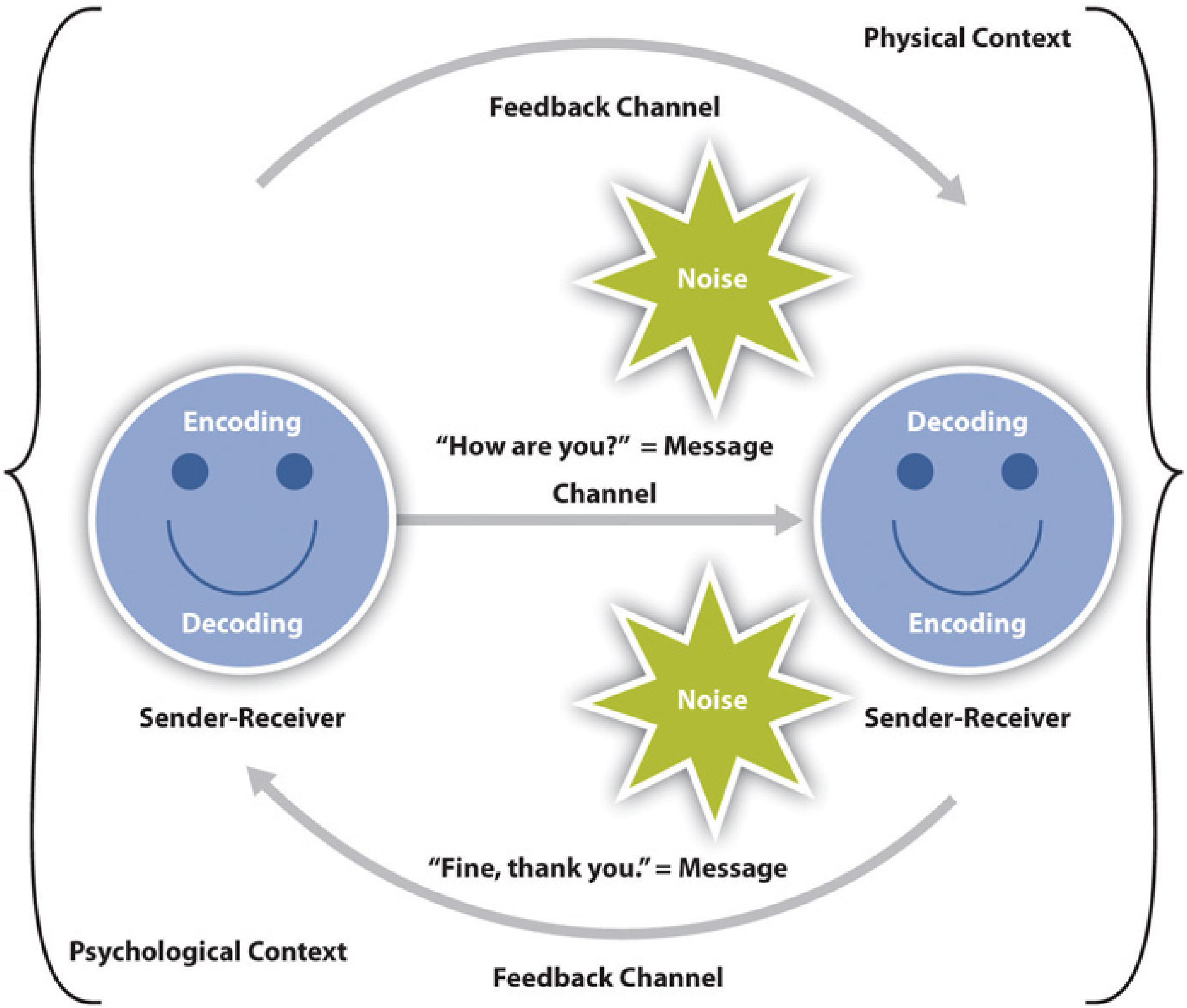


Figure 1.2 The Interaction Model of Communication

The interaction model takes physical and psychological context into account. Physical context includes the environmental factors in a communication encounter. The size, layout, temperature, and lighting of a space influence our communication. Imagine the different physical contexts in which job interviews take place and how that may affect your communication. I have had job interviews on a sofa in a comfortable office, sitting around a large conference table, and even once in an auditorium where I was positioned on the stage facing about twenty potential colleagues seated in the audience. I've also been walked around campus to interview with various people in temperatures below zero degrees. Although I was a little chilly when I got to each separate interview, it wasn't too difficult to warm up and go on with the interview. During a job interview in Puerto Rico, however, walking around outside wearing a suit in near 90 degree temperatures created a sweating situation that wasn't pleasant to try to communicate through. Whether it's the size of the room, the temperature, or other environmental factors, it's important to consider the role that physical context plays in our communication.

Psychological context includes the mental and emotional factors in a communication encounter. Stress, anxiety, and emotions are just some examples of psychological influences that can affect our communication. I recently found out some troubling news a few hours before a big public presentation. It was challenging to try to communicate because the psychological noise triggered by the stressful news kept intruding into my other thoughts. Seemingly positive psychological states, like experiencing the emotion of love, can also affect communication. During the initial stages of a romantic relationship individuals may be so "love struck" that they don't see incompatible personality traits or don't negatively evaluate behaviors they might otherwise find off-putting. Feedback and context help make the interaction model a more useful illustration of the communication process, but the transaction model views communication as a powerful tool that shapes our realities beyond individual communication encounters.

Transaction Model of Communication

As the study of communication progressed, models expanded to account for more of the communication process. Many scholars view communication as more than a process that is used to carry on conversations and convey meaning. We don't send messages like computers, and we don't neatly alternate between the roles of sender and receiver as an interaction unfolds. We also can't consciously decide to stop communicating, because communication is more than sending and receiving messages. The transaction model differs from the transmission and interaction models in significant ways, including the conceptualization of communication, the role of sender and receiver, and the role of context. (((Note: Dean C. Barnlund, "A Transactional Model of Communication," in *Foundations of Communication Theory*, eds. Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1970), 83–92.)))

To review, each model incorporates a different understanding of what communication is and what communication does. The transmission model views communication as a thing, like an information packet, that is sent from one place to another. From this view, communication is defined as sending and receiving messages. The interaction model views communication as an interaction in which a message is sent and then followed by a reaction (feedback), which is then followed by another reaction, and so on. From this view, communication is defined as producing conversations and interactions within physical and psychological contexts. The transaction model views communication as integrated into our social realities in such a way that it helps us not only understand them but also create and change them.

The **transaction model of communication** describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. In this model, we don't just communicate to exchange messages; we communicate to create relationships, form intercultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage with others in dialogue to create communities. In short, we don't communicate about our realities; communication helps to construct our realities.

The roles of sender and receiver in the transaction model of communication differ significantly from the other models. Instead of labeling participants as senders and receivers, the people in a communication encounter are referred to as *communicators*. Unlike the interaction model, which suggests that participants alternate positions as sender and receiver, the transaction model suggests that we are simultaneously senders and receivers. For example, on a first date, as you send verbal messages about your interests and background, your date reacts nonverbally. You don't wait until you are done sending your verbal message to start receiving and decoding the nonverbal messages of your date. Instead, you are simultaneously sending your verbal message and receiving your date's nonverbal messages. This is an important addition to the model because it allows us to understand how we are able to adapt our communication—for example, a verbal message—in the middle of sending it based on the communication we are simultaneously receiving from our communication partner.

