



Level 2 Communication Skills

Student Instructional Handbook

Welcome

This handbook is written for students. It teaches communication skills for learning, work, community life, and digital communication. It follows the uploaded Level 2 specification as the main authority and uses a student-study guide format so that every lesson explains the skill before asking you to practice it.

This qualification develops intermediate bilingual communication skills. It helps learners communicate confidently in English and Dari or Pashto, write clear documents for real purposes, understand audience and culture, and use digital tools responsibly.

Assessment may include speaking and listening tasks, role-play, reading responses, written work, observation, audio or video evidence, and instructor checklists. Because the course is bilingual, some evidence includes English together with Dari or Pashto.

How to use this handbook

- Read the unit overview first so you understand the purpose of the unit.
- Work through the lesson explanation before you attempt the activity.
- Use the worked example to see what successful communication looks like.
- Complete the assessment practice because it prepares you for evidence tasks.
- Notice audience, purpose, tone, and clarity in every unit.

Handbook contents

Unit	Focus
Unit 1	Non-Verbal Communication and Situational Awareness
Unit 2	Listening and Speaking in Conversation
Unit 3	Listening and Speaking Professionally
Unit 4	Reading Comprehension
Unit 5	Writing Professionally
Unit 6	Online Communication and Digital Literacy

Unit 1: Non-Verbal Communication and Situational Awareness

Unit Aim

Develop a mature understanding of symbolic, emotional, and cultural interaction, and learn to respond with empathy, awareness, and assertiveness.

What you will learn

- read non-verbal signals such as gestures, posture, clothing, and expression
- interpret emotional meaning and possible triggers in media and real situations
- use empathetic language and "I" statements
- distinguish passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior
- adapt communication to conflict and different social situations

How this unit supports assessment

This unit supports assessment tasks that ask you to identify meaning in gestures and images, interpret symbolism in music or art, respond to emotional situations, use assertive language, and demonstrate calm communication in role-played conflict.

Chapter 1: Understanding Non-Verbal Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Identify common forms of non-verbal communication
2. Explain how facial expression, posture, gestures, and appearance carry meaning
3. Use non-verbal awareness to understand real situations more accurately

Study Questions.

What is non-verbal communication?

How can body language change the meaning of spoken words?

Why should we read more than one sign before judging a situation?

Words to Know

Term	Meaning
non-verbal communication	communication through actions, expression, movement, appearance, and other signs without full spoken or written sentences
gesture	a movement of the hand, arm, head, or body that adds meaning to communication
posture	the way a person sits, stands, or holds the body
context	the situation around the message that helps explain what a sign may really mean

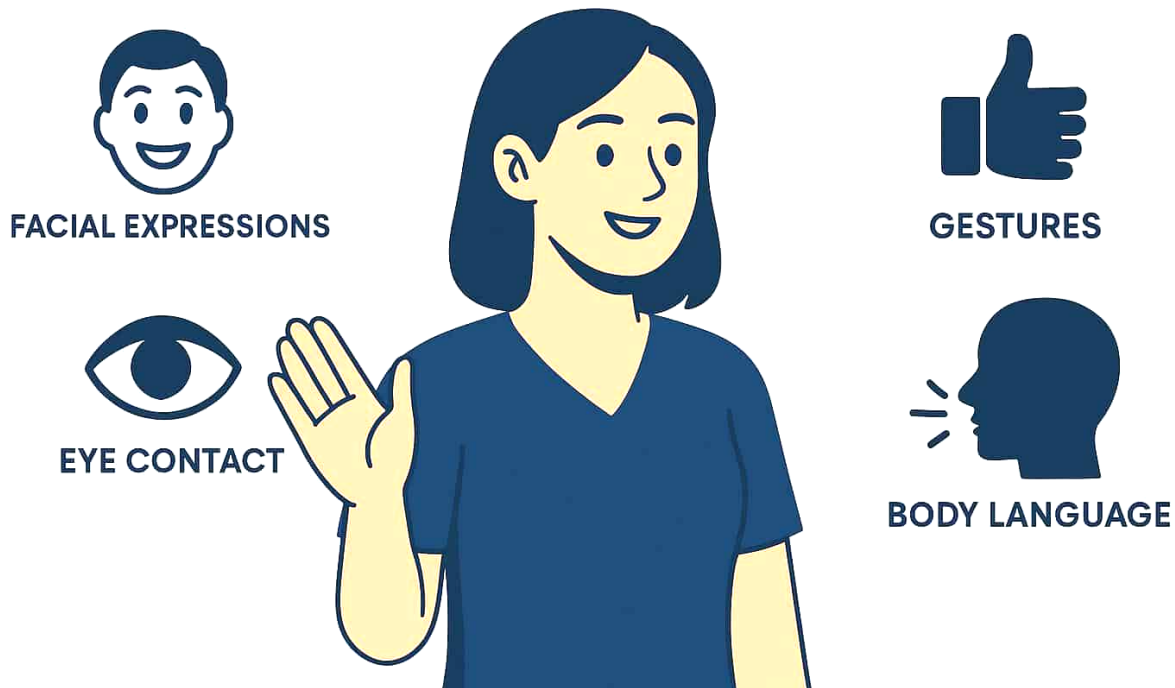
What Is Non-Verbal Communication?

Non-verbal communication is a way of sharing meaning without depending only on spoken words. It includes facial expression, body language, eye contact, gesture, posture, tone of voice, appearance, and the way a person uses social space. In real communication, people often understand feelings and attitude through these signals before the speaker has fully explained anything. For that reason, non-verbal communication is not a small extra part of communication. It is one of the main ways people show confidence, nervousness, interest, boredom, respect, or discomfort. The source text explains that a person can show feelings and ideas through actions, movements, and personal presentation, and that these signs can either strengthen a conversation or send a different message from the words themselves. For example, if a student says, **“I am okay,”** but looks down, speaks very softly, and has a sad face, we may understand that the student is not okay. In the same way, if a teacher smiles and nods while a learner is speaking, the learner feels supported even if the teacher says nothing. This shows that communication is not only about words. It is also about the signs that people give through their actions and expressions. Furthermore, imagine you go to a job interview. You say, **“I am confident and ready to work,”** but your hands are shaking, your shoulders are bent, and you avoid eye contact. The interviewer may feel that you are nervous, even though your words sound strong. On the other hand, if you sit straight, look attentive, and speak in a calm voice, your non-verbal communication supports your words and makes your message stronger. This is why students need to study non-verbal communication carefully in Level 2 communication skills.

Why Is Non-Verbal Communication Important?

Non-verbal communication is important because it helps people understand the full meaning of a message. Words alone do not always show tone, emotion, or intention clearly. A simple sentence can sound friendly, serious, impatient, or rude depending on the face, body, and voice of the speaker. The source text explains that without non-verbal communication, conversations may feel flat and people may struggle to understand feelings properly. It also points out that people often rely on tone of voice, facial expression, and body language as much as, or more than, the actual words being spoken. This is especially true when emotions are involved. In school, work, and community life, this skill helps students read situations more accurately, respond more appropriately, and avoid misunderstanding. The specification also places this skill early in Unit 1 because learners are expected to identify emotions, attitudes, signals, and social meaning through visible communication, not only through speech.

UNDERSTANDING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION



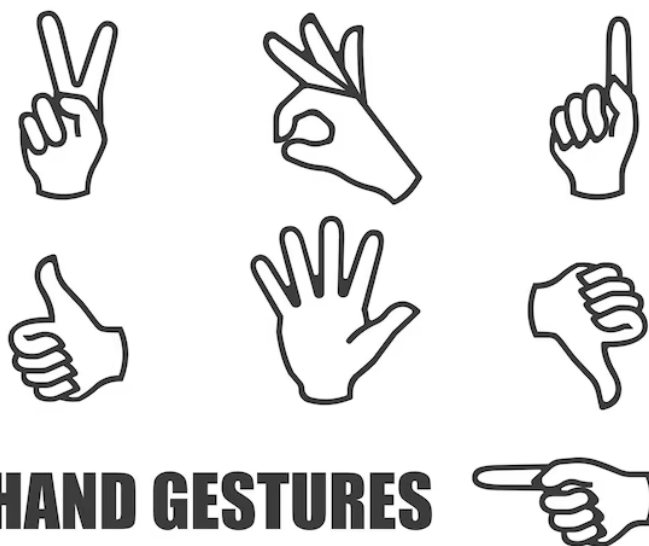
How Can Body Language Change the Meaning of Spoken Words?

Body language can support spoken words, weaken them, or even contradict them. When body language and spoken language match, communication usually feels clear and believable. For example, a smile, relaxed posture, and a nod can make a polite statement feel warm and genuine. However, if a person says something kind while frowning, slouching, or looking away, the listener may doubt the message. The source text gives examples such as a smile or nod strengthening a conversation; while slouching or other signals may send a different impression. This shows why body language must always be considered together with speech. A strong communicator learns that meaning is created by the whole person, not by words alone. This awareness is especially useful in presentations, interviews, group work, and difficult conversations, where listeners are often influenced by visual signals as much as by speech. So, imagine a girl is asked in class, **“Do you understand this lesson?”** She answers, **“Yes, I understand.”** But while speaking, she looks down, avoids eye contact, holds her book tightly, and speaks in a weak voice. Her words say one thing, but her body language gives another message. A careful teacher or classmate may understand that she is confused or shy and may need more help. Now imagine the same answer in a different way. The girl says, **“Yes, I understand,”** while looking at the speaker, sitting straight, and speaking in a calm voice. In this case, her body language supports her words, so the message feels clear and believable. This shows that body language can make spoken words **stronger, weaker, clearer, or more doubtful**. That is why good communication means paying attention to both the words and the body.



What Do Gestures Communicate?

Gestures are movements that add meaning to communication. They include actions such as waving, nodding, pointing, crossing arms, or tapping the shoulder to get someone's attention. Gestures can show agreement, impatience, confidence, discomfort, warning, or friendliness depending on the situation. The source text explains that hand and arm movements add meaning to words and often help people understand what the speaker feels or intends. However, gestures do not always have one fixed meaning. A crossed arm position may show discomfort, self-protection, cold weather, or disagreement depending on the context. For this reason, students should learn to read gestures carefully rather than too quickly. Gestures are useful in communication, but it becomes more accurate when it is read together with facial expression, posture, tone, and situation.



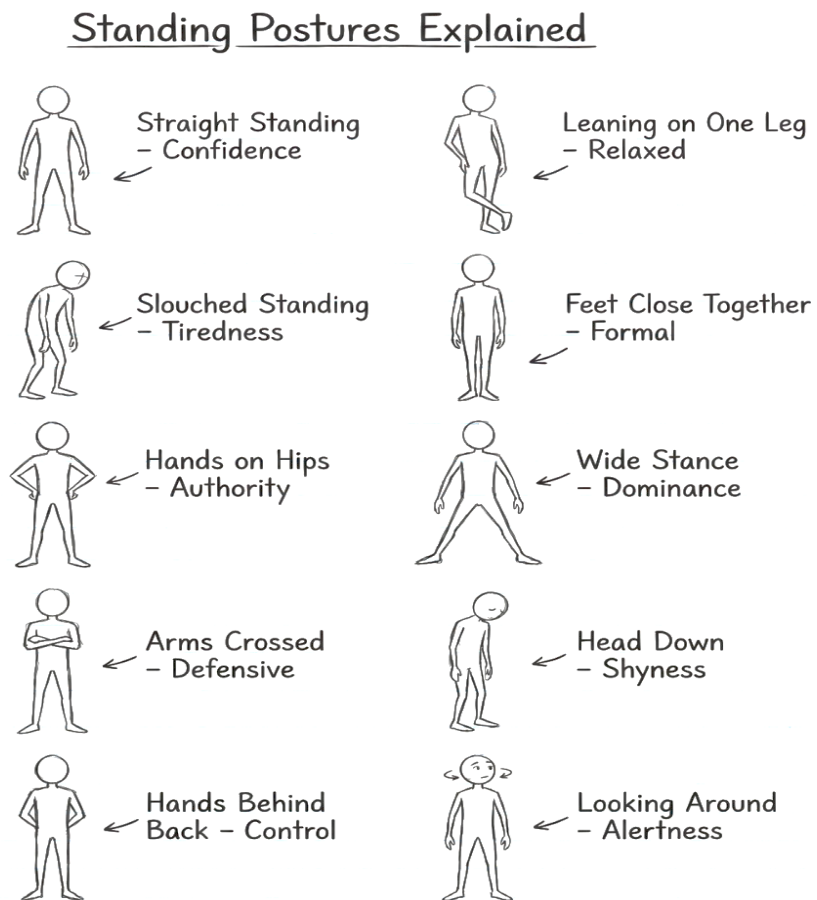
HAND GESTURES

How Do Posture and Movement Show Meaning?

Posture means the way a person sits, stands, or carries the body. Movement includes how a person enters a room, leans forward, shifts weight, or uses the arms and feet. These non-verbal signs can suggest confidence, nervousness, boredom, respect, or lack of interest. The source text explains that body language includes the way a person sits, stands, or moves around others, and that these physical signs can show confidence, nervousness, or boredom. A person who stands upright and faces others may appear ready and attentive. A person who hunches, turns away, or leans back too much may seem uncomfortable or disengaged. In real situations, posture affects first impressions strongly. It also affects how a person feels inside. Someone who adopts a steady and open posture may appear more confident and may even begin to feel more in control. This is why posture matters in classrooms, public speaking, interviews, and teamwork. Now, imagine a girl is giving a short presentation in class. She says, **“I am ready to speak,”** but her shoulders are bent, her head is down, and she keeps moving her feet nervously.

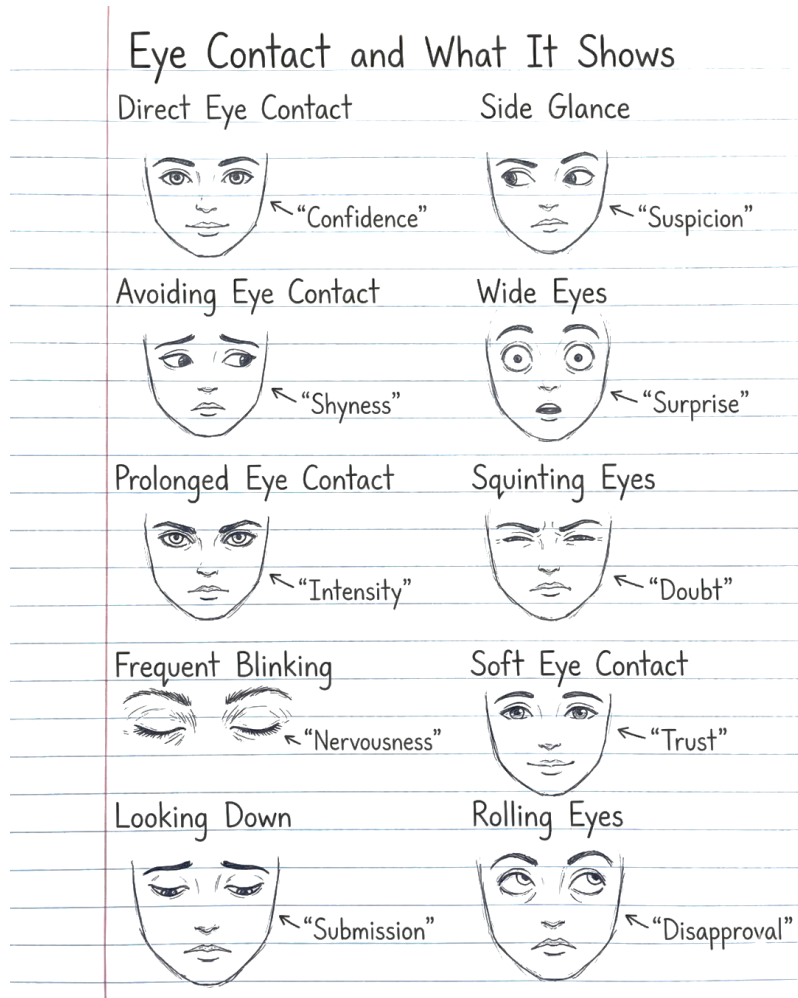
Even if her words sound ready, her posture shows that she may feel shy or unsure. Now imagine another girl giving the same presentation. She stands straight, keeps her shoulders relaxed, looks toward the class, and holds her book steadily. Even before she says much, her posture gives a message of confidence and preparation. This shows that posture can strongly change how other people understand a speaker.

Look at the image carefully for a better understanding.



What Can Facial Expression and Eye Contact Tell Us?

Facial expression and eye contact are two of the clearest non-verbal signals in human interaction. The face can show happiness, frustration, confusion, fear, anger, or interest even before a person speaks. Eye contact can show attention, confidence, and involvement in a conversation. The source text explains that facial expression often changes how someone receives a message, while eye contact can show interest in the conversation. At the same time, it also warns that not everyone is comfortable with direct eye contact and that this may differ between people and cultures. For that reason, eye contact should not be judged too simply. A student may avoid strong eye contact because of shyness, culture, or discomfort, not because of dishonesty. Good communication therefore means watching facial expression and eye contact carefully but also interpreting them fairly and with respect for individual difference. Furthermore, imagine a girl is studying at home, and her mother asks her, **“Did you understand today’s lesson?”** The girl answers, **“Yes, I understood,”** but she keeps looking down, avoids eye contact, and her face looks worried. In this situation, her mother may understand that the girl is probably still confused or not fully confident, even though her words say she understood. Here, **not looking up while speaking** gives an extra message. It may show uncertainty, worry, or shyness. Now imagine another situation. The same girl says, **“Yes, I understood this part,”** and while speaking she looks toward her mother, keeps a calm face, and speaks in a steady way. In this case, her **eye contact** and facial expression support her words, so the message feels clearer and more believable. This shows that **eye contact can change how words are understood**. If a person is not looking at you, it may mean many different things, so you should look at the face, voice, and situation before deciding what it means.



How Does Appearance Affect First Impressions?

Appearance is an important part of non-verbal communication because it shapes the first impression people form before a longer conversation begins. Clothing, grooming, and overall presentation can influence how others see role, seriousness, confidence, or suitability for a situation. The source text

explains that appearance affects how people see you and helps create first impressions. In educational and professional settings, appearance may suggest whether someone is prepared, formal, casual, respectful, or part of a particular role. However, students should also remember that appearance must be interpreted with care. It can suggest meaning, but it does not tell the full story by itself. A strong communicator notices appearance as one clue among several, not as the only clue. This is important because fair judgment requires more than one visible sign. Imagine a girl joins an online class or a community meeting from home. She is dressed neatly, her hair is tidy, and she sits in a calm and respectful way. Even before she speaks much, others may feel that she is serious, prepared, and respectful. Now imagine another person joins in a careless way, looks untidy, and seems unprepared. People may quickly think that the person is not taking the meeting seriously. This example shows that **appearance can affect the first message people receive about you**, even before your words begin.

How to Make a Strong First Impression

SECTION 1: FIRST 30 SECONDS MATTER

- Smile naturally
- Maintain eye contact
- Stand straight
- Look confident



SECTION 2: APPEARANCE

- Dress neatly
- Clean shoes
- Well-groomed hair
- Simple accessories



SECTION 3: BODY LANGUAGE

- Firm handshake
- Open posture
- Avoid crossed arms
- Nod while listening



SECTION 4: SPEAKING

- Greet politely
- Speak clearly
- Use a calm tone
- Be respectful



"People remember how you make them feel."

Why Does Context Matter in Non-Verbal Communication?

Context matters because the same non-verbal sign can mean different things in different situations. The source text explains that non-verbal communication may be understood differently across cultures, and it gives the example that eye contact shows respect in some cultures but may feel uncomfortable in others. This idea is very important for students. A person who stands far away may seem distant in one situation, but in another situation, they may simply be respecting personal space. A serious facial expression may show concentration, not anger. A quiet tone may show sadness, politeness, or tiredness depending on the moment. Context includes the setting, the relationship between the people, the culture, the purpose of the interaction, and what happened before the moment. Good communication depends on reading all these parts together. Without context, people may make quick and unfair judgments that damage communication.

Why Should We Read More Than One Sign Before Judging a Situation?

One of the most important rules in non-verbal communication is that one sign alone is not enough. A strong reader of communication looks at several clues together. For example, a student who gives little

eye contact, speaks softly, and keeps a closed posture may be shy, tired, worried, or simply uncomfortable in that moment. If only one clue is noticed, the judgment may be wrong. The source text supports this idea by showing that many types of non-verbal signals work together: tone, facial expression, gesture, space, and posture all contribute to meaning. The best communicator therefore combines the signs, thinks about the context, and delays judgment until the fuller picture becomes clearer. This habit leads to more accurate understanding and better response in real life.

How Can Students Improve Their Non-Verbal Communication Skills?

The source text gives practical ways to improve non-verbal communication. It advises turning the body toward the other person, keeping an open posture, leaning in slightly to show attention, using comfortable eye contact, relaxing the body, using simple gestures such as nodding or smiling, speaking with a calm voice, respecting personal space, and showing empathy in a suitable way. These suggestions are useful because non-verbal communication can be improved through awareness and practice. Students do not need to become artificial or over-controlled. Instead, they should become more aware of the message their body is already sending. Small changes in posture, tone, and attention can make communication clearer, warmer, and more respectful. In school and future work situations, this improvement helps a student appear more confident, more engaged, and more professional.

Brief Example

A student says, “Yes, I understand the task,” but avoids eye contact, keeps a tense face, and shrugs the shoulders. The teacher notices these non-verbal signs and realizes that the student may still be unsure. Instead of ending the conversation, the teacher explains the task again more clearly. This example shows why non-verbal communication matters: the spoken message sounded complete, but the body language suggested that the student needed more support.

Student Practice Activities

1. Observe a short classroom or workplace interaction and identify at least four non-verbal signs used by the speakers or watch a video online(if you can't join the class)/ observe your neighbors conversation(if you don't have access to internet), and explain what each sign may mean.
2. Choose one spoken sentence and show how it could sound polite, rude, nervous, or confident by changing only facial expression, posture, and tone of voice.
3. Look at two pictures of people in conversation and explain how appearance, gesture, and eye contact influence the meaning of the situation.
4. Write a short reflection on your own non-verbal communication. What message do you think your posture, face, and voice usually send to others?

Reflection Questions

1. Which non-verbal signs do you notice most quickly in other people?
2. Which part of your own non-verbal communication would you like to improve most?
3. Have you ever misunderstood someone because of body language or tone? What happened?
4. How can better non-verbal awareness help you in school, work, or daily life?

Assessment Practice

Look at several short communication situations, either in pictures or brief written descriptions. For each one, identify the main non-verbal signs, explain what they may mean, and state what extra context you would need before making a final judgment.

Chapter 2: Symbolic and Aesthetic Expression

Non-Verbal Communication

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize symbolic and aesthetic meaning in music, images, and abstract art.
2. Explain how color, shape, sound, and style can communicate emotion.
3. Write or speak about interpretation using clear supporting reasons.

Words to Know

Key terms	meaning
symbol	An object, image, color, sound, gesture, or sign that represents an idea beyond its direct appearance.
Symbolic meaning	The deeper meaning communicated by a symbol. For example, a heart shape may communicate love
symbolism	The use of symbols to communicate ideas, emotions, identity, culture, or values.
aesthetic expression	Communicating meaning or feeling through artistic or sensory forms such as color, music, image, shape, movement, design, or style.
abstract art	Art that does not show real objects clearly, but uses colors, lines, shapes, and forms to express ideas or emotions.
Mood	The feeling or atmosphere created by something, such as calmness, sadness, fear, joy, or excitement.
interpretation	The meaning a person understands from something after observing and thinking about it.
style	The way something is designed, arranged, performed, or presented.

What Is Symbolic Meaning?

Symbolic meaning is the deeper meaning that something communicates beyond its simple physical form. A symbol may look simply, but it can carry a larger idea. For example, a flag is not only colored cloth. It may symbolize a country, history, unity, sacrifice, or national identity. A wedding ring is not only jewelry. It symbolizes love, commitment, and marriage.

In non-verbal communication, symbolic meaning is very important because people often understand symbols quickly without needing a full explanation. A red traffic light tells drivers to stop. A school logo may communicate education and trust. A black ribbon may communicate mourning or respect. A dove may communicate peace. Furthermore, symbolic communication depends on shared

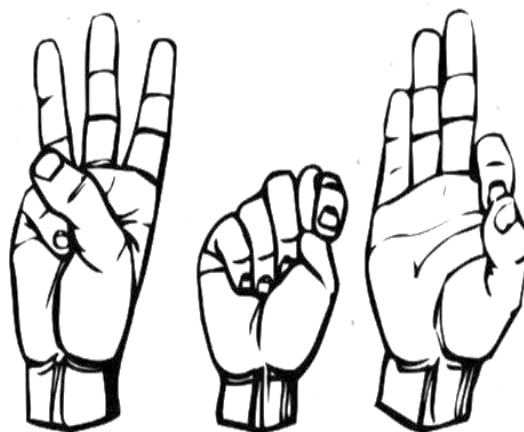
understanding. People understand symbols because their culture, community, or social environment has taught them what those symbols mean. The uploaded material on symbolic communication explains that humans interpret symbols and receive messages from them, such as traffic signs that guide actions while driving. For instance, a teacher enters the classroom and raises one finger to the lips. The teacher does not say “be quiet,” but the students understand the message. The gesture works as a symbol. It communicates silence, attention, and classroom discipline without words.

What Are Symbolic and Aesthetic Expression?

Symbolic and aesthetic expression means communicating meaning through symbols, beauty, design, style, sound, image, color, shape, or artistic form which are closely connected. A symbol gives meaning, and aesthetic style gives emotional effect. Together, they help people communicate complex messages quickly. In this lesson, we study it as part of **non-verbal communication**, because the message is not mainly communicated through direct words. For a better understanding, symbolic expression focuses on **what something**

represents. For example, a white coat may symbolize medical professionalism. A graduation gown may symbolize academic achievement. A national anthem may symbolize national identity. And aesthetic expression focuses on **how something creates feeling or mood** through artistic or sensory choices. For example, soft music, warm lighting, and gentle colors can create a calm mood. Dark colors, sharp shapes, and loud sounds can create tension or fear. The uploaded aesthetic communication document explains that aesthetic forms of expression can communicate ideas, moods, and meaning. It also emphasizes that students should learn how meaning is created, perceived, and interpreted through artistic forms. For example, imagine a hospital waiting room. If the room has soft blue walls, comfortable chairs, quiet music, and simple clean design, patients may feel calmer and safer. The room is not speaking, but its aesthetic design

communicates care, peace, and trust. Now imagine the same room with very bright red walls, loud music, broken chairs, and messy posters. The feeling changes. The message may become stress, disorder, or discomfort. This shows how aesthetic expression can influence emotion without direct words.



How Can Aesthetic Choices Communicate Mood?

Aesthetic choices communicate mood by affecting how people feel when they see, hear, or experience something. Color, sound, shape, lighting, space, texture, clothing, and design can make a message feel serious, joyful, peaceful, professional, frightening, or emotional. Sometimes the audience feels the mood before they can explain it clearly. For example, slow music can make a scene feel sad, respectful, or reflective. Fast music can make a scene feel exciting or energetic. Dark lighting in a film can create fear or mystery. Bright natural light can create hope or openness. A clean and simple design can communicate professionalism, while a messy and crowded design can communicate confusion or lack of preparation. Imagine a hospital waiting room. If the walls are soft blue, the lights are gentle, the chairs are comfortable, and the posters are simple and clear, patients may feel calmer. The room is not speaking, but its aesthetic design communicates care and safety. Now imagine the same room with harsh red walls, loud noise, broken chairs, and crowded posters. Patients may feel stress or discomfort. This example shows that aesthetic expression can influence emotion even when no one says anything. Now, look at the picture, and ask yourself, how do you feel or which vibe it carries? How it changes your mood?



How Does Color Communicate Meaning?