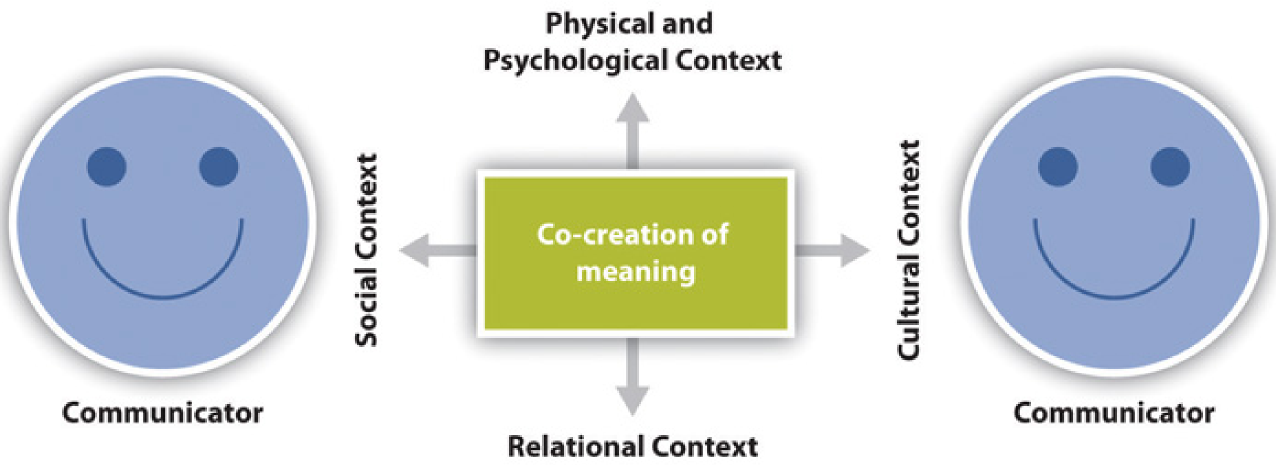


Figure 1.3 The Transaction Model of Communication

The transaction model also includes a more complex understanding of context. The interaction model portrays context as physical and psychological influences that enhance or impede communication. While these contexts are important, they focus on message transmission and reception. Since the transaction model of communication views communication as a force that shapes our realities before and after specific interactions occur, it must account for contextual influences outside of a single interaction. To do this, the transaction model considers how social, relational, and cultural contexts frame and influence our communication encounters.

Social context refers to the stated rules or unstated norms that guide communication. As we are socialized into our various communities, we learn rules and implicitly pick up on norms for communicating. Some common rules that influence social contexts include don't lie to people, don't interrupt people, don't pass people in line, greet people when they greet you, thank people when they pay you a compliment, and so on. Parents and teachers often explicitly convey these rules to their children or students. Rules may be stated over and over, and there may be punishment for not following them.

Norms are social conventions that we pick up on through observation, practice, and trial and error. We may not even know we are breaking a social norm until we notice people looking at us strangely or someone corrects or teases us. For example, as a new employee you may over- or underdress for the company's holiday party because you don't know the norm for formality. Although there probably isn't a stated rule about how to dress at the holiday party, you will notice your error without someone having to point it out, and you will likely not deviate from the norm again in order to save yourself any potential embarrassment. Even though breaking social norms doesn't result in the formal punishment that might be a consequence of breaking a social rule, the social awkwardness we feel when we violate social norms is usually enough to teach us that these norms are powerful even though they aren't made explicit like rules. Norms even have the power to override social rules in some situations. To go back to the examples of common social rules mentioned before, we may break the rule about not lying if the lie is meant to save someone from feeling hurt. We often interrupt close friends when we're having an exciting conversation, but we wouldn't be as likely to interrupt a professor while they are lecturing. Since norms and rules vary among people and cultures, relational and cultural contexts are also included in the transaction model in order to help us understand the multiple contexts that influence our communication.

Relational context includes the previous interpersonal history and type of relationship we have with a person. We communicate differently with someone we just met versus someone we've known for a long time. Initial interactions with people tend to be more highly scripted and governed by established norms and rules, but when we have an established relational context, we may be able to bend or break social norms and rules more easily. For example, you would likely follow social norms of politeness and attentiveness and might spend the whole day cleaning the house for the first time you invite your new neighbors to visit. Once the neighbors are in your house, you may also make them the center of your attention during their visit. If you end up becoming friends with your neighbors and establishing a relational context, you might not think as much about having everything cleaned and prepared or even giving them your whole attention during later visits. Since communication norms and rules also vary based on the type of relationship people have, relationship type is also included in relational context. For example, there are certain communication rules and norms that apply to a supervisor-supervisee relationship that don't apply to a brother-sister relationship and vice versa. Just as social norms and relational history influence how we communicate, so does culture.

Cultural context includes various aspects of identities such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and ability. It is important for us to understand that whether we are aware of it or not, we all have multiple cultural identities that influence our communication. Some people, especially those with identities that have been historically marginalized, are regularly aware of how their cultural identities influence their communication and influence how others communicate with them. Conversely, people with identities that are dominant or in the majority may rarely, if ever, think about the role their cultural identities play in their communication.

When cultural context comes to the forefront of a communication encounter, it can be difficult to manage. Since intercultural communication creates uncertainty, it can deter people from communicating across cultures or lead people to view intercultural communication as negative. But if you avoid communicating across cultural identities, you will likely not get more comfortable or competent as a communicator. Difference isn't a bad thing. In fact, intercultural communication has the potential to enrich various aspects of our lives. In order to communicate well within various cultural contexts, it is important to keep an open mind and avoid making assumptions about others' cultural identities. While you may be able to identify some aspects of the cultural context within a communication encounter, there may also be cultural influences that you can't see. A competent communicator shouldn't assume to know all the cultural contexts a person brings to an encounter, since not all cultural identities are visible. As with the other contexts, it requires skill to adapt to shifting contexts, and the best way to develop these skills is through practice and reflection.

Key Takeaways

- Communication models are not complex enough to truly capture all that takes place in a communication encounter, but they can help us examine the various steps in the process in order to better understand our communication and the communication of others.
- The transmission model of communication describes communication as a one-way, linear process in which a sender encodes a message and transmits it through a channel to a receiver who decodes it. The transmission of the message many be disrupted by environmental or semantic noise. This model is usually too simple to capture FtF interactions but can be usefully applied to computer-mediated communication.
- The interaction model of communication describes communication as a two-way process in which participants alternate positions as sender and receiver and generate meaning by sending and receiving feedback within physical and psychological contexts. This model captures the interactive aspects of communication but still doesn't account for how communication constructs our realities and is influenced by social and cultural contexts.
- The transaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. This model includes participants who are simultaneously senders and receivers and accounts for how communication constructs our realities, relationships, and communities.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: How might knowing the various components of the communication process help you in your academic life, your professional life, and your civic life?
2. What communication situations does the transmission model best represent? The interaction model? The transaction model?

3. Use the transaction model of communication to analyze a recent communication encounter you had. Sketch out the communication encounter and make sure to label each part of the model (communicators; message; channel; feedback; and physical, psychological, social, relational, and cultural contexts).

Communication Principles

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss how communication is integrated in various aspects of your life.
2. Explain how communication meets physical, instrumental, relational, and identity needs.
3. Explain how the notion of a "process" fits into communication.
4. Discuss the ways in which communication is guided by culture and context.

Taking this course will change how you view communication. Most people admit that communication is important, but it's often in the back of our minds or viewed as something that "just happens." Putting communication at the front of your mind and becoming more aware of how you communicate can be informative and have many positive effects. When I first started studying communication as an undergraduate, I began seeing the concepts we learned in class in my everyday life. When I worked in groups, I was able to apply what I had learned about group communication to improve my performance and overall experience. I also noticed interpersonal concepts and theories as I communicated within various relationships. Whether I was analyzing mediated messages or considering the ethical implications of a decision before I made it, studying communication allowed me to see more of what was going on around me, which allowed me to more actively and competently participate in various communication contexts. In this section, as we learn the principles of communication, I encourage you to take note of aspects of communication that you haven't thought about before and begin to apply the principles of communication to various parts of your life.

Communication Is Integrated into All Parts of Our Lives

This book is meant to help people see the value of communication in the real world and in our real lives. When I say *real*, I don't mean to imply that there is some part of our world or lives that is not real. Since communication is such a practical field of study, I use the word *real* to emphasize that what you're reading in this book isn't just about theories and vocabulary or passing a test and giving a good speech. I also don't mean to imply that there is a divide between the classroom and the real world. The "real world" is whatever we are experiencing at any given moment. In order to explore how communication is integrated into all parts of our lives, I have divided up our lives into four spheres: academic, professional, personal, and civic. The boundaries and borders between these spheres are not solid, and there is much overlap. After all, much of what goes on in a classroom is present in a professional environment, and the classroom has long been seen as a place to prepare students to become active and responsible citizens in their civic lives. The philosophy behind this approach is called **integrative learning**, which encourages students to reflect on how the content they are learning connects to other classes they have taken or are taking, their professional goals, and their civic responsibilities.

Academic

It's probably not difficult to get you, as students in a communication class, to see the relevance of communication to your academic lives. At least during this semester, studying communication is important to earn a good grade in the class, right? Beyond the relevance to your grade in this class, I challenge you to try to make explicit connections between this course and courses you have taken before and are currently taking. Then, when you leave this class, I want you to connect the content in future classes back to what you learned here. If you can begin to see these connections now, you can build on the foundational communication skills you learn in here to become a more competent communicator, which will undoubtedly also benefit you as a student.