Color is one of the strongest tools in symbolic and aesthetic expression. It can communicate emotion, identity, warning, peace, celebration, sadness, or seriousness. Red may communicate danger, love, energy, anger, blood, or urgency depending on the context. Blue may communicate calmness, sadness, trust, or professionalism. Green may communicate nature, health, growth, safety, or freshness. Black may communicate elegance, power, mourning, seriousness, or mystery. White may communicate

peace, cleanliness, purity, or mourning depending on cultural context. Color is powerful because it can affect the audience very quickly. Before a person reads the words on a poster, the color may already create an emotional reaction. This is why designers, teachers, advertisers, artists, and public speakers often choose colors carefully. A mental health awareness poster may use soft colors to create emotional safety. A

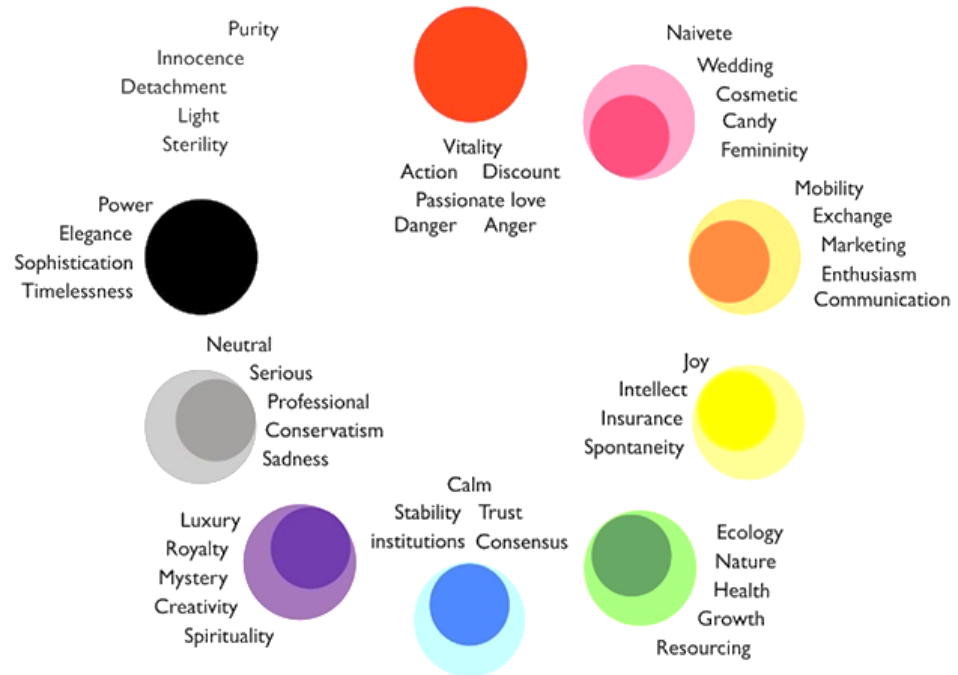
warning poster may use red or yellow to catch attention and communicate danger. For instance, imagine a teacher designs two posters for the same classroom rule:

“Respect each other.”

The first poster uses soft blue and green colors, round shapes, and calm images of students helping each other. The second poster uses dark red, sharp lines, and large bold letters. The first poster may communicate cooperation and kindness. The second may communicate warning or strict discipline. The words

are the same, but the color and design change the feeling of the message.

Colors symbolism



How Do Shape, Line, and Space Communicate Meaning?

Shapes, lines, and space can also communicate meaning. Round shapes often feel soft, friendly, safe, or gentle. Sharp shapes may feel strong, dangerous, modern, aggressive, or energetic. Straight lines can communicate order, stability, and control. Curved lines can communicate movement, comfort, or softness. Empty space can communicate peace, loneliness, importance, or distance depending on the context.

In abstract art, shape and space are especially important because the artwork may not show a clear person, object, or place. A painting with broken lines, dark colors, and crowded shapes may communicate confusion or pressure. A painting with soft circles, light colors, and open space may communicate calmness or harmony. The viewer understands meaning through the arrangement of visual elements, not through realistic objects. To understand better, imagine a student sees an abstract image with one small black circle placed far away from many bright circles. The image may not show a real person, but it can still communicate isolation. The small circle may symbolize a person who feels left out, while the distance from the group creates a feeling of loneliness. If the same circle is placed near the others, the meaning may change to belonging or friendship. This shows how space and arrangement can affect interpretation.

How Do Music and Sound Express Meaning?

Music and sound express meaning through rhythm, speed, volume, pitch, silence, repetition, and tone. Music can communicate mood even without lyrics. Slow and soft music may create sadness, calmness, respect, or reflection. Fast and loud music may create excitement, celebration, energy, or urgency. Low sounds may create seriousness or fear. High bright sounds may create happiness or playfulness. Silence can also communicate meaning, especially in films, ceremonies, and serious conversations. In real life, music often prepares people emotionally for a situation. At a graduation ceremony, formal music creates respect and importance. At a wedding, joyful music creates celebration. In a horror film, low sound and sudden loud noises create fear. In a classroom, calm background music during drawing or writing may help students feel relaxed and focused. Imagine a school assembly begins with slow formal music while students walk in quietly. Before anyone speaks, the music tells students that the event is serious and respectful. Now imagine the same assembly begins with very fast dance music. The students may feel excited and informal. The event has not changed yet, but the sound has changed the mood. This shows that sound is a strong part of non-verbal communication.



How Does Style Communicate Identity and Purpose?

Style means the way something is designed, arranged, worn, performed, or presented. Style communicates identity, purpose, seriousness, culture, professionalism, creativity, or attitude. Clothing style, room design, poster design, font choice, slide layout, music style, and artistic style all affect how a message is understood.

A formal style may communicate respect and professionalism. A colorful playful style may communicate creativity and fun. A traditional style may communicate culture and history. A simple clean style may communicate clarity and confidence. A messy or crowded style may communicate confusion or lack of preparation.

Imagine two students give the same presentation. One student uses clear slides, simple colors, organized images, and readable text. The other uses random colors, too many pictures, and crowded slides. Even if both students speak about the same topic, the first student may seem more prepared and professional because the visual style supports the message. This is why style is not only decoration. It affects communication.

How Does Abstract Art Communicate Without Clear Objects?

Abstract art communicates by using color, line, shape, space, texture, and movement rather than realistic images. It may not show a clear face, house, tree, or person. Because of this, abstract art asks

the viewer to interpret meaning from visual clues. It can express emotions that may be difficult to explain directly, such as confusion, pressure, hope, loneliness, freedom, fear, or peace. Abstract art is important in non-verbal communication because it shows that meaning does not always need direct representation. A painting can communicate sadness without showing a crying person. It can communicate conflict without showing a fight. It can communicate hope without showing a sunrise. The meaning comes from the total feeling created by the elements. For example, imagine an abstract painting with dark grey colors, heavy black lines, and a small yellow shape in the corner. A student may interpret it as hope during a difficult time. The dark colors may suggest sadness or struggle, while the small yellow shape may suggest light or possibility. Another student may interpret it differently, but both students should support their interpretation with details from the artwork.



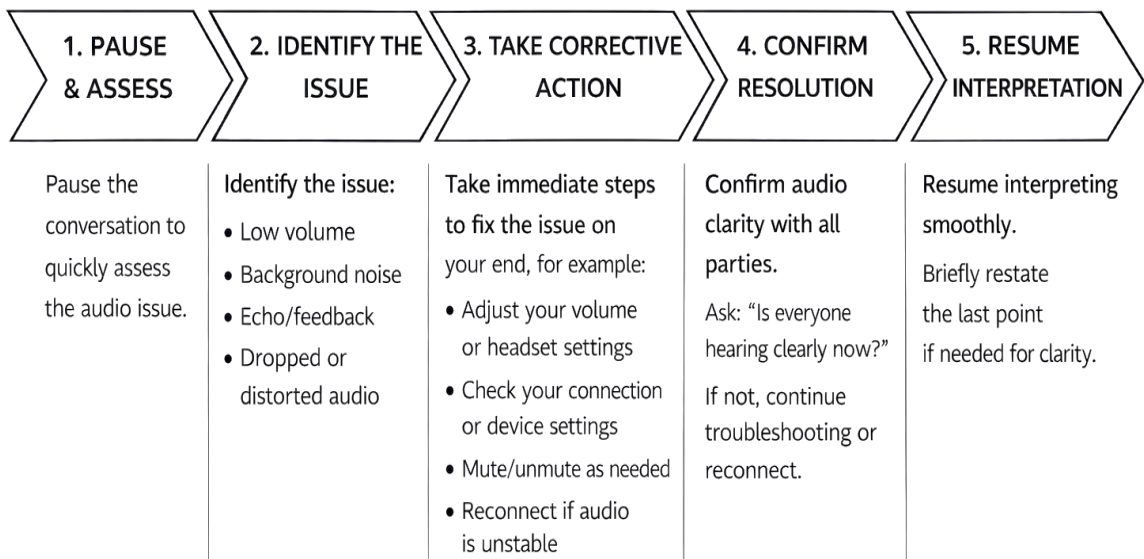
Why Can People Interpret the Same Symbol or Artwork Differently?

People can interpret the same symbol or artwork differently because meaning depends on culture, personal experience, context, mood, and background knowledge. A symbol may have one common meaning, but it can still create different feelings in different people. A song may make one person feel peaceful because it reminds them of family, while another person may feel sad because it reminds them of loss. A color may feel joyful in one culture and serious in another. This does not mean every interpretation is equally strong. A strong interpretation must be supported by clear evidence. Students should not only say, “I think this means sadness.” They should explain what details create that meaning. For example, they may mention dark colors, slow sound, empty space, downward lines, or a lonely figure. A good interpretation connects the meaning to visible or audible evidence. Imagine three students look at the same poster. The poster shows a small plant growing from cracked dry ground. One student says it means hope. Another says it means survival. Another says it means climate change. All three interpretations may be possible if the students give reasons. The green plant may show hope, the dry ground may show hardship, and the environmental image may suggest climate problems. This shows why interpretation should be thoughtful and supported.

How Can you Support an Interpretation Clearly?

You can support an interpretation clearly by using observation, meaning, and evidence. First, you should observe what you see or hear. This may include color, shape, sound, space, movement, style, clothing, image, or symbol. Second, you should explain what meaning they understand. Third, you should give a reason that connects the observation to the meaning. Keep in mind, that a weak interpretation says, “This picture is sad.” A stronger interpretation says, “This picture may communicate sadness because it uses dark blue and grey colors, empty space, and a person standing alone. These details create a lonely mood.” The second interpretation is stronger because it explains the reason.

In speaking or writing, you can use simple sentence patterns. you may say, “I think this symbol represents peace because it shows a dove.” You may say, “The mood seems serious because the colors are dark and the people are standing still.” You may say, “The music creates excitement because it is fast, loud, and repeated.” These sentence patterns help students move from feeling to explanation.



Why Does Context Matter in Symbolic and Aesthetic Expression?

Context matters because the same symbol, color, sound, or style can mean different things in different situations. A red color on a heart card may mean love, but red on a warning sign may mean danger. Black clothing at a funeral may show respect, but black clothing at a formal event may show elegance. Silence in a library may show respect for study, but silence after a difficult question may show discomfort or deep thinking. Context includes the place, culture, purpose, audience, relationship, and situation. Without context, people may misunderstand the message. A person may think a design is rude, sad, or strange when it has a cultural or personal meaning. For this reason, students should learn to interpret carefully and respectfully. For example, a girl sees her friend wearing traditional clothing at a school event. If she does not understand the context, she may think it is only fashion. But in that situation, the clothing may symbolize cultural identity, family respect, and pride. Understanding context helps her interpret the appearance more accurately.

Brief Example

A school creates a poster for a campaign about kindness. The poster shows two hands holding a small light. The background is dark blue, but the light is warm yellow. The hands may symbolize support and care. The dark background may show difficulty or sadness. The yellow light may symbolize hope. The whole poster communicates that kindness can help people during difficult times. This example shows how symbolic and aesthetic expression work together: the hands are symbolic, the colors create mood, and the arrangement supports the message.

Student Practice Activities

1. Observe a poster, school logo, public sign, or picture in your community(home). Identify at least three symbolic or aesthetic features, such as color, image, shape, space, or style, and explain what each one may communicate.
2. Listen to a short piece of music without focusing on words. Explain what mood it creates and what features of the sound support your interpretation, such as speed, volume, rhythm, pitch, or silence.
3. Look at an abstract artwork or image. Describe what you notice first, then explain what meaning or emotion it may communicate. Support your answer with at least three visual details.
4. Choose one real-life place, such as a classroom, hospital, restaurant, office, or wedding hall. Explain how the colors, sounds, decorations, clothing, and arrangement of the place communicate meaning without words.

Reflection Questions

1. Which symbols do you notice most often in your daily life?
2. Which aesthetic element affects your feelings most strongly: color, music, image, shape, or style?
3. Have you ever understood a message from a symbol, picture, or sound without anyone explaining it? What happened?
4. Why is it important to support an interpretation with clear reasons?
5. How can understanding symbolic and aesthetic expression help you communicate better in school, work, or daily life?

Assessment Practice

Look at several short communication situations, either in pictures, posters, music clips, artworks, or brief written descriptions. For each one, identify the main symbolic and aesthetic signs, explain what they may mean, and state what details support your interpretation. Then explain what extra context you would need before making a final judgment.

Lesson 3: Emotions, Triggers, and Empathetic Response

Learning Objectives

1. Explain what an emotional trigger is and how it can affect communication.
2. Recognize emotional signs in difficult conversations and respond with empathy.
3. Use “I” statements to express feelings, needs, and concerns without blaming others.

Words to Know

Key terms	Meaning
emotion	a strong feeling such as happiness, anger, fear, sadness, shame, surprise, or worry
emotional trigger	a situation, word, memory, action, tone, or behavior that causes a strong emotional reaction
response	what a person says or does after something happens
empathetic response	a response that shows understanding, respect, and care for another person’s feelings
reaction	a quick emotional or physical answer that may happen before a person has fully thought about it
validation	showing that another person’s feelings or experience are understood and respected, even if you do not fully agree
“I” statement	a sentence that explains your feeling or concern from your own point of view instead of blaming the other person
defensiveness	a reaction where a person feels attacked and tries to protect themselves instead of listening calmly
difficult conversation	a conversation that may involve disagreement, hurt feelings, correction, conflict, or sensitive emotions

What Is an Emotional Trigger?

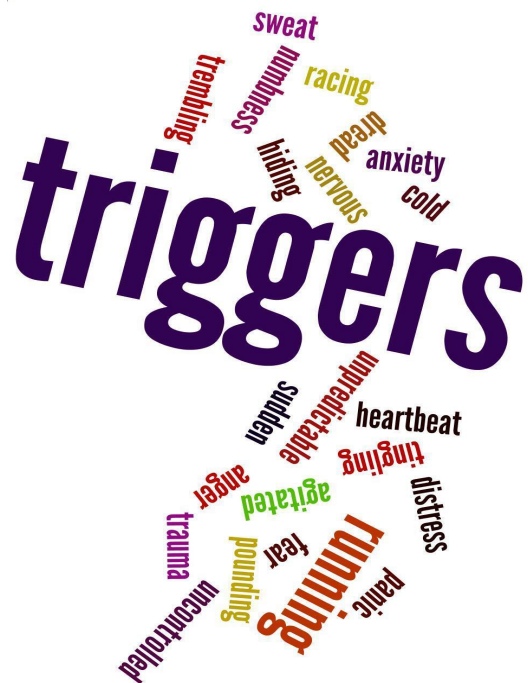
An emotional trigger is something that causes a strong emotional reaction in a person. It may be a word, memory, facial expression, tone of voice, situation, smell, place, or behavior. A trigger does not affect every person in the same way. One student may feel calm when a teacher corrects their mistake, while another student may feel embarrassed or attacked. The situation is the same, but the emotional reaction is different. A trigger often feels bigger than the present moment because it may connect to a person’s experience, fear, stress, shame, or insecurity. For example, if a student was often laughed at for making mistakes, even a small correction in class may trigger embarrassment or fear. If someone has experienced disrespect before, a sharp tone of voice may quickly make them feel hurt or angry.