Aside from wanting to earn a good grade in this class, you may also be genuinely interested in becoming a better communicator. If that's the case, you are in luck because research shows that even people who have poor communication skills can improve a wide range of verbal, nonverbal, and interpersonal communication skills by taking introductory communication courses. (((Note: Wendy S. Zabava and Andrew D. Wolvin, "The Differential Impact of a Basic Communication Course on Perceived Communication Competencies in Class, Work, and Social Contexts," *Communication Education* 42 (1993): 215–17.))) Communication skills are also tied to academic success. Poor listening skills were shown to contribute significantly to failure in a person's first year of college. Also, students who take a communication course report more confidence in their communication abilities, and these students have higher grade point averages and are less likely to drop out of school. Much of what we do in a classroom—whether it is the interpersonal interactions with our classmates and professor, individual or group presentations, or listening—can be used to build or add to a foundation of good communication skills and knowledge that can carry through to other contexts.

Professional

The National Association of Colleges and Employers has found that employers most desire good communication skills in the college graduates they may hire. (((Note: National Association of Colleges and Employers, *Job Outlook 2011* (2010): 25.))) Desired communication skills vary from career to career, but again, this textbook provides a foundation onto which you can build communication skills specific to your major or field of study. Research has shown that introductory communication courses provide important skills necessary for functioning in entry-level jobs, including listening, writing, motivating/persuading, interpersonal skills, informational interviewing, and small-group problem solving. (((Note: Vincent S. DiSalvo, "A Summary of Current Research Identifying Communication Skills in Various Organizational Contexts," *Communication Education* 29 (1980): 283–90.))) Interpersonal communication skills are also highly sought after by potential employers, consistently ranking in the top ten in national surveys. (((Note: National Association of Colleges and Employers, *Job Outlook 2011* (2010): 25.))) Poor listening skills, lack of conciseness, and inability to give constructive feedback have been identified as potential communication challenges in professional contexts. Employers appreciate good listening skills and the ability to communicate concisely because efficiency and clarity are often directly tied to productivity and success in terms of profit or task/project completion. Despite the well-documented need for communication skills in the professional world, many students still resist taking communication classes. Perhaps people think they already have good communication skills or can improve their skills on their own. While either of these may be true for some, studying communication can only help. In such a competitive job market, being able to document that you have received communication instruction and training from communication professionals (the faculty in your communication department) can give you the edge needed to stand out from other applicants or employees.

Personal

While many students know from personal experience and from the prevalence of communication counseling on television talk shows and in self-help books that communication forms, maintains, and ends our interpersonal relationships, they do not know the extent to which that occurs. I am certain that when we get to the interpersonal communication chapters in this textbook that you will be intrigued and maybe even excited by the relevance and practicality of the concepts and theories discussed there. My students often remark that they already know from experience much of what's discussed in the interpersonal unit of the course. While we do learn from experience, until we learn specific vocabulary and develop foundational knowledge of communication concepts and theories, we do not have the tools needed to make sense of these experiences. Just having a vocabulary to name the communication phenomena in our lives increases our ability to consciously alter our communication to achieve our goals, avoid miscommunication, and analyze and learn from our inevitable mistakes.

Civic

The connection between communication and our civic lives is a little more abstract and difficult for students to understand. Many younger people don't yet have a conception of a "civic" part of their lives because the academic, professional, and personal parts of their lives have so much more daily relevance. **Civic engagement** refers to working to make a difference in our communities by improving the quality of life of community members; raising awareness about social, cultural, or political issues; or participating in a wide variety of political and nonpolitical processes. (((Note: Thomas Ehrlich, *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx, 2000), vi.))) The civic part of our lives is developed through engagement with the decision making that goes on in our society at the small-group, local, state, regional, national, or international level. Such involvement ranges from serving on a neighborhood advisory board to sending an e-mail to a US senator. Discussions and decisions that affect our communities happen around us all the time, but it takes time and effort to become a part of that process. Doing so, however, allows us to become a part of groups or causes that are meaningful to us, which enables us to work for the common good. This type of civic engagement is crucial to the functioning of a democratic society.

Communication scholars have been aware of the connections between communication and a person's civic engagement or citizenship for thousands of years. Aristotle, who wrote the first and most influential comprehensive book on communication 2,400 years ago, taught that it is through our voice, our ability to communicate, that we engage with the world around us, participate in our society, and become a "virtuous citizen." It is a well-established and unfortunate fact that younger people, between the ages of eighteen and thirty, are some of the least politically active and engaged members of our democracy. Civic engagement includes but goes beyond political engagement, which includes things like choosing a political party or advocating for a presidential candidate. Although younger people have tended not to be as politically engaged as other age groups, the current generation of sixteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds, known as the millennial generation, is known to be very engaged in volunteerism and community service. In addition, some research has indicated that college students are eager for civic engagement but are not finding the resources they need on their campuses. (((Note: Scott Jaschik, "The Civic Engagement Gap," *Inside Higher Ed*, September 30, 2009, accessed May 18, 2012, http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/09/30/civic.))) The American Association of Colleges and Universities has launched several initiatives and compiled many resources for students and faculty regarding civic engagement. I encourage you to explore their website at the following link and try to identify some ways in which you can productively integrate what you are learning in this class into a civic context: http://www.aacu.org/resources/civicengagement.

Communication Meets Needs

You hopefully now see that communication is far more than the transmission of information. The exchange of messages and information is important for many reasons, but it is not enough to meet the various needs we have as human beings. While the content of our communication may help us achieve certain physical and instrumental needs, it also feeds into our identities and relationships in ways that far exceed the content of what we say.

Physical Needs

Physical needs include needs that keep our bodies and minds functioning. Communication, which we most often associate with our brain, mouth, eyes, and ears, actually has many more connections to and effects on our physical body and well-being. At the most basic level, communication can alert others that our physical needs are not being met. Even babies cry when they are hungry or sick to alert their caregiver of these physical needs. Asking a friend if you can stay at their house because you got evicted or kicked out of your own place will help you meet your physical need for shelter. There are also strong ties between the social function of communication and our physical and psychological health. Human beings are social creatures, which makes communication important for our survival. In fact, prolonged isolation has been shown to severely damage a human. (((Note: Kipling D. Williams and Lisa Zadro, "Ostracism: On Being Ignored, Excluded, and Rejected," in *Interpersonal Rejection*, ed. Mark R. Leary (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 21–54.))) Aside from surviving, communication skills can also help us thrive. People with good interpersonal communication skills are better able to adapt to stress and have less depression and anxiety. (((Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 2.))) Communication can also be therapeutic, which can lessen or prevent physical problems. A research study found that spouses of suicide or accidental death victims who did not communicate about the death with their friends were more likely to have health problems such as weight change and headaches than those who did talk with friends. (((Note: Kathryn Greene, Valerian J. Derlega, and Alicia Mathews, "Self-Disclosure in Personal Relationships," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Personal Relationships*, eds. Anita L. Vangelisti and Daniel Perlman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 421.))) Satisfying physical needs is essential for our physical functioning and survival. But, in order to socially function and thrive, we must also meet instrumental, relational, and identity needs.

Instrumental Needs

Instrumental needs include needs that help us get things done in our day-to-day lives and achieve short- and long-term goals. We all have short- and long-term goals that we work on every day. Fulfilling these goals is an ongoing communicative task, which means we spend much of our time communicating for instrumental needs. Some common instrumental needs include influencing others, getting information we need, or getting support. (((Note: Brant R. Burleson, Sandra Metts, and Michael W. Kirch, "Communication in Close Relationships," in *Close Relationships: A Sourcebook*, eds. Clyde Hendrick and Susan S. Hendrick (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 247.))) In short, communication that meets our instrumental needs helps us "get things done."

To meet instrumental needs, we often use communication strategically. Politicians, parents, bosses, and friends use communication to influence others in order to accomplish goals and meet needs. There is a research area within communication that examines **compliance-gaining communication**, or communication aimed at getting people to do something or act in a particular way. (((Note: Robert H. Gass and John S. Seiter, *Persuasion, Social Influence and Compliance Gaining* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 205.))) Compliance gaining and communicating for instrumental needs is different from coercion, which forces or manipulates people into doing what you want. Compliance-gaining communication is different from persuasion. While research on persuasion typically focuses on public speaking and how a speaker persuades a group, compliance-gaining research focuses on our daily interpersonal interactions. Researchers have identified many tactics that people typically use in compliance-gaining communication. (((Note: Robert H. Gass and John S. Seiter, *Persuasion, Social Influence and Compliance Gaining* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 206.))) As you read through the following list, I am sure many of these tactics will be familiar to you.