Mental health sources describe triggers as actions or situations that can lead to adverse emotional reactions, especially when they connect with stress, painful memories, or difficult experiences. And emotional triggers are very important in communication because they can change how a person hears a message. A simple sentence may sound like criticism if the listener is already feeling sensitive. A normal question may feel like pressure if the person is anxious. A joke may feel insulting if it touches a painful subject. This is why good communicators do not only think about what they say. They also think about how the other person may receive it. Imagine a student submits homework late. The teacher says, “You need to be more responsible.” One student may accept this calmly and promise to improve. Another student may become silent, embarrassed, or upset because the word “responsible” reminds them of being harshly criticized at home. The teacher may not intend to hurt the student, but the student’s emotional trigger changes the meaning of the message. This shows why emotional awareness is necessary in respectful communication.

Why Do Emotional Triggers Affect Communication?

Emotional triggers affect communication because strong emotions can make it harder to listen, think clearly, and respond calmly. When a person feels attacked, embarrassed, ignored, or unsafe, the person may react quickly instead of responding thoughtfully.

They may become angry, defensive, silent, tearful, sarcastic, or withdrawn. In that moment, the conversation is no longer only about the topic. It is also about the emotion underneath the topic. For example, two classmates are working in a group. One says, “You didn’t do your part properly.” The other student immediately becomes angry and says, “You always blame me!” The second student may be reacting not only to the group work, but also to the feeling of being judged. The trigger may be criticism, public correction, or feeling unappreciated. If both students continue reacting emotionally, the conversation may become a conflict. If one of them slows down and responds with empathy, the conversation can become calmer. Furthermore, they can also appear through non-verbal signs. A person may cross their arms, look away, speak loudly, become quiet, avoid eye contact, or show a tense facial expression. These signs do not always prove what the person feels, but they may show that the person is emotionally affected. A careful communicator notices these signs and responds with patience instead of making the situation worse.

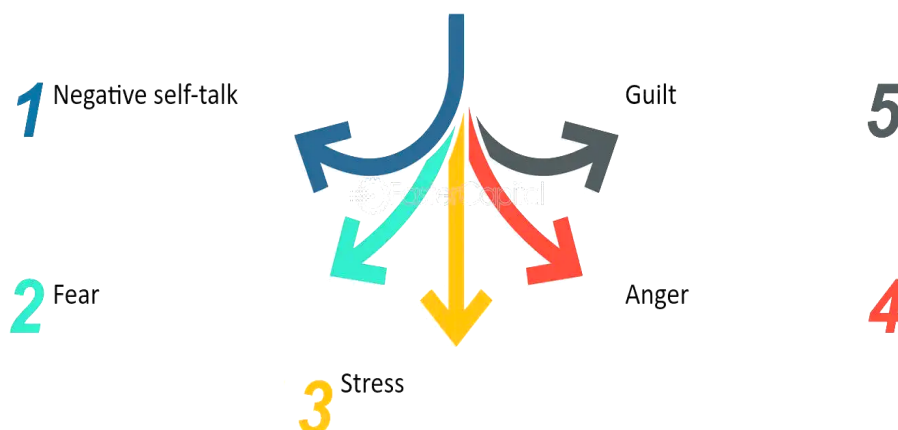


What Are Common Emotional Triggers?

Common emotional triggers include criticism, being ignored, being interrupted, feeling disrespected, being blamed, being compared to others, feeling embarrassed, being excluded, hearing a harsh tone of voice, or feeling that one’s effort is not appreciated. These triggers are common because they connect to basic human needs such as respect, safety, belonging, fairness, and being understood. A student may be triggered when a teacher corrects them in front of others. A parent may be triggered when a child does not listen. A worker may be triggered when a manager speaks in a cold tone. A friend may be triggered when messages are ignored. In each case, the visible event may seem small, but the

emotional meaning may be large. Imagine a girl sends a message to her friend and receives no reply for many hours. One person may think, “Maybe she is busy.” Another person may think, “She does not care about me.” If the second person has a strong fear of being ignored or rejected, the silence may become an emotional trigger. The problem is not only the unanswered message. The problem is the meaning the person gives to the silence.

Common Types of Emotional Triggers



What Makes a Response Empathetic?

An empathetic response shows that you are trying to understand another person’s feelings and experience. It does not mean you must agree with everything the person says. It means you listen respectfully, notice the feeling, and respond in a way that makes the person feel heard rather than attacked. Empathy is especially important when someone is upset, embarrassed, angry, confused, or afraid. An empathetic response often includes active listening and validation. Active listening means paying close attention and responding in a way that shows understanding. Health communication sources describe active listening as a professional communication skill where the listener acknowledges the message and gives feedback to support mutual understanding. Validation means showing that another person’s feelings or point of view are understood and respected, even when you do not fully agree with their conclusion.

For example, if a student says, “I feel like everyone is laughing at me,” an unhelpful response would be, “Don’t be dramatic.” This response may make the student feel more embarrassed. An empathetic response would be, “I can see that you felt embarrassed. That must have been uncomfortable. Let’s talk about what happened.” This response does not say the student is completely right about everyone laughing. It simply recognizes the feeling and creates safety for further conversation.

How Can Empathy Help in Difficult Conversations?

Empathy helps difficult conversations because it lowers defensiveness. When people feel attacked, they usually protect themselves. They may argue, deny, blame back, or stop listening. But when they feel understood, they are more likely to calm down and continue the conversation. Empathy does not remove responsibility. It makes responsibility easier to discuss.

Imagine a teacher needs to talk to a student who disturbed the class. A non-empathetic response might be, “You are always causing problems. Sit down and be quiet.” This may shame the student and increase resistance. An empathetic but firm response could be, “I can see you are frustrated today, but shouting is disturbing others. Let’s take a moment, and then we will continue respectfully.” This

response recognizes the emotion but still sets a boundary. Furthermore, Empathy is useful in school, family, work, friendship, and community life. It helps people feel respected even when they are being corrected. It also helps the speaker avoid sounding harsh or careless. In difficult conversations, the goal is not to win against the other person. The goal is to understand the problem clearly and respond in a way that protects respect.

What Does an Empathetic Response Sound Like?

An empathetic response usually sounds calm, respectful, and specific. It does not rush to judge, fix, or criticize. It may include phrases such as:

- “I can see this is upsetting for you.”
- “It sounds like you felt ignored.”
- “I understand why that situation felt stressful.”
- “That must have been difficult.”
- “Thank you for telling me. Let me make sure I understand.”
- “I may not see it exactly the same way, but I understand that it affected you.”

A strong empathetic response has three parts. First, it notices the feeling. Second, it shows respect for the person’s experience. Third, it keeps the conversation open. It does not insult, minimize, mock, or immediately give advice. For better understanding, imagine a student says, “I don’t want to present because everyone will laugh.” A weak response is, “Stop being scared.” A better response is, “It sounds like you are worried about being embarrassed. Presenting in front of people can feel difficult. We can practice together first.” This response recognizes the emotion and gives support without making the student feel weak.

Why Are “I” Statements Useful in Difficult Conversations?

“I” statements are useful because they help a person express feelings and concerns without directly blaming the other person. A blaming sentence often begins with “you,” such as, “You never listen,” “You are rude,” or “You always make problems.” These sentences may make the other person defensive. An “I” statement explains the speaker’s experience instead. It may sound like, “I feel ignored when I am interrupted because I cannot finish my idea. ” An “I” statement does not guarantee that the conflict will be solved immediately. It simply opens a healthier conversation by explaining how the situation looks from the speaker’s perspective. Communication guidance from Boston University describes “I” messages as clear statements from one’s own perspective that are intended to open healthy conversation, not force the other person to fix everything immediately. For example, instead of saying, “You don’t care about the group project,” a student can say, “I feel worried when the work is not finished on time because our whole group may lose marks.” This sentence is clearer and less attacking. It explains the feeling, the situation, and the reason. The other person may still disagree, but the conversation has a better chance of staying respectful.

Read the table carefully and think about the deference. Explain your feeling when someone talk to you using you (How do you feel), and when they use, I statement (how do you feel)?

You never do any of the work	When I have to clean the house after work. I feel exhausted. Could you please help me?
------------------------------	--

How Can Students Make a Good “I” Statement?

A good “I” statement usually includes the feeling, the situation, and the effect. A simple structure is:

“I feel _____ when _____ because _____.”

For example:

“I feel confused when instructions change quickly because I do not know which task to follow.”

“I feel uncomfortable when people laugh during my answer because it makes me afraid to speak again.”

“I feel stressed when group work is left until the last day because I want us to do well.”

“I feel hurt when my message is ignored because I thought the issue was important.”

This structure helps the speaker stay focused on their own experience instead of attacking the other person’s character. It also helps the listener understand the real problem. The goal is not to hide emotion. The goal is to express emotion responsibly.

Imagine a girl is upset because her friend keeps interrupting her. If she says, “You are so disrespectful,” the friend may argue. If she says, “I feel frustrated when I am interrupted because I lose my idea and feel unheard,” the friend may understand the problem more clearly. The second sentence is still honest, but it is less likely to create defensiveness.

What Is the Difference Between a Reaction and a Response?

A reaction is usually quick and emotional. It may happen before a person has fully thought about the situation. A response is more careful. It includes thinking, choosing words, and considering the other person’s feelings. In difficult conversations, students should try to move from reaction to response. For example, if someone says, “Your work is not good,” a quick reaction may be, “You are wrong!” or “You always criticize me!” A thoughtful response may be, “I feel disappointed hearing that. Can you explain which part needs improvement?” The response gives space for learning and reduces conflict. This does not mean emotions are bad. Emotions are normal and useful because they show what matters to us. Anger may show that we feel treated unfairly. Sadness may show that something hurt us. Fear may show that we need safety. The problem is not having emotions. The problem is allowing emotions to control the conversation without reflection.

Reacting vs. Responding

What is the difference between these two?

Reacting (Insecure)		Responding (Secure)
• An immediate and emotional reply • Instincts and learned behavior take over • No second thought for whether the reaction will have a negative or positive outcome • Comes from a place of fear		• You evaluate the situation and slow down • You can identify and become aware of unpleasant or uncomfortable emotions and mindfully select your response • Weighs long-term effects • Comes from a place of love and respect

How Should We Respond When Someone Is Triggered?

When someone is triggered, the first goal is not to win the argument. The first goal is to lower the emotional intensity so communication can continue safely. A helpful response includes calm tone, respectful body language, listening, and short validating statements. It is better to avoid mocking, blaming, shouting, or saying things like “You are overreacting.” Those responses often make the trigger stronger. A good response might be, “I can see this topic is upsetting. Let’s slow down.” Another response might be, “I did not mean to hurt you, but I understand that my words affected you. Can we talk about it calmly?” These sentences show respect without giving up honesty. Imagine a student becomes upset after receiving feedback. The teacher says, “You need to improve your introduction.” The student looks down and becomes silent. A careful teacher may say, “I know feedback can feel uncomfortable. I am giving this because your work has potential, and I want to help you improve.” This response recognizes the emotional moment and keeps the student engaged.

Why Should We Avoid Minimizing Feelings?

Minimizing feelings means making another person’s emotion seem small, silly, or unimportant. Examples include “It is not a big deal,” “You are too sensitive,” “Just forget it,” or “Why are you upset?” These responses may be intended to calm the person, but they often make the person feel unheard. An empathetic communicator does not need to agree with every emotion, but they should respect that the emotion is real for the person experiencing it. A better response is, “I can see this affected you,” or “I did not realize this was so important to you.” This keeps the conversation open. For example, if a classmate is upset because they were not included in a group, saying “It doesn’t matter” may hurt them more. Saying, “I understand that being left out felt painful” shows empathy. After that, the group can discuss what happened and how to fix it.

Brief Example

A student says, “I am fine,” but her face looks tense, her voice is quiet, and she avoids eye contact after being corrected in class. The teacher understands that the correction may have triggered embarrassment. Instead of saying, “Why are you acting like this?” the teacher says, “I noticed that the feedback may have felt uncomfortable. I want you to know the goal is to help your work improve, not to embarrass you.” The student feels safer and becomes more willing to listen. This example shows the full connection between emotions, triggers, and empathetic response. The trigger is public correction. The emotional reaction is embarrassment and withdrawal. The empathetic response is calm, respectful, and supportive. The teacher also avoids blame and uses careful language to protect the student’s dignity.

Student Practice Activities

1. Read or watch a short difficult conversation. Identify one possible emotional trigger and explain what reaction it caused. Listen to a difficult conversation that happens at home between your family member and explain emotional trigger and reaction that it caused (For those who don’t have access to internet).
2. Rewrite three blaming sentences as “I” statements. For example, change “You never help” into “I feel stressed when I have to do the work alone because I need support.”
3. Work with a partner. One person shares a small problem, and the other person gives an empathetic response using active listening and validation.
4. Think of a time when someone misunderstood your feelings. Write what they said, how it affected you, and what an empathetic response would have sounded like.

Reflection Questions

1. What kinds of situations can trigger strong emotions in students?
2. How can you say that someone may be emotionally affected during a conversation?
3. Why is empathy useful when someone is upset or defensive?
4. Which is more helpful in conflict: “You never listen” or “I feel ignored when I am interrupted”? Why?
5. How can using “I” statements help you in school, work, family, or friendship?

Assessment Practice

Read several short communication situations, either in pictures, role-play cards, or written descriptions. For each situation, identify the possible emotional trigger, describe the emotional reaction, and write one empathetic response. Then rewrite one blaming sentence as an “I” statement that could help the conversation continue respectfully.

Chapter 4: Assertiveness, Boundaries, and Conflict Response

Learning Objectives

1. Distinguish passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.
2. Use assertive language to express boundaries, say no, and ask for help.
3. Demonstrate calm listening and fair communication during conflict.