Common Tactics Used for Compliance Gaining

- **Offering rewards.** Seeks compliance in a positive way, by promising returns, rewards, or generally positive outcomes.
- **Threatening punishment.** Seeks compliance in a negative way, by threatening negative consequences such as loss of privileges, grounding, or legal action.
- **Using expertise.** Seeks compliance by implying that one person "knows better" than the other based on experience, age, education, or intelligence.
- **Liking.** Seeks compliance by acting friendly and helpful to get the other person into a good mood before asking them to do something.
- **Debt.** Seeks compliance by calling in past favors and indicating that one person "owes" the other.
- **Altruism.** Seeks compliance by claiming that one person only wants "what is best" for the other and he or she is looking out for the other person's "best interests."
- **Esteem.** Seeks compliance by claiming that other people will think more highly of the person if he or she complies or think less of the person if he or she does not comply.

Relational Needs

Relational needs include needs that help us maintain social bonds and interpersonal relationships. Communicating to fill our instrumental needs helps us function on many levels, but communicating for relational needs helps us achieve the social relating that is an essential part of being human. Communication meets our relational needs by giving us a tool through which to develop, maintain, and end relationships. In order to develop a relationship, we may use nonverbal communication to assess whether someone is interested in talking to us or not, then use verbal communication to strike up a conversation. Then, through the mutual process of self-disclosure, a relationship forms over time. Once formed, we need to maintain a relationship, so we use communication to express our continued liking of someone. We can verbally say things like “You’re such a great friend” or engage in behaviors that communicate our investment in the relationship, like organizing a birthday party. Although our relationships vary in terms of closeness and intimacy, all individuals have relational needs and all relationships require maintenance. Finally, communication or the lack of it helps us end relationships. We may communicate our deteriorating commitment to a relationship by avoiding communication with someone, verbally criticizing him or her, or explicitly ending a relationship. From spending time together, to checking in with relational partners by text, social media, or face-to-face, to celebrating accomplishments, to providing support during difficult times, communication forms the building blocks of our relationships. Communicating for relational needs isn’t always positive though. Some people’s “relational needs” are negative, unethical, or even illegal. Although we may feel the “need” to be passive aggressive or controlling, these communicative patterns are not positive and can hurt our relationships.

Identity Needs

Identity needs include our need to present ourselves to others and be thought of in particular and desired ways. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself? Are you funny, smart, loyal, or quirky? Your answer isn’t just based on who you think you are, since much of how we think of ourselves is based on our communication with other people. Our identity changes as we progress through life, but communication is the primary means of establishing our identity and fulfilling our identity needs. Communication allows us to present ourselves to others in particular ways. Just as many companies, celebrities, and politicians create a public image, we desire to present different faces in different contexts. The influential scholar Erving Goffman compared self-presentation to a performance and suggested we all perform different roles in different contexts. (((Note: Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1959).))) Indeed, competent communicators can successfully manage how others perceive them by adapting to situations and contexts. A parent may perform the role of stern head of household, supportive shoulder to cry on, or hip and culturally aware friend based on the situation they are in with their child. A newly hired employee may initially perform the role of motivated and agreeable coworker but later perform more leadership behaviors after being promoted.

Communication Is a Process

Communication is a process that involves an interchange of verbal and/or nonverbal messages within a continuous and dynamic sequence of events. (((Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 15.))) When we refer to communication as a process, we imply that it doesn’t have a distinct beginning and end or follow a predetermined sequence of events. It can be difficult to trace the origin of a communication encounter, since communication doesn’t always follow a neat and discernible format, which makes studying communication interactions or phenomena difficult. Any time we pull one part of the process out for study or closer examination, we artificially “freeze” the process in order to examine it, which is not something that is possible when communicating in real life. But sometimes scholars want to isolate a particular stage in the process in order to gain insight by studying, for example, feedback or eye contact. Doing that changes the very process itself, and by the time you have examined a particular stage or component of the process, the entire process may have changed. These snapshots are useful for scholarly interrogation of the communication process, and they can also help us evaluate our own communication practices, troubleshoot a problematic encounter we had, or slow things down to account for various contexts before we engage in communication. (((Note: Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *The Functions of Human Communication: A Theoretical Approach* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1976), 28.)))

We have already learned, in the transaction model of communication, that we communicate using multiple channels and send and receive messages simultaneously. There are also messages and other stimuli around us that we never actually perceive because we can only attend to so much information at one time. The dynamic nature of communication allows us to examine some principles of communication that are related to its processual nature. Next, we will learn that communication messages vary in terms of their level of conscious thought and intention, communication is irreversible, and communication is unrepeatable.

Some scholars have put forth definitions of communication stating that messages must be intended for others to perceive them in order for a message to “count” as communication. This narrow definition only includes messages that are tailored or at least targeted to a particular person or group and excludes any communication that is involuntary.Frank E. X. Dance and Carl E. Larson, *The Functions of Human Communication: A Theoretical Approach* (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1976), 25. Since intrapersonal communication happens in our heads and isn’t intended for others to perceive, it wouldn’t be considered communication. But imagine the following scenario: You and I are riding on a bus and you are sitting across from me. As I sit thinking about a stressful week ahead, I wrinkle up my forehead, shake my head, and put my head in my hands. Upon seeing this you think, “That guy must be pretty stressed out.” In this scenario, did communication take place? If I really didn’t intend for anyone to see the nonverbal communication that went along with my intrapersonal communication, then this definition would say no. But even though words weren’t exchanged, you still generated meaning from the communication I was unintentionally sending. As a communication scholar, I do not take such a narrow definition of communication. Based on the definition of communication from the beginning of this chapter, the scenario we just discussed would count as communication, but the scenario illustrates the point that communication messages are sent both intentionally and unintentionally.

Communication messages also vary in terms of the amount of conscious thought that goes into their creation. In general, we can say that intentional communication usually includes more conscious thought and unintentional communication usually includes less. For example, some communication is reactionary and almost completely involuntary. We often scream when we are frightened, say “ouch!” when we stub our toe, and stare blankly when we are bored. This isn’t the richest type of communication, but it *is* communication. Some of our interactions are slightly more substantial and include more conscious thought but are still very routine. For example, we say “excuse me” when we need to get past someone, say “thank you” when someone holds the door for us, or say “what’s up?” to our neighbor we pass every day in the hall. The reactionary and routine types of communication just discussed are common, but the messages most studied by communication scholars are considered constructed communication. These messages include more conscious thought and intention than reactionary or routine messages and often go beyond information exchange to also meet relational and identity needs. As we will learn later on, a higher degree of conscious thought and intention doesn’t necessarily mean the communication will be effective, understood, or ethical. In addition, ethical communicators cannot avoid responsibility for the effects of what they say by claiming they didn’t “intend” for their communication to cause an undesired effect. Communication has short- and long-term effects, which illustrates the next principle we will discuss—communication is irreversible.

The dynamic nature of the communication process also means that communication is irreversible. After an initial interaction has gone wrong, characters in sitcoms and romantic comedies often use the line “Can we just start over?” As handy as it would be to be able to turn the clock back and “redo” a failed or embarrassing communication encounter, it is impossible. Miscommunication can occur regardless of the degree of conscious thought and intention put into a message. For example, if David tells a joke that offends his coworker Beth, then he can’t just say, “Oh, forget I said that,” or “I didn’t intend for it to be offensive.” The message has been sent and it can’t be taken back. I’m sure we have all wished we could take something back that we have said. Conversely, when communication goes well, we often wish we could recreate it. However, in addition to communication being irreversible, it is also unrepeatable.

If you try to recreate a good job interview experience by asking the same questions and telling the same stories about yourself, you can’t expect the same results. Even trying to repeat a communication encounter with the same person won’t feel the same or lead to the same results. We have already learned the influence that contexts have on communication, and those contexts change frequently. Even if the words and actions stay the same, the physical, psychological, social, relational, and cultural contexts will vary and ultimately change the communication encounter. Have you ever tried to recount a funny or interesting experience to a friend who doesn’t really seem that impressed? These “I guess you had to be there” moments illustrate the fact that communication is unrepeatable.

Communication Is Guided by Culture and Context

As we learned earlier, context is a dynamic component of the communication process. Culture and context also influence how we perceive and define communication. Western culture tends to put more value on senders than receivers and on the content rather the context of a message. These cultural values are reflected in our definitions and models of communication. As we will learn in later chapters, cultures vary in terms of having a more individualistic or more collectivistic cultural orientation. The United States is considered an individualistic culture, where emphasis is put on individual expression and success. Japan is considered a collectivistic culture, where emphasis is put on group cohesion and harmony. These are strong cultural values that are embedded in how we learn to communicate. In many collectivistic cultures, there is more emphasis placed on silence and nonverbal context. Whether in the United States, Japan, or another country, people are socialized from birth to communication in culturally specific ways that vary by context. In this section we will discuss how communication is learned, the rules and norms that influence how we communicate, and the ethical implications of communication.