Words to Know

words	Meaning
assertive	able to express thoughts, feelings, needs, and limits clearly and respectfully
compromise	an agreement where both sides adjust or give up part of what they want in order to reach a fair solution
aggressive	expressing needs, opinions, or feelings in a forceful, rude, blaming, or controlling way
boundary	a limit that shows what is acceptable and unacceptable in a relationship, conversation, or situation
compromise	an agreement where both sides adjust or give up part of what they want in order to reach a fair solution
conflict	a disagreement or tension between people because of different needs, opinions, values, or expectations
fair communication	communication that gives both people a chance to speak, listen, and be treated respectfully
saying no	refusing a request in a clear and respectful way when something is not possible, suitable, or healthy

What Is the Difference Between Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive Behavior?

Passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior are three different ways people may communicate their needs, feelings, and opinions. These three styles are especially important in difficult conversations because they can change whether a problem becomes worse or moves toward a solution.

Passive behavior means a person does not clearly express their own needs, feelings, or opinions. A passive person may agree when they do not really agree, say “yes” when they want to say “no,” or stay silent because they are afraid of upsetting others. Passive communication may look polite on the outside, but it can cause stress inside. Over time, the person may feel ignored, tired, frustrated, or resentful because their needs are never clearly expressed. Furthermore, aggressive behavior is the opposite. An aggressive person expresses their own needs or opinions in a way that hurts, controls, insults, or ignores others. Aggressive communication may include shouting, blaming, threatening, mocking, interrupting, or forcing others to agree. It may help the person get what they want in the moment, but it often damages trust and relationships. Assertive behavior is the balanced style. An assertive person expresses their own needs, feelings, and opinions clearly, honestly, and respectfully. Assertiveness does not mean being rude or demanding. It means saying what is true for you while still respecting the other person. Assertive communication says, “My needs matter, and your needs matter too.” This is why assertiveness is usually the healthiest communication style in school, work, family, friendship, and community life. To better understand, imagine a student is asked by a group to do all the work for a project. A passive response would be, “Okay, I will do it,” even though the student feels stressed and treated unfairly. An aggressive response would be, “You people are lazy. I am not doing anything for you.” An assertive response would be, “I want to help with the project, but I cannot do all the work alone. Let’s divide the tasks fairly.” The assertive response is clear, respectful, and focused on solving the problem. Read the table below carefully for a clear understanding of the differences.



Thinking your needs don't matter at all	Recognising that your needs matter as much as anyone else's	Thinking that only your needs matter
Give in	Compromise	Take
Not talking, not being heard	Talking and listening	Talking over people
Trying to keep the peace	Making sure things are fair - for you and others	Looking out for yourself
Allowing yourself to be bullied	Standing up for yourself	Bullying others
Not saying what you think, or not saying anything	Express your point clearly and confidently	Can lead to shouting, aggression or violence
Damages relationships - other people respect you less	Enhances relationships - other people know where they stand	Damages relationships - other people don't like aggression
Damages your self-esteem	Builds your self-esteem	Damages others self-esteem

Why Is Assertiveness Important?

Assertiveness is important because it helps people communicate honestly without hurting themselves or others. If people never express their thoughts and needs, they may feel invisible or “walked over.” If they express themselves aggressively, they may damage relationships and create fear or anger. Assertiveness helps people stand in the middle: confident enough to speak, but respectful enough to

listen. In real communication, many problems become worse because people wait too long to speak. They stay silent, agree unwillingly, and then become angry later. Assertive communication helps prevent this by allowing a person to express concerns early and calmly. It also helps others understand what is needed. People cannot read each other's minds. If a person needs help, space, time, respect, or clearer instructions, they usually need to say so. Assertiveness also supports self-respect. When a student says, "I need more time to understand this," or "I am not comfortable with that joke," the student is not being difficult. The student is communicating honestly. At the same time, assertiveness requires responsibility. The speaker should choose words carefully, use a calm tone, and avoid attacking the other person. For example, a girl is in a classroom group. Her classmates keep choosing tasks without asking her opinion. At first, she stays quiet because she does not want conflict. Later, she feels hurt and excluded. A passive response keeps her silent. An aggressive response may lead her to say, "You never care about me." An assertive response would be, "I would like my opinion to be included before we decide the tasks. I think our group will work better if everyone has a chance to speak." This response protects her dignity and gives the group a fair way to improve.

What Is a Boundary?

A boundary is a limit that shows what is acceptable and unacceptable in a relationship, conversation, or situation. Boundaries protect a person's time, energy, values, safety, privacy, and emotional well-being. A boundary is not a wall that rejects people. It is a clear line that helps relationships stay respectful. Boundaries can be physical, emotional, social, digital, or time related. A physical boundary may involve personal space. An emotional boundary may involve not accepting insults or disrespectful jokes. A social boundary may involve choosing who to spend time with. A digital boundary may involve not replying to messages late at night. A time boundary may involve saying that you cannot take on extra work because you already have other responsibilities. Boundaries are important because people have different needs and limits. One person may be comfortable discussing a private topic, while another person may not. One student may be able to help a classmate for ten minutes, but not for two hours. One person may enjoy frequent messages, while another may need quiet time. Healthy communication requires people to express these limits respectfully. For instant, imagine that you have an exam and you are studying. A friend keeps calling and asking for help with homework. You want to be kind but also needs time to study. A respectful boundary would be, "I can help you for fifteen minutes now, but after that I need to study for my exam." This is not rude. It is clear and fair. The you respect the friend but also protects their own responsibility.

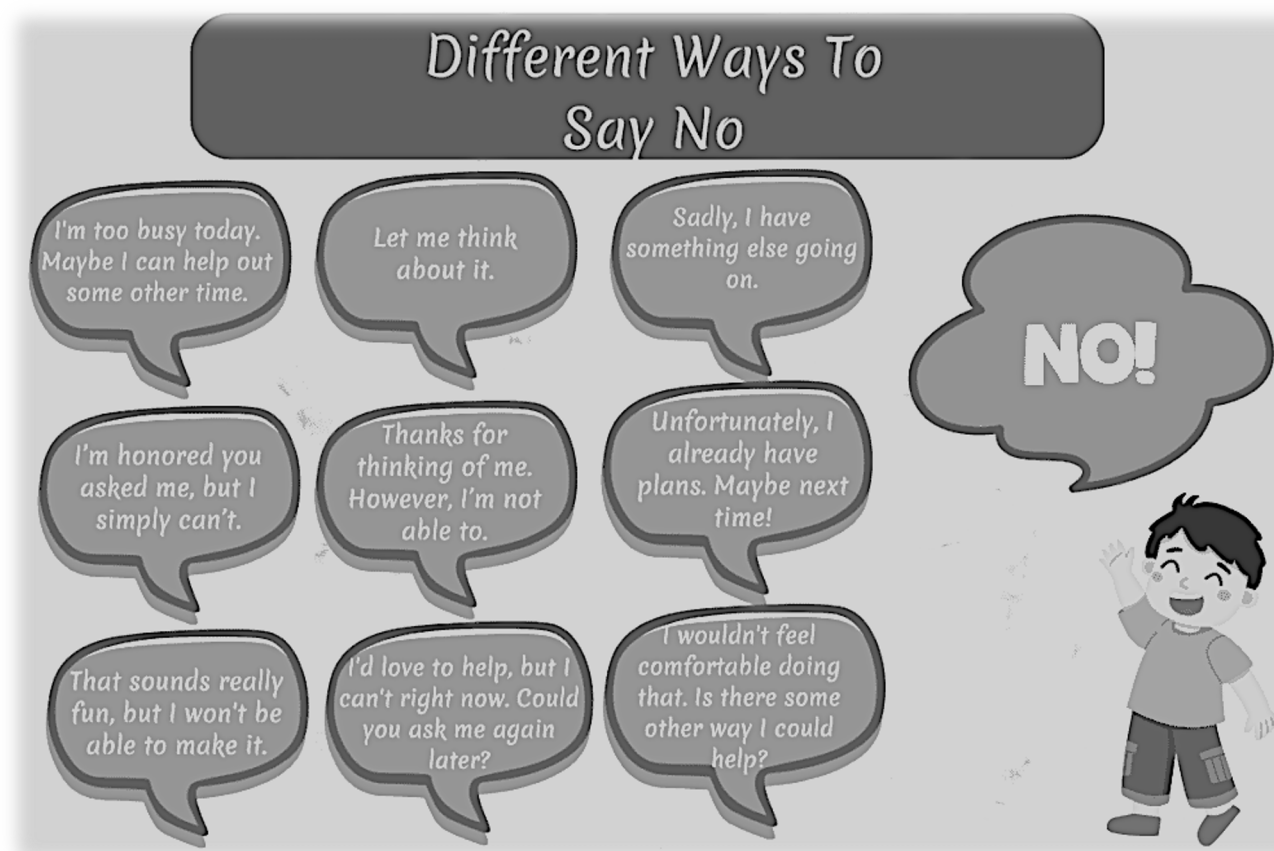
How Can You Set a Boundary Respectfully?

A respectful boundary should be clear, calm, and specific. It should explain what you can or cannot do without insulting the other person. A boundary is stronger when it focuses on behavior rather than attacking character. Instead of saying, "You are annoying," a person can say, "I need quiet time now, so I cannot talk at the moment." The second sentence is more respectful and easier to accept. A good boundary often has three parts. First, acknowledge the situation or the other person's need. Second, state your limit clearly. Third, offer a possible next step if appropriate. For example, "I understand that you need help with the assignment, but I cannot do it for you. I can explain the first question, and then you can try the rest yourself." This response is kind, but it does not allow the other person to cross the boundary. It is also important not to apologize too much for having a boundary. A person can be polite without acting guilty. Saying "I am sorry" once may be appropriate, but repeating apologies again can make the boundary sound weak or uncertain. A calm tone, steady posture, and respectful words help the boundary feel firm but not aggressive. Imagine a girl is in an online class group. Another student keeps sending messages late at night asking for answers. A passive response would be to answer every

message even when she is tired. An aggressive response would be, “Stop bothering me. You are so irresponsible.” An assertive boundary would be, “I do not answer school messages after 9 p.m. If you need help, please message me earlier, and I can try to help when I am free.” This boundary is realistic, respectful, and clear.

How Can You Say No Assertively?

Saying no is one of the most important parts of assertiveness. Many people find it difficult because they fear disappointing others, sounding rude, or losing approval. However, saying yes to everything can create stress, resentment, and poor communication. When a person says yes while secretly wanting to say no, the relationship may seem peaceful for a short time, but the person may later feel used or overwhelmed. An assertive “no” is not cruel. It refuses the request, not the person. A person can say no while still showing respect. For example, “Thank you for asking, but I cannot join today,” or “I cannot take this responsibility right now because I already have another task.” These sentences are clear and polite. They do not attack the other person, and they do not give unnecessary excuses. Sometimes people need to repeat a boundary calmly. If the other person keeps pushing, the speaker can use a steady sentence such as, “I understand, but my answer is still no,” or “I cannot do that today.” This helps the person stay firm without becoming aggressive. Imagine a student is asked to share her completed homework so another student can copy it. A passive response would be, “Okay, take it,” even though she feels uncomfortable. An aggressive response would be, “Do your own work. You are lazy.” An assertive response would be, “I cannot give you my homework to copy, but I can explain the question if you want to understand it.” This response protects honesty and still offers support. Showing that saying no is not always about fighting, not respecting or being unkind. Look at the picture and read some different ways to say no.



How Can You Ask for Help Assertively?

Assertiveness is not only about saying no. It is also about asking for help when help is needed. Some students avoid asking for help because they think it makes them look weak. Others may demand help aggressively. Assertive asking is different. It is clear, respectful, and specific. A good request for help explains what is needed and why. Instead of saying, “I don’t understand anything,” a student can say, “I understand the first part, but I need help with the last question.” Instead of saying, “You must help me now,” a student can say, “Could you please explain this part when you have time?” Specific requests are easier for others to answer. Assertive asking also respects the other person’s limits. If the person cannot help at that moment, the speaker should not become angry or controlling. Respect works in both directions. A person has the right to ask, and the other person has the right to say whether they can help. Imagine a student is preparing for a presentation and feels nervous. A passive student may stay silent and struggle alone. An aggressive student may say to a classmate, “You have to help me because I cannot do this.” An assertive student would say, “I am nervous about the presentation. Could you listen to me practice once and give me feedback?” This request is clear, respectful, and practical.

What Helps Communication Stay Calm in Conflict?

Communication stays calmer in conflict when people slow down, listen carefully, use respectful language, and focus on the problem rather than attacking the person. Conflict itself is not always bad. People will naturally disagree because they have different needs, ideas, responsibilities, and opinions. The real problem is not disagreement. The problem is how people behave during disagreement. Calm conflict response begins with self-control. A person should try to notice their tone of voice, facial expression, posture, and words. Speaking louder does not usually make the message stronger. It often makes the other person defensive. A calm voice, steady breathing, and respectful words can help the conversation remain safe enough for problem-solving. Listening is also necessary. Many conflicts become worse because each person prepares their next argument instead of listening to what the other person is saying. Calm listening means giving the other person time to speak, not interrupting, and trying to understand the concern behind the words. This does not mean agreeing with everything. It means showing enough respect to hear the other side. For example, two students disagree about how to divide work in a group project. One student says, “You are not doing enough.” The other student immediately becomes angry and says, “You always complain.” The conflict grows because both students attack each other. A calmer response would be, “Let’s look at the tasks again. I feel stressed because I think the work is uneven. Can we divide it more clearly?” This response focuses on the problem, not on insulting the person.

What Is Compromise and Why Is It Useful?

Compromise means finding a fair solution where both sides adjust instead of one side winning completely. In many conflicts, both people may have real needs. One person may need quiet time, while another person may need help. One student may want to finish work early, while another may need more time. A compromise helps both sides move toward a solution that is realistic and respectful. Compromise does not mean giving up all boundaries. A person should not compromise on safety, dignity, honesty, or serious values. For example, a student should not agree to cheating just to keep peace in a group. However, many everyday conflicts can be solved through flexible thinking. People can adjust time, tasks, methods, or expectations. A good compromise begins by identifying the real need behind each person’s position. For example, one student says, “We must meet today,” while another says, “I cannot meet today.” The conflict may seem difficult. But the real needs may be simple: one wants progress, and the other needs time for family responsibilities. A compromise could

be, “Let’s each complete one part tonight and meet tomorrow for twenty minutes.” Both people adjust, and the work continues. Think about two sisters who share one study table at home. One wants to study quietly for an exam. The other needs the table to complete an art project. If they argue, both may become upset. A compromise could be that the first sister uses the table for one hour, and the second sister uses it after that. Another compromise could be that one uses the table while the other works on the floor with a board for a short time. The point is not that both get everything they want. The point is that both needs are considered fairly.