Communication Is Learned

Most people are born with the capacity and ability to communicate, but everyone communicates differently. This is because communication is learned rather than innate. As we have already seen, communication patterns are relative to the context and culture in which one is communicating, and many cultures have distinct languages consisting of symbols.

A key principle of communication is that it is symbolic. Communication is symbolic in that the words that make up our language systems do not directly correspond to something in reality. Instead, they stand in for or symbolize something. The fact that communication varies so much among people, contexts, and cultures illustrates the principle that meaning is not inherent in the words we use. For example, let's say you go to France on vacation and see the word *poisson* on the menu. Unless you know how to read French, you will not know that the symbol is the same as the English symbol *fish*. Those two words don't look the same at all, yet they symbolize the same object. If you went by how the word looks alone, you might think that the French word for fish is more like the English word *poison* and avoid choosing that for your dinner. Putting a picture of a fish on a menu would definitely help a foreign tourist understand what they are ordering, since the picture is an actual representation of the object rather than a symbol for it.

All symbolic communication is learned, negotiated, and dynamic. We know that the letters *b-o-o-k*refer to a bound object with multiple written pages. We also know that the letters *t-r-u-c-k* refer to a vehicle with a bed in the back for hauling things. But if we learned in school that the letters *t-r-u-c-k* referred to a bound object with written pages and *b-o-o-k* referred to a vehicle with a bed in the back, then that would make just as much sense, because the letters don't actually refer to the object and the word itself only has the meaning that we assign to it.

We are all socialized into different languages, but we also speak different "languages" based on the situation we are in. For example, in some cultures it is considered inappropriate to talk about family or health issues in public, but it wouldn't be odd to overhear people in a small town grocery store in the United States talking about their children or their upcoming surgery. There are some communication patterns shared by very large numbers of people and some that are particular to a dyad—best friends, for example, who have their own inside terminology and expressions that wouldn't make sense to anyone else. These examples aren't on the same scale as differing languages, but they still indicate that communication is learned. They also illustrate how rules and norms influence how we communicate.

Rules and Norms

Earlier we learned about the transaction model of communication and the powerful influence that social context and the roles and norms associated with social context have on our communication. Whether verbal or nonverbal, mediated or interpersonal, our communication is guided by rules and norms.

Phatic communion is an instructive example of how we communicate under the influence of rules and norms. (((Note: Gunter Senft, "Phatic Communion," in *Culture and Language Use*, eds. Gunter Senft, Jan-Ola Ostman, and Jef Verschueren (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 226–33.))) Phatic communion refers to scripted and routine verbal interactions that are intended to establish social bonds rather than actually exchange meaning. When you pass your professor in the hall, the exchange may go as follows:

Student:	"Hey, how are you?"
Professor:	"Fine, how are you?"

Student:	“Fine.”

What is the point of this interaction? It surely isn’t to actually inquire as to each other’s well-being. We have similar phatic interactions when we make comments on the weather or the fact that it’s Monday. We often joke about phatic communion because we see that is pointless, at least on the surface. The student and professor might as well just pass each other in the hall and say the following to each other:

Student:	“Generic greeting question.”
Professor:	“Generic greeting response and question.”
Student:	“Generic response.”

This is an example of communication messages that don’t really require a high level of conscious thought or convey much actual content or generate much meaning. So if phatic communion is so “pointless,” why do we do it?

The term *phatic communion* derives from the Greek word *phatos*, which means “spoken,” and the word *communion*, which means “connection or bond.” As we discussed earlier, communication helps us meet our relational needs. In addition to finding communion through food or religion, we also find communion through our words. But the degree to which and in what circumstances we engage in phatic communion is also influenced by norms and rules. Generally, US Americans find silence in social interactions awkward, which is one sociocultural norm that leads to phatic communion, because we fill the silence with pointless words to meet the social norm. It is also a norm to greet people when you encounter them, especially if you know them. We all know not to unload our physical and mental burdens on the person who asks, “How are you?” or go through our “to do” list with the person who asks, “What’s up?” Instead, we conform to social norms through this routine type of verbal exchange.

Phatic communion, like most aspects of communication we will learn about, is culturally relative as well. While most cultures engage in phatic communion, the topics of and occasions for phatic communion vary. Scripts for greetings in the United States are common, but scripts for leaving may be more common in another culture. Asking about someone’s well-being may be acceptable phatic communion in one culture, and asking about the health of someone’s family may be more common in another.

Communication Has Ethical Implications

Another culturally and situationally relative principle of communication is the fact that communication has ethical implications. Communication ethics deals with the process of negotiating and reflecting on our actions and communication regarding what we believe to be right and wrong. Aristotle said, “In the arena of human life the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action.” (((Note: Judy C. Pearson, Jeffrey T. Child, Jody L. Mattern, and David H. Kahl Jr., “What Are Students Being Taught about Ethics in Public Speaking Textbooks?” *Communication Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2006): 508.))) Aristotle focuses on actions, which is an important part of communication ethics. While ethics has been studied as a part of philosophy since the time of Aristotle, only more recently has it become applied. In communication ethics, we are more concerned with the decisions people make about what is right and wrong than the systems, philosophies, or religions that inform those decisions. Much of ethics is gray area. Although we talk about making decisions in terms of what is right and what is wrong, the choice is rarely that simple. Aristotle goes on to say that we should act “to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way.”

Communication has broad ethical implications. Later in this book we will discuss the importance of ethical listening, how to avoid plagiarism, how to present evidence ethically, and how to apply ethical standards to mass media and social media. These are just a few examples of how communication and ethics will be discussed in this book, but hopefully you can already see that communication ethics is integrated into academic, professional, personal, and civic contexts.

When dealing with communication ethics, it's difficult to state that something is 100 percent ethical or unethical. I tell my students that we all make choices daily that are more ethical or less ethical, and we may confidently make a decision only later to learn that it wasn't be most ethical option. In such cases, our ethics and goodwill are tested, since in any given situation multiple options may seem appropriate, but we can only choose one. If, in a situation, we make a decision and we reflect on it and realize we could have made a more ethical choice, does that make us a bad person? While many behaviors can be more easily labeled as ethical or unethical, communication isn't always as clear. Murdering someone is generally thought of as unethical and illegal, but many instances of hurtful speech, or even what some would consider hate speech, have been protected as free speech. This shows the complicated relationship between protected speech, ethical speech, and the law. In some cases, people see it as their ethical duty to communicate information that they feel is in the public's best interest. The people behind WikiLeaks, for example, have released thousands of classified documents related to wars, intelligence gathering, and diplomatic communication. WikiLeaks claims that exposing this information keeps politicians and leaders accountable and keeps the public informed, but government officials claim the release of the information should be considered a criminal act. Both parties consider the other's communication unethical and their own communication ethical. Who is right?

Since many of the choices we make when it comes to ethics are situational, contextual, and personal, various professional fields have developed codes of ethics to help guide members through areas that might otherwise be gray or uncertain. The following "Getting Critical" box includes information about the National Communication Association's Ethical Credo. Doctors take oaths to do no harm to their patients, and journalists follow ethical guidelines that promote objectivity and provide for the protection of sources. Although businesses and corporations have gotten much attention for high-profile cases of unethical behavior, business ethics has become an important part of the curriculum in many business schools, and more companies are adopting ethical guidelines for their employees.

"Getting Critical"

NCA Credo for Ethical Communication

This page will challenge you to think critically about a variety of communication issues, and many of those issues will involve questions of ethics. Therefore, it is important that we have a shared understanding of ethical standards for communication. I tell my students that I consider them communication scholars while they are in my class, and we always take a class period to learn about ethics using the National Communication Association's (NCA) "Credo for Ethical Communication," since the NCA is the professional organization that represents communication scholars and practitioners in the United States.
We all have to consider and sometimes struggle with questions of right and wrong. Since communication is central to the creation of our relationships and communities, ethical communication should be a priority of every person who wants to make a positive contribution to society. The NCA's "Credo for Ethical Communication" reminds us that communication ethics is relevant across contexts and applies to every channel of communication, including media. (((Note: National Communication Association, "NCA Credo for Ethical Communication," accessed May 18, 2012, http://natcom.org/Tertiary.aspx?id=2119&terms=ethical%20credo.))) The credo goes on to say that human worth and dignity are fostered through ethical communication practices such as truthfulness, fairness, integrity, and respect for self and others. The emphasis in the credo and in the study of communication ethics is on practices and actions rather than thoughts and philosophies. Many people claim high ethical standards but do not live up to them in practice. While the credo advocates for, endorses, and promotes certain ideals, it is up to each one of us to put them into practice. The following are some of the principles stated in the credo:

- We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.

- We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences of our own communication and expect the same of others.

1. What are some examples of unethical communication that you have witnessed?
2. Read through the whole credo. Of the nine principles listed, which do you think is most important and why? The credo can be accessed at the following link: http://natcom.org/Tertiary.aspx?id=2119&terms=ethical%20credo.

Key Takeaways

- Getting integrated: Increasing your knowledge of communication and improving your communication skills can positively affect your academic, professional, personal, and civic lives.
- In terms of academics, research shows that students who study communication and improve their communication skills are less likely to drop out of school and are more likely to have high grade point averages.
- Professionally, employers desire employees with good communication skills, and employees who have good listening skills are more likely to get promoted.
- Personally, communication skills help us maintain satisfying relationships.
- Communication helps us with civic engagement and allows us to participate in and contribute to our communities.
- Communication meets our physical needs by helping us maintain physical and psychological well-being; our instrumental needs by helping us achieve short- and long-term goals; our relational needs by helping us initiate, maintain, and terminate relationships; and our identity needs by allowing us to present ourselves to others in particular ways.
- Communication is a process that includes messages that vary in terms of conscious thought and intention. Communication is also irreversible and unrepeatable.
- Communication is guided by culture and context.
- We learn to communicate using systems that vary based on culture and language.
- Rules and norms influence the routines and rituals within our communication.
- Communication ethics varies by culture and context and involves the negotiation of and reflection on our actions regarding what we think is right and wrong.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: The concepts of integrative learning and communication ethics are introduced in this section. How do you see communication ethics playing a role in academic, professional, personal, and civic aspects of your life?
2. Identify some physical, instrumental, relational, and identity needs that communication helps you meet in a given day.
3. We learned in this section that communication is irreversible and unrepeatable. Identify a situation in which you wished you could reverse communication. Identify a situation in which you wished you could repeat communication. Even though it's impossible to reverse or repeat communication, what lessons can be learned from these two situations you identified that you can apply to future communication?

4. What types of phatic communion do you engage in? How are they connected to context and/or social rules and norms?

Communication Competence

Learning Objectives

1. Define communication competence.
2. Explain each part of the definition of communication competence.
3. Discuss strategies for developing communication competence.
4. Discuss communication apprehension and public speaking anxiety and employ strategies to manage them.

Communication competence has become a focus in higher education over the past couple of decades as educational policy makers and advocates have stressed a "back to basics" mentality. (((Note: James C. McCroskey, "Communication Comptence: The Elusive Construct," in *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 259.))) The ability to communicate effectively is often included as a primary undergraduate learning goal along with other key skills like writing, critical thinking, and problem solving. You likely haven't heard professors or university administrators use the term *communication competence*, but as we learn more about it in this section, I am sure you will see how communication competence can benefit you in many aspects of your life. Since this book focuses on communication in the real world, strategies for developing communication competence are not only limited to this section.

Defining Competence

We have already defined *communication*, and you probably know that to be competent at something means you know what you're doing. When we combine these terms, we get the following definition: **communication competence** refers to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts. (((Note: Ralph E. Cooley and Deborah A. Roach, "A Conceptual Framework," in *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 25.))) To better understand this definition, let's break apart its components.

The first part of the definition we will unpack deals with *knowledge*. The cognitive elements of competence include knowing how to do something and understanding why things are done the way they are. (((Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice*(London: Routledge, 2011), 9.))) People can develop cognitive competence by observing and evaluating the actions of others. Cognitive competence can also be developed through instruction. Since you are currently taking a communication class, I encourage you to try to observe the communication concepts you are learning in the communication practices of others and yourself. This will help bring the concepts to life and also help you evaluate how communication in the real world matches up with communication concepts. As you build a repertoire of communication knowledge based on your experiential and classroom knowledge, you will also be developing behavioral competence.

The second part of the definition of communication competence that we will unpack is *the ability to use*. Individual factors affect our ability to do anything. Not everyone has the same athletic, musical, or intellectual ability. At the individual level, a person's physiological and psychological characteristics affect competence. In terms of physiology, age, maturity, and ability to communicate affect competence. In terms of psychology, a person's mood, stress level, personality, and level of communication apprehension (level of anxiety regarding communication) affect competence. (((Note: Ralph E. Cooley and Deborah A. Roach, "A Conceptual Framework," in *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 24.))) All these factors will either help or hinder you when you try to apply the knowledge you have learned to actual communication behaviors. For example, you might know strategies for being an effective speaker, but public speaking anxiety that kicks in when you get in front of the audience may prevent you from fully putting that knowledge into practice.

The third part of the definition we will unpack is ability to *adapt* to *various contexts*. What is competent or not varies based on social and cultural context, which makes it impossible to have only one standard for what counts as communication competence. (((Note: Ralph E. Cooley and Deborah A. Roach, "A Conceptual Framework," in *Competence in Communication: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Robert N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984), 26.))) Social variables such as status and power affect competence. In a social situation where one person—say, a supervisor—has more power than another—for example, his or her employee—then the supervisor is typically the one who sets the standard for competence. Cultural variables such as race and nationality also affect competence. A Taiwanese woman who speaks English as her second language may be praised for her competence in the English language in her home country but be viewed as less competent in the United States because of her accent. In summary, although we have a clear definition of communication competence, there are not definitions for how to be competent in any given situation, since competence varies at the individual, social, and cultural level.

Despite the fact that no guidelines for or definitions of competence will be applicable in all situations, the National Communication Association (NCA) has identified many aspects of competence related to communication. The primary focus has been on competencies related to speaking and listening, and the NCA notes that developing communication competence in these areas will help people in academic, professional, and civic contexts. (((Note: Sherwyn Morreale, Rebecca B. Rubin, and Elizabeth Jones, *Speaking and Listening Competencies for College Students* (Washington, DC: National Communication Association, 1998), n.p.))) To help colleges and universities develop curriculum and instruction strategies to prepare students, the NCA has defined what students should be able to do in terms of speaking and listening competencies by the time they graduate from college:

1. State ideas clearly.
2. Communicate ethically.
3. Recognize when it is appropriate to communicate.
4. Identify their communication goals.
5. Select the most appropriate and effective medium for communicating.
6. Demonstrate credibility.
7. Identify and manage misunderstandings.
8. Manage conflict.
9. Be open-minded about another's point of view.
10. Listen attentively.

These are just some of the competencies the NCA identified as important for college graduates. While these are skill focused rather than interpersonally or culturally focused, they provide a concrete way to assess your own speaking competencies and to prepare yourself for professional speaking and listening, which is often skill driven. Since we communicate in many different contexts, such as interpersonal, group, intercultural, and mediated, we will discuss more specific definitions of competence in later sections of the book.

Developing Competence

Knowing the dimensions of competence is an important first step toward developing competence. Everyone reading this book already has some experience with and knowledge about communication. After all, you've spent many years explicitly and implicitly learning to communicate. For example, we are explicitly taught the verbal codes we use to communicate. On the other hand, although there are numerous rules and norms associated with nonverbal communication, we rarely receive explicit instruction on how to do it. Instead, we learn by observing others and through trial and error with our own nonverbal communication. Competence obviously involves verbal and nonverbal elements, but it also applies to many situations and contexts. Communication competence is needed in order to understand communication ethics, to develop cultural awareness, to use computer-mediated communication, and to think critically. Competence involves knowledge, motivation, and skills. It's not enough to know what good communication consists of; you must also have the motivation to reflect on and better your communication and the skills needed to do so.

In regards to competence, we all have areas where we are skilled and areas where we have deficiencies. In most cases, we can consciously decide to work on our deficiencies, which may take considerable effort. There are multiple stages of competence that I challenge you to assess as you communicate in your daily life: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence. (((Note: Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Interaction: Research, Theory, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2011), 7.))) Before you have built up a rich cognitive knowledge base of communication concepts and practiced and reflected on skills in a particular area, you may exhibit unconscious incompetence, which means you are not even aware that you are communicating in an incompetent manner. Once you learn more about communication and have a vocabulary to identify concepts, you may find yourself exhibiting conscious incompetence. This is where you know what you should be doing, and you realize that you're not doing it as well as you could. However, as your skills increase you may advance to conscious competence, meaning that you know you are communicating well in the moment, which will add to your bank of experiences to draw from in future interactions. When you reach the stage of unconscious competence, you just communicate successfully without straining to be competent. Just because you reach the stage of unconscious competence in one area or with one person does not mean you will always stay there. We are faced with new communication encounters regularly, and although we may be able to draw on the communication skills we have learned about and developed, it may take a few instances of conscious incompetence before you can advance to later stages.