How Can Assertiveness, Boundaries, and Compromise Work Together?

Assertiveness, boundaries, and compromise work together because each one supports fair communication. Assertiveness gives a person the voice to speak clearly. Boundaries show what the person can and cannot accept. Compromise helps both sides find a workable solution when their needs are different. Without assertiveness, a person may stay silent and allow resentment to build. Without boundaries, a person may accept behavior that is harmful, unfair, or exhausting. Without compromise, a person may become too rigid and make conflict harder to solve. Together, these skills help people communicate with both strength and respect. Imagine a student is part of a school event team. The group wants her to stay after class every day to prepare decorations. She cannot do this because she helps at home in the afternoon. A passive response would be to stay every day and become stressed. An aggressive response would be to refuse angrily and leave the group. An assertive response would be, “I cannot stay after class every day because I have responsibilities at home. I can stay on Tuesday and Thursday, and I can prepare some materials from home. Would that help the group?” This response includes a boundary, a respectful explanation, and a compromise.

Why Should Assertiveness Include Respect for Others?

Assertiveness should include respect for others because communication is not only about expressing oneself. It is also about maintaining fairness and dignity. A person who speaks clearly but does not listen may become aggressive. A person who sets boundaries, but insults others may damage the relationship. True assertiveness respects both sides. Respect means allowing others to have feelings, opinions, needs, and limits too. If one student has the right to say no, the other student also has the right to say no. If one person wants to be heard, the other person also deserves a chance to speak. This balance is what separates assertiveness from aggression. In real life, being assertive does not always mean the other person will agree. Someone may still feel disappointed, surprised, or upset. But if the speaker has been clear, honest, and respectful, they have made a fair communication attempt. The goal of assertiveness is not to control the other person’s reaction. The goal is to communicate responsibly. Imagine a girl tells her friend, “I cannot talk right now because I need to finish my assignment. I can call you after dinner.” The friend may feel disappointed, but the message is still respectful. The girl has not rejected the friendship. She has protected her time while still offering another option. This is assertiveness with care.

Brief Example

A student is working in a group project. One classmate keeps asking her to complete extra parts because “she writes better.” At first, she says nothing and accepts the work, but later she feels tired and resentful. Finally, she decides to respond assertively. She says, “I understand that you want the project

to be good, and I also want us to get a good mark. But I cannot complete everyone's sections. I can edit the final paragraph after each person writes their own part. Let's divide the work fairly."

This example shows passive, assertive, boundary-setting, and compromise skills together. The student does not insult her classmates, but she also does not accept unfair work. She sets a clear boundary and offers a realistic solution. This keeps the conversation respectful and gives the group a better chance to solve the problem.

Student Practice Activities

1. Read three short situations and decide whether each response is passive, aggressive, or assertive. Explain what words or actions helped you decide.
2. Write three assertive sentences for setting boundaries in school, family, or friendship. Each sentence should be clear, respectful, and specific.
3. Practice saying no respectfully. Choose one request that you cannot accept and write an assertive refusal that refuses the request without insulting the person.
4. Work with a partner or write alone. Create a short conflict between two students and show how they can use calm listening, boundaries, and compromise to solve it.

Reflection Questions

1. Which communication style do you use most often: passive, aggressive, or assertive?
2. Why do some people find it difficult to say no?
3. What is one boundary that can help students protect their time, energy, or learning?
4. How can calm listening change the direction of a conflict?
5. Why is compromise useful, and when should a person avoid compromising?

Assessment Practice

Read several short conflict situations, either in pictures, role-play cards, or written descriptions. For each situation, identify whether the behavior is passive, aggressive, or assertive. Then write one assertive response that includes a clear boundary, respectful language, and, where suitable, a fair compromise. Finally, explain what helped the communication stay calm and respectful.

Unit 2: Listening and Speaking in Conversation

Unit Aim

Develop effective listening and speaking skills for everyday conversations. Learn how to listen actively, express ideas clearly, ask thoughtful questions, participate confidently in discussions, and communicate respectfully with different people in different situations.

What You Will Learn

By completing this unit, students will learn how to:

- listen actively during conversations
- understand spoken messages more accurately
- ask and answer questions effectively
- express thoughts and opinions clearly
- participate confidently in conversations and discussions
- avoid misunderstandings
- communicate respectfully with others

How This Unit Supports Assessment

This unit supports assessment tasks that ask students to demonstrate listening skills, participate in discussions, ask and answer questions, express opinions, solve communication problems, and communicate effectively in real-life situations.

Chapter 1: Understanding Listening and Speaking in Conversation

Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain the role of listening and speaking in communication.
2. Distinguish between hearing and listening.
3. Identify the characteristics of effective listeners and speakers.
4. Understand how listening and speaking work together during conversations.
5. Recognize common barriers that affect communication.
6. Apply practical strategies to improve conversation skills.

Words to Know

Term	Meaning
conversation	A discussion between two or more people
Listening	Paying attention to understand a message
Speaking	Expressing ideas through words
communication	Sharing information and ideas
Attention	Focusing on what someone is saying
Misunderstanding	Understanding a message incorrectly

What Makes a Conversation Successful?

A conversation is much more than simply talking. A successful conversation happens when people exchange ideas in a way that allows everyone to understand each other. In many situations, people think that communication depends mainly on speaking. However, good conversations require both listening and speaking. If one person speaks clearly but the other person does not listen, communication becomes ineffective. Likewise, if a person listens carefully but cannot express ideas clearly, misunderstandings may still occur. A successful conversation is built on attention, respect, understanding, and participation. People need to pay attention to what others are saying, respond appropriately, and allow everyone an opportunity to speak. Good conversations help people learn new information, solve problems, build relationships, and share experiences.

Imagine a student participating in an online study discussion. One student explains a difficult lesson while the others listen carefully and ask questions when something is unclear. Because everyone contributes respectfully, the group understands the lesson more effectively. Now imagine a different situation where several students speak at the same time and nobody listens carefully. Even though many words are spoken, very little learning takes place. This shows that successful conversations depend on cooperation between speakers and listeners.

Good conversations are not about speaking the most. They are about helping people understand one another. When both listening and speaking work together, communication becomes more meaningful and productive.

Why Is Listening Important in a Conversation?

Listening is one of the most important parts of communication because it allows people to understand the messages, ideas, and feelings of others. Many people believe they are listening when they are only hearing sounds. True listening requires attention and effort. It means focusing on what another person is saying and trying to understand the meaning behind the words.

Listening helps people learn, solve problems, and build trust. When someone feels listened to, they usually feel respected and valued. This encourages open and honest communication. On the other hand, poor listening can lead to confusion, frustration, and conflict. For example, you are discussing a homework assignment with a friend. The friend carefully listens to each question before answering. As a result, the explanation becomes clear and helpful. Now imagine another situation where the friend keeps interrupting and thinking about what to say next instead of listening. The conversation becomes

confusing and neither student benefits fully. Listening is also important because people often communicate more than just facts. Their tone of voice, choice of words, and expressions may reveal feelings such as excitement, worry, confidence, or uncertainty. A good listener pays attention to these signals as well as the spoken message. For this reason, listening should never be viewed as a passive activity. It is an active skill that helps people understand others more accurately and respond more appropriately.

Importance of clear speaking in conversation.

Clear speaking is important because it helps people understand the message correctly. In conversation, it is not enough to have a good idea; the idea must be expressed in a way that the listener can follow. Clear speaking means using understandable words, speaking at a suitable speed, organizing ideas in order, and making the voice loud enough to hear. When speech is unclear, people may misunderstand the message or need to ask many questions. This can make school, work, and daily communication more difficult. For example, if a student in an online class says, “I did not understand that part,” the teacher may not know what she means. A clearer sentence would be, “I understood the first example, but I did not understand the last step of the solution.” This helps the teacher know exactly what to explain. Clear speaking is also useful in group work and workplace communication. If a young woman helping with student records says, “Some names are not okay,” the message is unclear. A clearer way would be, “Three students’ names are missing from today’s attendance list. I marked the empty spaces and will confirm them before tomorrow.” This sounds more professional and helps the listener respond quickly. Clear speaking does not mean using difficult words or speaking perfectly. It means speaking calmly, directly, and in an organized way. A clear speaker helps the listener understand the main point, avoids confusion, and makes the conversation more respectful and effective.

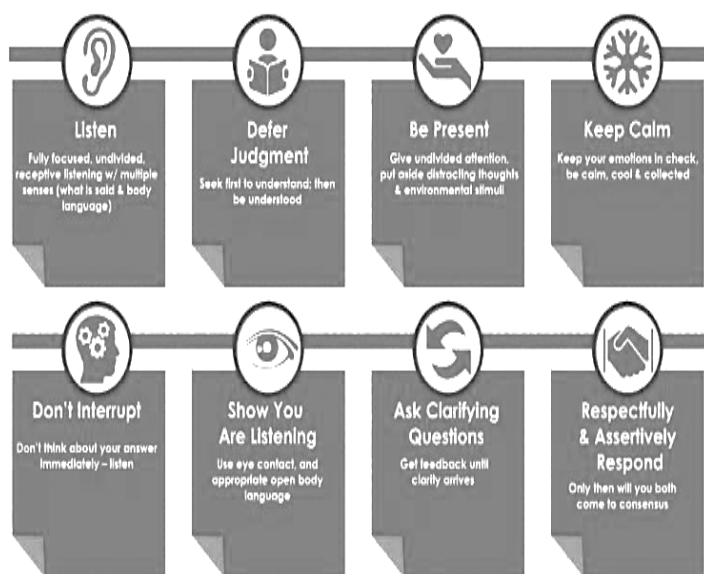
How Do Listening and Speaking Work Together?

Listening and speaking work together because conversation is not a one-sided activity. A good conversation needs both a speaker and a listener. Speaking allows a person to express ideas, feelings, questions, and needs. Listening allows the other person to understand those ideas and respond properly. If one person speaks clearly but the other person does not listen, communication fails. In the same way, if one person listens carefully but the speaker does not explain clearly, the message may still be misunderstood. This is why listening and speaking should be understood as two connected parts of the same communication process. Furthermore, in real conversation, listening usually comes before a good response. A person first hears the words, notices the tone of voice, observes the situation, and tries to understand the meaning. After that, the person can respond in a suitable way. If the listener responds too quickly without understanding, the answer may not match the real message. For example, if a student says, “I cannot finish the task today,” and the other person immediately says, “You are not responsible,” the listener may miss the real reason. The student may be sick, may not have internet access, may have family responsibilities, or may not understand the task. A better listener would first ask, “What is making it difficult to finish today?” This gives the speaker a chance to explain.

Speaking also helps listening because clear speech gives the listener something organized to understand. If the speaker gives information in a confusing way, the listener must guess the meaning. Guessing often leads to mistakes. For example, if a young woman helping with class records says, “The list has problems,” the listener may not know what kind of problem she means. Are names missing? Are numbers wrong? Are students repeated? A clearer speaker would say, “Three students’

names are missing from today's attendance list, and two names are repeated." This makes listening easier because the message is specific. Good communication happens when the speaker and listener support each other. The speaker should try to speak clearly, calmly, and in an organized way. The listener should pay attention, avoid interrupting, and check understanding when needed. This creates a cycle: one person speaks, the other listens, then responds based on understanding. The first person listens to that response and continues. In this way, conversation becomes an exchange, not just two people speaking separately. In the same way, listening also helps the speaker feel respected. When a person listens carefully, the speaker feels that her words matter. This can make the speaker more confident and more willing to explain. For example, in an online class, a student may be shy to ask a question. If the teacher listens patiently and says, "Yes, go ahead, explain which part is difficult," the student may feel safe to speak. But if the teacher interrupts or answers before the student finishes, the student may become silent and avoid asking questions in the future. Speaking respectfully also helps the listener stay open. If the speaker uses blaming or harsh words, the listener may become defensive and stop listening properly. For example, saying, "You never explain anything clearly," may make the teacher or classmate feel attacked. A more respectful way would be, "I am still confused about the last part. Could you please explain it again?" The second sentence is easier to listen to because it focuses on the problem, not on blaming the person. So, listening and speaking are especially important during disagreement. In conflict, many people listen only to reply, not to understand. They may hear one sentence and immediately prepare an argument. This makes the conflict stronger. Good listening in conflict means trying to understand what the other person really means before answering. Good speaking in conflict means explaining one's own concern without insult or attack. For example, if two students disagree about a group project, one may say, "You did not send your part on time." The other may feel attacked and answer, "You always blame me." The conversation can quickly become personal. A better response would be, "I understand you were waiting for my part. I had a problem with internet yesterday, but I should have informed you earlier. Can I send it tonight?" This response shows listening, responsibility, and clear speaking. But there is a very important thing that must be clear, which listening does not mean agreeing with everything. A person can listen carefully and still have a different opinion. Listening means giving the other person a fair chance to explain. After listening, the person can respond respectfully. For example, a student may listen to a classmate's idea for a presentation but think another idea is better. She can say, "I understand why you want to use that topic because it is easy to explain. I think this other topic may be stronger because it has better examples." This response shows that she listened first and then expressed her own opinion clearly.

To define a good listener and speaker, a good listener also uses small signs to show attention. These may include looking toward the speaker when appropriate, nodding, saying short phrases like “I understand,” asking questions, or repeating the main point. For example, a listener may say, “So you mean the deadline changed from Monday to Wednesday?” This helps confirm understanding. It also gives the speaker a chance to correct any mistake. These small listening responses make the conversation more accurate and respectful. A good speaker also checks whether the listener understood. This is important when giving instructions, explaining lessons, or discussing important tasks. A speaker can say, “Does that make sense?” or “Should I explain that part again?” This does not mean the speaker is weak. It shows responsibility for clear communication. For example, if a team leader explains how to complete student attendance records, she may finish by saying, “Please repeat the steps once so I can make sure I explained them clearly.” This helps prevent mistakes before they happen. In many real situations, listening and speaking are affected by emotion. If a person is angry, embarrassed, nervous, or tired, both listening and speaking may become weaker. The person may speak too quickly, misunderstand simple words, or react strongly. In such moments, slowing down helps. A person can say, “Let me explain calmly,” or “I want to understand first.” These phrases give the conversation more control and reduce misunderstanding. Listening and speaking also depend on context. In a classroom, students may need to listen carefully to instructions before asking questions. In a workplace, a young employee may need to listen to a supervisor’s request and then explain what is possible. At home, family members may need to speak respectfully and listen patiently because the relationship is close and sensitive. In all these settings, communication improves when people do not only focus on their own words, but also on how those words are received.