In many introductory communication classes that I teach, a student usually says something like "You must be really good at this stuff since you study it and have been teaching it for a while." At the same time students assume that I have a high level of communication competence, they are hard on themselves for being at the stage of conscious incompetence, where they catch themselves communicating poorly in regards to a concept we recently studied. In response to both of these comments, I say, "Just because I know the concepts and definitions doesn't mean I always put them to good use. We're all imperfect and fallible, and if we expect to be perfect communicators after studying this, then we're setting ourselves up for failure. However, when I do mess up, I almost always make a mental note and reflect on it. And now you're starting to do the same thing, which is to notice and reflect on your communication more. And that already puts you ahead of most people!"

One way to progress toward communication competence is to become a more mindful communicator. A mindful communicator actively and fluidly processes information, is sensitive to communication contexts and multiple perspectives, and is able to adapt to novel communication situations. (((Note: Judee K. Burgoon, Charles R. Berger, and Vincent R. Waldron, "Mindfulness and Interpersonal Communication," *Journal of Social Issues*56, no. 1 (2000): 105.))) Becoming a more mindful communicator has many benefits, including achieving communication goals, detecting deception, avoiding stereotypes, and reducing conflict. Whether or not we achieve our day-to-day communication goals depends on our communication competence. Various communication behaviors can signal that we are communicating mindfully. For example, asking an employee to paraphrase their understanding of the instructions you just gave them shows that you are aware that verbal messages are not always clear, that people do not always listen actively, and that people often do not speak up when they are unsure of instructions for fear of appearing incompetent or embarrassing themselves. Some communication behaviors indicate that we are not communicating mindfully, such as withdrawing from a romantic partner or engaging in passive-aggressive behavior during a period of interpersonal conflict. Most of us know that such behaviors lead to predictable and avoidable conflict cycles, yet we are all guilty of them. Our tendency to assume that people are telling us the truth can also lead to negative results. Therefore, a certain amount of tentativeness and mindful monitoring of a person's nonverbal and verbal communication can help us detect deception. However, this is not the same thing as chronic suspicion, which would not indicate communication competence. This is just the beginning of our conversation about communication competence.

"Getting Competent"

Getting Started on Your Road to Communication Competence

The “Getting Competent” boxes throughout this book are meant to help you become a more confident and skilled communicator. While each box will focus on a specific aspect of communication competence, this box addresses communication competence more generally. A common communication pitfall that is an obstacle on many students’ roads to communication competence is viewing communication as “common sense.”

Many students note that some of what we learn in communication classes is “common sense.” I agree with this observation in some cases but disagree with it in others. As I’ve noted before, this class builds on knowledge that you have already gained, through experience and observation as a person with many years of communication under your belt. For example, a student might say that it is “common sense” that conflict avoidance can lead to built-up tensions that eventually hurt an interpersonal relationship. But many of us avoid confronting what is causing conflict in our relationships even though we know it’s better to talk about our problems than to let them build up. In order to put that “commonsense” knowledge to competent use, we must have a more nuanced understanding of how conflict and interpersonal communication relate and know some conflict management strategies.

Communication is common in that it is something that we spend most of our time doing, but the ability to make sense of and improve our communication takes competence that is learned through deliberate study and personal reflection. So, to get started on your road to competence, I am proposing that you do two things. First, challenge yourself to see the value in the study of communication. Apply the concepts we are learning to your life and find ways to make this class help you achieve your goals. Second, commit to using the knowledge you gain in this class to improve your communication and the communication of those around you. Become a higher self-monitor, which means start to notice your communication more. We all know areas where we could improve our communication, and taking this class will probably expose even more. But you have to be prepared to put in the time to improve; for example, it takes effort to become a better listener or to give better feedback. If you start these things now you will be primed to take on more communication challenges that will be presented throughout this book.

1. What aspects of communication do you think are “common sense?” What aspects of communication do you think require more formal instruction and/or study?
2. What communication concept has appealed to you most so far? How can you see this concept applying to your life?
3. Do a communication self-assessment. What are your strengths as a communicator? What are your weaknesses? What can you do to start improving your communication competence?

Overcoming Anxiety

Whether you will give your first presentation in this class next week or in two months, you may be one of many students in the introduction to communication studies course to face anxiety about communication in general or public speaking in particular.

Decades of research conducted by communication scholars shows that communication apprehension is common among college students. (((Note: Jennifer S. Priem and Denise Haunani Solomon, “Comforting Apprehensive Communicators: The Effects of Reappraisal and Distraction on Cortisol Levels among Students in a Public Speaking Class,” *Communication Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2009): 260.))) **Communication apprehension** (CA) is fear or anxiety experienced by a person due to actual or imagined communication with another person or persons. CA includes multiple forms of communication, not just public speaking. Of college students, 15 to 20 percent experience high trait CA, meaning they are generally anxious about communication. Furthermore, 70 percent of college students experience some trait CA, which means that addressing communication anxiety in a class like the one you’re taking now stands to benefit the majority of students. (((Note: Jennifer S. Priem and Denise Haunani Solomon, “Comforting Apprehensive Communicators: The Effects of Reappraisal and Distraction on Cortisol Levels among Students in a Public Speaking Class,” *Communication Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2009): 260–61.))) **Public speaking anxiety** is type of CA that produces physiological, cognitive, and behavioral reactions in people when faced with a real or imagined presentation. (((Note: Graham D. Bodie, “A Racing Heart, Rattling Knees, and Ruminative Thoughts: Defining, Explaining, and Treating Public Speaking Anxiety,” *Communication Education* 59, no. 1 (2010): 72.))) Research on public speaking anxiety has focused on three key ways to address this common issue: systematic desensitization, cognitive restructuring, and skills training. (((Note: Graham D. Bodie, “A Racing Heart, Rattling Knees, and Ruminative Thoughts: Defining, Explaining, and Treating Public Speaking Anxiety,” *Communication Education* 59, no. 1 (2010): 86–92.))) Communication departments are typically the only departments that address communication apprehension explicitly, which is important as CA is "related to negative academic consequences such as negative attitudes toward school, lower over-all classroom achievement, lower final course grades, and higher college attrition rates." (((Note: Mike Allen, John E. Hunter, and William A. Donohue, "Meta-analysis of Self-Report Data on the Effectiveness of Public Speaking Anxiety Treatment Techniques," *Communication Education* 38, no. 1 (2009): 54–76.))) Additionally, CA can lead others to make assumptions about your communication competence that may be unfavorable. Even if you are intelligent, prepared, and motivated, CA and public speaking anxiety can detract from your communication and lead others to perceive you in ways you did not intend. CA is a common issue faced by many people, so you are not alone. While you should feel free to read ahead to that chapter, you can also manage your anxiety by following some of the following tips.

Top Ten Ways to Reduce Speaking Anxiety

1. Remember, you are not alone. Public speaking anxiety is common, so don't ignore it—confront it.
2. You can't literally "die of embarrassment." Audiences are forgiving and understanding.
3. It always feels worse than it looks.
4. Take deep breaths. It releases endorphins, which naturally fight the adrenaline that causes anxiety.
5. Look the part. Dress professionally to enhance confidence.
6. Channel your nervousness into positive energy and motivation.
7. Start your outline and research early. Better information = higher confidence.
8. Practice and get feedback from a trusted source. (Don't just practice for your cat.)
9. Visualize success through positive thinking.
10. Prepare, prepare, prepare! Practice is a speaker's best friend.

Key Takeaways

- Communication competence refers to the knowledge of effective and appropriate communication patterns and the ability to use and adapt that knowledge in various contexts.
- To be a competent communicator, you should have cognitive knowledge about communication based on observation and instruction; understand that individual, social, and cultural contexts affect competence; and be able to adapt to those various contexts.
- Getting integrated: The NCA notes that developing communication competence in speaking and listening will help college students in academic, professional, and civic contexts.
- Levels of communication competence include unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence.
- In order to develop communication competence, you must become a more mindful communicator and a higher self-monitor.
- Communication apprehension (CA) refers to fear or anxiety experienced by a person due to real or imagined communication with another person or persons. Public speaking anxiety is a form of CA that more specifically focuses on anxiety about giving a public presentation. Both are commonly experienced by most people and can be managed using various strategies.

Exercises

1. Getting integrated: Evaluate your speaking and listening competencies based on the list generated by the NCA. Out of the skills listed, which ones are you more competent in and less competent in? Which skill will be most useful for you in academic contexts? Professional contexts? Personal contexts? Civic contexts?
2. Think of a person you know who you think possesses a high level of communication competence. What makes you think this? What communication characteristics do they have that you might want to have yourself?

3. What anxieties do you have regarding communication and/or public speaking? Since communication and speaking are a necessary part of life, identify some strategies you can use to manage those anxieties.

ASSIGNMENT: GROUP PROJECT

Group Project

For this project, your group will be assigned a specific case study to analyze.

Your group will write a single paper based on the Discussion Questions included at the end of the case. In the group's paper, you should fully answer these questions. In answering the questions you should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant conceptual issues by fully defining and explaining relevant terms and arguments.
- Apply those relevant concepts to the case by providing specific issues from the case that illustrate the theoretical concept or argument.
- Provide a coherent argument regarding your assessment of the case by integrating your theoretical knowledge with the specific situation described in the case.

The paper should be written using the case discussion question topics as subheadings. The goal is to provide usable and, perhaps, creative suggestions for the case that are based on relevant theory and research.

The paper should be 3-4 pages (typed), 1 in margins, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with no cover page required. You must cite the course textbook using MLA formatting. When saving your document, include your group number and the assignment name, and save as either a Microsoft Word file (.doc or .docx) or a Rich Text File (.rtf). One member of the group will turn this paper in for the entire group at the end of Week 15.

Group Charter

Each group should submit a group charter which can not only get you started but also open the line for communication in the group. **The group charter is not graded but the group project won't be graded if you don't turn in the group charter by the end of week 13.** You can be as creative as you can when creating the charter but you have to make sure to include the following in the charter:

1. Decide how you will communicate –will it be solely by group forum, by email, phone, etc., or by a variety of methods. Whatever method you chose, it should be transparent to everyone all of the time. For example you can all read the group forum, so that would always be transparent. If you do use something that is not transparent (like an online chat), then post minutes or a transcript to the group forum for all to see.
2. Decide how quickly you should respond to one another. Within 12 hours, one day, and so on. Make this very clear.

3. Divide up the work and assign a role to each group member. Who will email the instructor for help if needed? Who will post the group charter and weekly progress reports on file exchange? Who will post the draft copy to the file exchange for group reviewing and approval? Who will submit the final paper for grading using the submit assignment tab in week 15? You can decide what the tasks might be and how to divide them.
4. Decide on criteria that might be important for the peer review process. Teams often include items like punctuality, quality of contribution, positive attitude, preparedness, focus on tasks and time management. Define these terms for the charter. You will use these criteria to evaluate your group members when the group project is due using the Group Member Evaluation form provided.
5. Ways to amend this charter if it becomes necessary.

Progress Report

Each group must report their progress at the end of weeks 12, 13 and 14 to make sure they won't wait until the last minute to get the project done. This progress report should be placed on the file exchange.

Peer Evaluation

You will also need to evaluate every member of your group (other than yourself) using the Group Member Evaluation Form below. You will individually submit this completed document to your instructor. Completed forms will earn you up to 20 points.

Here is how the group project will be graded according to the peer evaluation – Each student who submits a completed Group Member evaluation form will be awarded 20 points. Based on the information provided on this document, I will modify the group project to arrive an individual grade. If your group project earns the full 100 points and your group mates have each given you 20 points, you will receive 100 points as your individual grade which is 100% of the earned points. However if your group mates gave you an average of 15 points, your individual grade will be 75% of the earned group project points and you will earn 75 points as your individual grade. This is to ensure that group members who are not active and do the bare minimum or less receive a grade that reflects their involvement.

- Group Member Evaluation Form (.docx file)

Roles Reflection Paper

Each student must also submit a Roles Reflection Paper.

- Roles Reflection Paper (.rtf file)

Suggestions for Completing CST 110 Group Project

Here are some suggestions that will help guide you along your journey together:

1. **Prepare early**: Read the case and complete the group charter described above. You should also review any applicable material we have covered this semester.
2. **Virtual Meetings**: Consider holding virtual meetings using either Blackboard Collaborate or an outside vender such as Google Hangouts.
3. **Identify topics**: After reading the case and the material, identify the topic(s) that you think are important to discuss and analyze in your paper and/or class discussion. Take a trip to the library to find a reputable outside resource (e.g. journal article, book) to support/explain your analysis of the case. You may use the Internet to identify outside sources, however, for this assignment, a website alone is not considered a sufficient source. (on-line journals, e-books, online newspapers and magazines are fine)

4. **Introduce the case**: Your introductory paragraph should include a brief explanation of the case, but should focus primarily on introducing the main topic of analysis. Be sure to include a thesis statement that orients the reader to the rest of your paper.
5. **Analysis**: Indicate your critical thinking and in-depth analysis of the case (not just quick fix, simple answers) by connecting your ideas specifically to text and outside source material (i.e., information presented in the chapter should assist you in analyzing the case and in answering the questions posed in at the conclusion of the case). Please note: These questions are meant to stimulate your thinking about the case and to guide your analysis. I do not want you to simply answer the questions – I want you to integrate your responses to the questions into a more thorough analysis of the case.
6. **Conclude**: Be sure to wrap up your paper with a summary of your discussion and possibly some suggestions, implications, or recommendations (if it is appropriate to the case).
7. **References**: Be sure to include a reference page that cites your sources. Please follow MLA style guidelines (see guidelines on electronic reserve). Your Group Analysis Paper will be evaluated on the quality of your analysis, your writing and your adherence to the guidelines above. You will also receive points from your peers based on the outcome of your peer evaluations.

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Grading

This assignment is worth a total of 150 points. The Paper grading is as follows:

Up to 5 pts.	An effective introduction
Up to 45 pts.	Well-developed main points
Up to 5 pts.	An effective conclusion
Up to 25 pts.	Included quality research
Up to 10 pts.	Correct length (3-4 pages)
Up to 10 pts.	A works cited page and any other relevant materials

- Paper Score: /100 points
- Peer Evaluation (average score): /20 points
- Roles Essay: /30 points
- Total: /150 points

SPEECH: INFORMATIVE SPEECH ON CULTURE

There are two main goals in this assignment:

1. To gain your first public speaking experience for the course
2. To gain experience recording and uploading a video to the course

Guidelines

Here are you assignment guidelines:

1. Pick a culture that you strongly identify with. (Think about your nationality, your religion, the region where you grew up, or organizations of which you are a member.)
2. Select an object that represents that culture.
3. Create an outline that organizes your thoughts and main points into a coherent speech.
4. Make sure you follow the Ethical Pyramid (from the readings)
5. Speak for 2-3 minutes about your culture, how this object represents your culture, and how your culture has shaped who you are.
6. Upload your recorded speech to the course site using the instructions below.
7. Manuscripts are prohibited and will result in a point deduction. You may use notecards during the presentation.

Turn this assignment in by clicking on the Assignment link found in Module 12.

Recording Your Video

For this assignment, you will need to record your video using a device of your choosing and make the video available to me on Blackboard as a link.

You can use any recording device (video camera, iPad or tablet, mobile phone) as long as the device can be placed far enough away to allow me to see you from at least the waist up (at least 4-6 feet away) and hear you clearly.

Uploading Your Video

You are responsible for publishing your video and then submitting a link to that file on Blackboard. The video should either be playable directly from the link. Test your links before you submit them to make sure that they work. And please do this well in advance – I will not accept late or incomplete work due to technical issues. You are fully responsible more making sure that your video is accessible and playable.

Uploading Video Using YouTube

You are responsible for completing the necessary steps to post your video and ensuring that it is accessible. The video must be able to be played without having to login or enter a password. As such, you will need to make sure that your video is made public. It is your responsibility to ensure that the video is playable before you submit your link on Blackboard. There are complete instructions for how to upload to YouTube on the internet, but here is a link that may help you with the process:

- Uploading Video to YouTube

Once you have posted your video, copy the link and paste it in the Assignment Upload space in Week 10.

Grading

This assignment is worth a total of 60 points. Grading is as follows:

Up to 5 pts.	Using an object for your speech topic
Up to 15 pts.	A coherent outline (manuscripts will not be accepted)

Up to 15 pts.	Delivery (demonstrate you have practiced and thought through what you are speaking about
Up to 25 pts.	Explanation of culture and how the object represents your culture