Imagine a young woman is responsible for collecting weekly assignment files from students. One student sends the file late and says, “I could not upload it.” If the young woman does not listen carefully, she may respond harshly and say, “You are late again.” But if she listens and asks, “Was the problem with internet, file size, or the upload link?” she may discover that the student had a technical problem. Then she can speak clearly and say, “Please send the file through this link before 6 p.m. today, and next time inform me earlier if the upload does not work.” This conversation works because listening identifies the problem, and clear speaking gives the next step. In short, listening and speaking work together like two sides of communication. Listening helps a person understand before responding. Speaking helps a person express idea clearly, so the listener does not have to guess. When both skills are used together, conversations become more respectful, accurate, calm, and useful. A strong communicator is not only someone who speaks well, but also someone who listens carefully and responds based on real understanding.

What Prevents People from Listening Effectively?

Many factors can prevent people from listening effectively, even when they want to listen. These obstacles are often called communication barriers. One common barrier is distraction. Phones, noise, side conversations, and other interruptions can take attention away from the speaker. Another barrier is emotion. When people are angry, worried, stressed, or upset, they may find it difficult to focus on what others are saying. Sometimes people stop listening because they assume they already know what the speaker will say. Others spend the entire conversation preparing their response instead of paying attention. In these situations, listening becomes less effective because understanding is replaced by assumption. Imagine a student attending an online lesson while constantly checking messages on a phone. Although the lesson continues, much of the information may be missed because attention is divided. In another situation, a student becomes worried about an upcoming examination and finds it difficult to concentrate during a discussion. Even though the student wants to listen, emotional concerns interfere with attention. Recognizing these barriers is important because it allows people to manage them more effectively and become better communicators.

How Can Students Improve Listening and Speaking Skills?

Students can improve listening and speaking skills through regular practice and careful attention. These skills do not become strong only by reading about them. They improve when students use them in real conversations, notice their mistakes, and try to communicate more clearly next time. One important way to improve listening is to give full attention to the speaker. A good listener does not only hear the words but also tries to understand the message behind them. This means avoiding interruption, not judging too quickly, and asking questions when something is unclear. For example, if a teacher gives instructions for an assignment and the student does not understand the deadline, she can ask, “Do we need to submit this today or tomorrow?” This simple question prevents confusion. Students can also improve listening by repeating or summarizing the main point. For example, after a group leader explains a task, a student may say, “So my part is to collect the examples and send them before 7 p.m., correct?” This shows that the student listened carefully and wants to make sure she understood correctly. To improve speaking, students should organize their ideas before they speak. A clear speaker knows the main point and gives the necessary details in order. Instead of saying, “There was a problem with the file,” a clearer speaker says, “The file did not upload because the internet stopped. I will upload it again before 6 p.m.” This message is easier to understand because it explains the problem and the next step. Students should also use simple words, a suitable speed, and a clear voice. Speaking clearly does not mean using difficult vocabulary. It means choosing words that the listener can understand. In online classes, meetings, or group work, this is especially important because unclear speech can easily lead to misunderstanding. Practice is the best way to improve. Students can practice by asking one clear question in class, explaining a lesson to someone at home, giving a short update in a group, or recording a short voice message and listening to it again. When they listen to their own speech, they may notice if they speak too fast, repeat words too much, or leave ideas unfinished. Suppose a student is responsible for sending group homework. One classmate says she could not send her part because the internet was not working. Instead of reacting quickly and saying, “You are always late,” the student listens first and asks, “Can you send it now, or do you need more time?” Then she speaks clearly: “Please send it before 8 p.m. so I can combine the work and submit it on time.” This response shows both good listening and clear speaking. In short, students improve listening and speaking by paying attention, asking for clarification, summarizing important points, organizing ideas before speaking, using clear language, and practicing regularly. A strong communicator listens to understand and speaks to be understood.

Brief Example

A student is preparing for an examination and joins a small study discussion with friends. During the conversation, everyone listens carefully, asks questions, and shares ideas respectfully. When one student becomes confused about a topic, the others explain it using simple examples. By the end of the discussion, the group has a better understanding of the lesson. This example shows how listening and speaking work together to support learning.

Student Practice Activities

1. Think about a real conversation you had recently with a teacher, classmate, family member, or someone in your community. The conversation can be face-to-face, by phone, in an online class, or through a voice message. Write a short description of what happened. Then identify one moment where someone listened well and one moment where someone did not listen well. Explain how the good listening helped the conversation and how the poor listening created confusion, discomfort, or misunderstanding.
2. Practice careful listening with another person if possible. One student should speak for one minute about a simple topic, such as a favorite subject, a recent lesson, a household responsibility, or a future goal. The listener should not interrupt while the speaker is talking. After one minute, the listener should summarize the main points by saying, “You said that...” or “The main points I understood are...” If a partner is not available, the student can listen to a short voice message, radio program, class recording, or family conversation and write the main points afterwards.
3. Write three realistic situations where poor listening could cause misunderstanding. For each situation, explain what the listener missed and what problem could happen because of it. For example, a student may misunderstand the deadline for homework, a sister may not hear which item should be bought from the market, or a worker may misunderstand which names should be added to an attendance list. Then write one sentence showing how the listener could ask for clarification.
4. Practice explaining a simple idea clearly. Choose one topic you know well, such as how to submit homework online, how to prepare for an exam, how to organize a notebook, or how to complete a small household task. Explain it in five or six clear sentences. Focus on using simple words, speaking or writing the steps in order, and giving one example. Afterward, check your explanation by asking: Is my main point clear? Did I include the important details? Would another person know what to do after listening to me?

Reflection Questions

1. What makes you feel that someone is really listening to you?
2. What usually distracts you when you are trying to listen?
3. Which is easier for you: listening carefully or speaking clearly?
4. What can happen if a person gives unclear instructions?
5. What is one thing you can do to improve your speaking or listening?

Assessment Practice

Read the short situation below and answer the questions.

Situation: A student sends a message to her group leader and says, “I cannot send the data, and reports”
The group leader replies, “You are always late,” without asking what happened.

Questions:

1. What was unclear in the student’s message?
2. Did the group leader listen carefully before responding? Explain briefly.
3. How could the student make her message clearer?
4. How could the group leader respond in a better way?
5. Explain how better listening and clearer speaking could prevent misunderstanding in this situation.

Chapter 2: Asking Questions and Sharing Ideas

Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain why questions are important in conversations.
2. Distinguish between different types of questions.
3. Ask questions that encourage discussion and understanding.
4. Share ideas clearly and respectfully.
5. Use follow-up questions to deepen conversations.
6. Respond thoughtfully when others ask questions.

Words to Know

Term	Meaning
Question	A sentence used to request information or understanding
Open question	a question that needs more than a “yes,” “no,” or one-word answer and encourages the speaker to explain more
follow-up question	an extra question asked after someone answers, to understand more deeply or continue the conversation
Closed question	a question that can usually be answered with “yes,” “no,” or a short answer
idea	a thought, opinion, suggestion, or belief that a person shares with others
Opinion	A personal belief or viewpoint
respectful response	an answer that shows attention, politeness, and care for the other person’s words or feelings
clarification	a clearer explanation that helps remove confusion or misunderstanding
discussion	a conversation where people exchange ideas, questions, opinions, and reasons

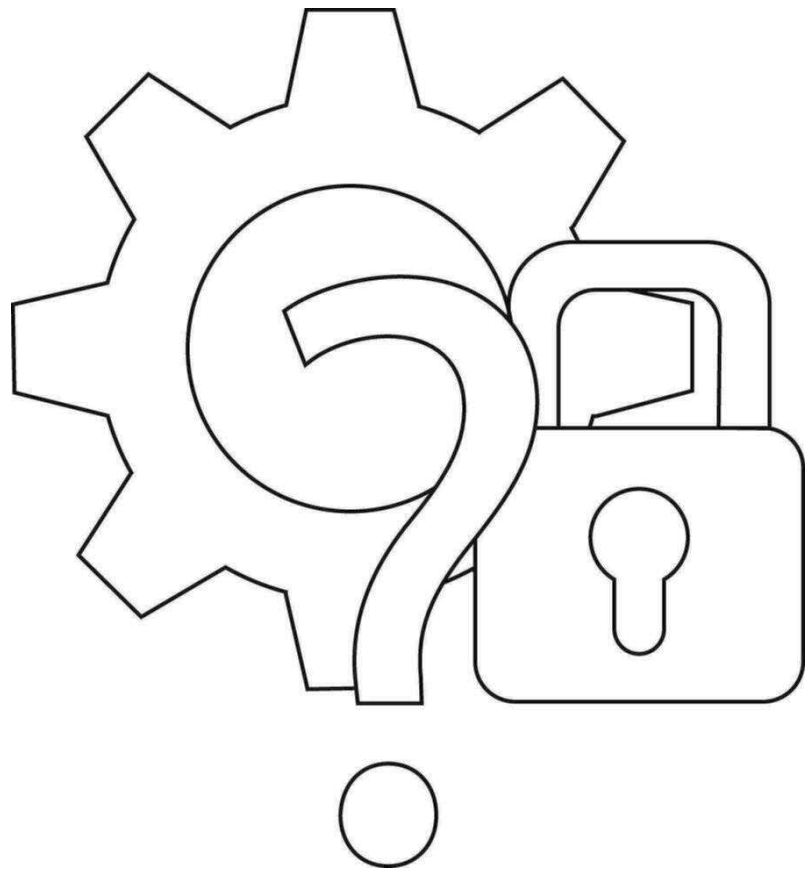
Why Are Questions Important in Conversations?

Questions are important because they help conversations move forward. Without questions, people may only make statements, and the conversation can become short, one-sided, or unclear. A good question shows interest, encourages the other person to speak, and helps both people understand each other better. In school, family life, online learning, community work, and professional situations, questions help people learn information, solve problems, clarify instructions, and build connection.

Questions also show that the listener is active, not silent or careless. When a person asks a suitable question, it often tells the speaker, “I am listening to you,” or “I want to understand more.” This can make the speaker feel respected and encouraged. For example, if a student explains that she could not complete an assignment, a careless listener may only say, “That is your problem.” A better listener may ask, “What part was difficult?” or “Was the problem with the instructions, the internet, or the time?” These questions help discover the real reason instead of judging quickly. Questions are also useful because they can prevent misunderstanding. Many problems happen because people guess instead of asking. A student may hear, “Send the work later,” but does not know whether “later” means today, tomorrow, or next week. A simple question such as, “Should I send it before 6 p.m. today?” can prevent confusion. In this way, asking questions is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of responsibility. Imagine a student receives a message from a group leader saying, “Prepare your part soon.” If the student does not ask anything, she may send the work too late or prepare the wrong section. A useful question would be, “Which part should I prepare, and what time should I send it?” This question is simple, but it makes the task clear. It also helps the group work more smoothly.

How Do Questions Help People Understand Each Other?

Questions help people understand each other because they invite explanation. Sometimes a person’s first sentence does not give the full meaning. People may speak briefly because they are shy, busy, nervous, or unsure. A question gives them space to explain more. For example, if someone says, “I am not comfortable with this plan,” the listener may not know why. A helpful question would be, “Which part of the plan feels difficult for you?” This allows the speaker to explain the real concern. Questions also help people understand feelings and opinions, not only facts. In many conversations, the important message is not only what happened, but how the person feels about it. For example, a student may say, “The presentation did not go well.” A follow-up question such as, “What part made you feel that way?” helps the listener understand whether the problem was fear, poor preparation, technical difficulty, or audience reaction. In conversations about opinions, questions help people avoid quick disagreement. If one person says, “Online learning is better than classroom learning,” another person may immediately disagree. But a stronger communicator asks first, “What makes online learning better for you?” This question does not mean the listener agrees. It means the listener wants to understand the reason before responding. This makes the conversation more respectful and more thoughtful. For example, two students are discussing whether group work is useful. One says, “I do not like group work. A quick answer might be, “You are wrong; group work is good.” A better response would be, “What makes group work difficult for you?” The student may then explain that some members do not complete their tasks. Now the conversation becomes clearer. The



issue is not that group work is always bad; the issue is unfair responsibility. This understanding is possible because someone asked a good question.

What Is the Difference Between Open-Ended and Closed Questions?

Open-ended and closed questions are two common types of questions. A closed question usually has a short answer, such as “yes,” “no,” a number, a name, or one piece of information. For example, “Did you submit the assignment?” is a closed question because the answer may be only “yes” or “no.” “What time is the meeting?” is also mostly closed because it asks for one specific answer. Closed questions are not bad. They are useful when the speaker needs quick, exact information. For example, “Did you receive the file?” “Is the class at 5 p.m.?” “Do we need to write our names on the answer sheet?” These questions help confirm facts. They are useful when time is short or when the information must be exact. Open-ended questions are different. They invite longer answers, explanation, opinions, or stories. They often begin with words such as what, how, where, when, who, or sometimes why. For example, “What part of the lesson was most difficult?” invites a longer answer. “How did you solve the problem?” encourages explanation. “What do you think about this idea?” invites opinion. Open-ended questions are helpful when the goal is discussion, learning, or deeper understanding. They encourage the speaker to think and explain. For example, if a student asks a classmate, “Did you like the lesson?” the classmate may say only “yes.” But if the student asks, “What part of the lesson helped you most?” the answer will probably be more useful. The second question creates conversation, not only a short reply. Imagine you want to understand why your friend is worried about an exam. A closed question would be, “Are you worried?” The friend may answer, “Yes.” An open-ended question would be, “What part of the exam worries you most?” This question helps the friend explain whether the problem is time, difficult vocabulary, lack of practice, or fear of forgetting. Because the question is open, it gives more useful information, so that you can help he. You can see a couple of sample questions in the photo attached the text.

Closed-ended vs. open-ended questions

Closed-ended questions	Open-ended questions
Would you recommend our product/service?	What were the main reasons you chose our product/service?
Did you experience good customer service?	How did you feel about our customer service?
Would you consider using our product/service again?	What would make you use our product/service again?
Did you like our product/service?	What is the most important feature of our product/service for you?
Are you interested in buying product/service today?	Why are you looking for product/service today?
Are you happy with your experience with us?	How would you describe your experience with us?
Did you find what you were looking for today?	How can we help you find what you are looking for today?

When Should Students Use Closed Questions?

Students should use closed questions when they need to confirm clear information. Closed questions are useful for checking facts, deadlines, choices, names, numbers, and instructions. They are also useful when a conversation needs to be quick and direct. For example, if a student is submitting homework online, she may ask, “Should I upload the file as a PDF?” This is a closed question because the answer may be yes or no. It is useful because the student needs a direct answer. If she asks, “What do you think about file formats?” the question may be too broad for the situation. A closed question is better when the student needs exact guidance. Closed questions can also help when someone is confused and needs to narrow the problem. For example, if a classmate says, “I cannot open the lesson,” the helper may ask, “Is the problem with the internet?” or “Did you download the file?” These questions help identify the issue step by step. However, too many closed questions can make a conversation feel like an interrogation. If one person only asks, “Did you do it?” “Was it hard?” “Are you ready?” “Do you understand?” the other person may answer briefly and stop speaking. Closed questions are useful, but they do not always encourage discussion. A strong communicator knows when to use them and when to change to open-ended questions. For example, if a young woman is helping collect student attendance information, she may first ask closed questions: “Did you attend today’s class?” “Was your internet working?” Then she may ask an open-ended question: “What made it difficult for you to join on time?” This combination gives both exact information and deeper understanding.

When Should Students Use Open-Ended Questions?

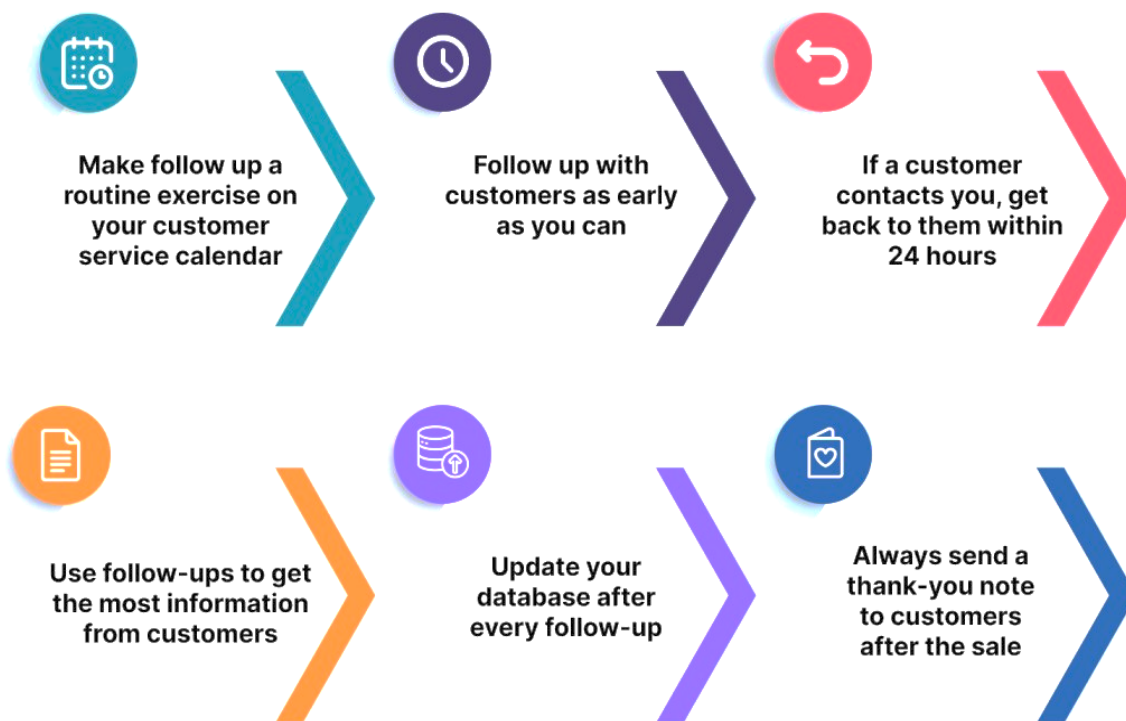
Students should use open-ended questions when they want more explanation, deeper thinking, or a better conversation. Open-ended questions are useful in discussions, group work, interviews, problem-solving, and conversations about opinions or feelings. They help the speaker say more than one word and explain the reason behind an answer. Open-ended questions are especially useful when the speaker is quiet or unsure. A student may say, “I did not like the activity.” Instead of asking, “Was it boring?” a better question is, “What made the activity difficult or unhelpful for you?” This question gives the speaker more freedom to explain. Maybe the activity was too long, maybe the instructions were unclear, or maybe the student did not have enough time. The open-ended question helps find the real issue. Open-ended questions also make conversations more respectful because they show that the listener is not assuming the answer. For example, instead of saying, “You did not study, right?” a student can ask, “What made the exam difficult for you?” The second question is less judgmental and more helpful. In online learning or home study, open-ended questions can help students support each other. For example, after a recorded lesson, one student may ask another, “What part of the lesson was easiest for you to understand?” or “How did you take notes from the video?” These questions can lead to useful sharing of study methods. Imagine two classmates are preparing for a speaking task. One student says, “I am nervous.” A closed question would be, “Are you afraid of speaking?” The answer may be only “yes.” An open-ended question would be, “What makes you feel nervous about speaking?” The classmate may explain that she forgets words, worries about pronunciation, or feels shy when others listen. Now the helper knows how to support her better.

Why Are Follow-Up Questions Important?

Follow-up questions are important because the first answer is often not the full answer. When people speak, they may begin with a short or general statement. A follow-up question helps the listener understand more clearly. It also shows that the listener is paying attention and cares about the speaker’s answer. A follow-up question is asked after someone has already answered. It connects to

what the person said. For example, if a student says, “The homework was difficult,” a follow-up question could be, “Which question was most difficult?” If someone says, “I liked the presentation,” a follow-up question could be, “What part did you like most?” These questions continue the conversation naturally. Follow-up questions are useful because they help move from general information to specific information. A general answer may be “I had a problem with the assignment.” A follow-up question asks, “Was the problem with understanding the task, finding information, or sending the file?” This helps the listener understand the exact issue. Furthermore, follow-up questions also help students share ideas more deeply. For example, in a discussion about education, one student may say, “Girls should have more learning opportunities.” A follow-up question could be, “What kind of opportunities would help most?” This question invites a more specific idea, such as online courses, libraries, exam preparation, or safe study groups. Imagine a girl tells her friend, “I want to improve my English.” A weak response is only, “Good.” A stronger response is, “What part of English do you want to improve first: speaking, writing, reading, or vocabulary?” This follow-up question helps the speaker think clearly and continue the conversation. For mastering your question skill look to the photo as it discuss some tips.

Follow Up Best Practices



How Can Students Ask Questions That Encourage Discussion?

Students can ask questions that encourage discussion by making their questions clear, respectful, and open enough for the other person to explain. A good discussion question usually does not force one answer. It allows different ideas and reasons. For example, “Do you agree?” may create a short answer. But “What do you think about this idea?” invites more explanation. “Is this good?” may be too simple. But “What are the strengths and weaknesses of this idea?” creates deeper discussion. A question that encourages discussion should help people think, answer quickly. Students should also avoid questions that sound like an attack. For example, “Why did you make such a bad plan?” can make the other person defensive. A better question is, “Which part of the plan do you think we should improve?” This still addresses the problem, but it does so respectfully. Questions should also match the situation. In a serious conversation, playful or careless questions may seem disrespectful. In a friendly conversation, very formal questions may feel unnatural. A good communicator chooses questions based on the person, the topic, and the purpose of the conversation. Imagine a group is planning a community reading activity. One student suggests a topic, but others are unsure. A poor question would be, “Why is your idea so weak?” A better discussion question would be, “How would this topic help the students, and what materials would we need?” This question respects the speaker and helps the group think practically.

How Can Students Share Ideas Clearly and Respectfully?

Students can share ideas clearly by organizing their thoughts before speaking. A clear idea usually includes the main point, a short reason, and sometimes an example. Without these parts, the listener may not understand why the idea matters. For example, a student might say, “We should change the time.” This is too unclear. A clearer version is, “We should change the meeting time from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. because some students have family responsibilities at 5 p.m.” This statement gives the idea and the reason. It is easier for others to discuss. Sharing ideas respectfully means expressing one’s own view without insulting others. A respectful speaker does not say, “Your idea is useless.” Instead, she may say, “I understand your idea, but I think another option may work better because...” This sentence shows disagreement without disrespect. It is also helpful to use phrases that soften disagreement while keeping the message clear. Students can say, “I see your point,” “Another way to look at it is,” “I agree with part of that,” or “I have a different suggestion.” These phrases help keep the conversation calm. So, think that students are discussing how to prepare for an exam. One student says, “We should memorize everything.” Another student disagrees. An aggressive response would be, “That is a bad idea.” A respectful response would be, “Memorizing may help with definitions, but I think we should also practice questions because the exam may ask us to apply ideas.” This answer gives a clear opinion, respects the first speaker, and adds a useful reason.

How Can Students Respond Thoughtfully When Others Ask Questions?

Students respond thoughtfully when they listen to the question carefully, think before answering, and give an answer that matches what was asked. A thoughtful answer does not need to be long, but it should be clear and relevant. If the student does not understand the question, it is better to ask for clarification than to guess. For example, if someone asks, “What part of the lesson was difficult?” a weak answer is, “I do not know.” A stronger answer is, “The vocabulary was not difficult, but the example at the end was confusing.” This answer is specific and useful. If the student truly does not understand the question, she can say, “Could you please explain what you mean by ‘difficult part’?” This is a responsible response. A thoughtful answer also shows respect for the person asking. If someone asks a question, the speaker should not mock the question or make the person feel foolish. Even simple questions deserve respectful answers. In learning environments, many students stay silent

because they fear being laughed at. Respectful answers help create safe communication. Sometimes a question may feel challenging or critical. In that situation, a student should try not to react too quickly. For example, if a group member asks, “Why did you not send your part earlier?” the student may feel defensive. A thoughtful answer would be, “You are right to ask. I had an internet problem, but I should have informed the group earlier. I can send it tonight.” This answer accepts responsibility and keeps the conversation calm. Imagine a young woman is asked during a volunteer interview, “Why do you want this role?” A weak answer is, “Because I like it.” A thoughtful answer is, “I want this role because I enjoy helping students, and I have experience organizing class materials. I also want to improve my communication and teamwork skills.” This answer is clear, respectful, and connected to the question.

Why Should Students Listen Before Asking or Answering?

Students should listen before asking or answering because good questions and good answers come from understanding. If a person does not listen, the question may repeat something already said, or the answer may not fit the conversation. Listening first helps the speaker avoid confusion and shows respect. For example, if a classmate explains the deadline clearly and another student immediately asks, “When is the deadline?” it may show that the student was not listening. However, if the student listened but still needs clarity, she can ask a more specific question: “You said the written part is due Thursday. Is the voice recording also due Thursday?” This question shows attention and careful thinking. So, listening also helps students ask better follow-up questions. If someone says, “I am worried about speaking in English,” a good listener does not change the topic. She may ask, “Is pronunciation the main problem, or do you feel nervous when people listen?” This question is useful because it is connected to the speaker’s concern. In discussions, listening before answering prevents unnecessary conflict. Many disagreements become stronger because people answer what they think the other person said, not what the person meant. A careful listener may say, “Let me make sure I understood you. You are saying the task is too long, not that the task is useless, correct?” This kind of listening makes the answer fairer and more accurate.

How Can Questions Help When There Is Miscommunication?

Questions are one of the best tools for fixing miscommunication. Miscommunication happens when a message is unclear, incomplete, misunderstood, or received differently from what the speaker intended. Instead of blaming quickly, students can ask questions to find out what went wrong. For example, if one student says, “I sent it,” but the group leader did not receive anything, the group leader can ask, “Where did you send it: WhatsApp, email, or the class group?” This question helps solve the problem. Without the question, the group leader may assume the student is lying or careless. Clarifying questions are especially useful. They include questions such as, “What do you mean by that?” “Can you explain the last part again?” “Do you mean we should do this today or tomorrow?” and “Can you give an example?” These questions are polite ways to remove confusion. For instance, a student receives a message saying, “Prepare the questions.” She may not know whether to prepare answers to questions, exam questions, or discussion questions. Instead of guessing, she can ask, “Do you mean I should write questions for discussion, or answer the questions from the lesson?” This simple clarification can prevent wrong work and wasted time. Remember that questions can also help when emotions are involved. If someone sounds upset, it is better to ask carefully than to accuse. For example, “You sound worried. What happened?” is better than, “Why are you acting like this?” The first question is gentle and gives space. The second may sound blaming.

How Can Students Build on Other People’s Ideas?

Students build on other people's ideas when they listen to what was said and add something connected to it. This is more than simply taking turns to speak. It means using another person's idea as a starting point for a new thought, question, example, or solution. For example, one student says, "We should make a study schedule." Another student builds on it by saying, "That is a good idea. We could divide the schedule by subject, with one hour for English and one hour for science each day." This response does not ignore the first idea. It develops it. Building on ideas is important in group work because it creates cooperation. If each person only pushes her own idea, the group may become divided. But if students connect their ideas, the conversation becomes more productive. Useful phrases include, "I agree, and we could also...", "That connects to...", "Another example of that is...", or "We can add to your idea by..." Think about a small group which is planning how to help younger students improve reading. One person says, "We can give them short stories." Another says, "Yes, and after each story, we can ask two simple questions to check understanding." A third says, "We can also let them record themselves reading, so they can hear their pronunciation." Each student builds on the previous idea. The final plan becomes stronger because the group listens and adds ideas respectfully.

Brief Example

A student is preparing for an online group discussion. One classmate says, "I think we should choose the topic of time management." Instead of ignoring the idea or immediately disagreeing, another student asks, "What makes time management a useful topic for our group?" The classmate explains that many students miss deadlines because they have study, home, and internet challenges. A third student asks a follow-up question: "How can we make the topic practical, not just general?" Then the group decides to include examples about homework deadlines, online class schedules, and family responsibilities.

This example shows how questions and idea sharing work together. The first question encourages explanation. The follow-up question deepens the discussion. The students listen before responding, and their ideas become clearer because they build on each other's points.

Student Practice Activities

1. Think of a recent conversation at home, online, or in a study group. Write two questions that could have made the conversation clearer or more interesting. At least one question should be open-ended.
2. Write three closed questions and three open-ended questions about the same topic, such as homework, online learning, exam preparation, or future goals. Then explain which questions would create a longer conversation.
3. Choose a short answer such as "It was difficult," "I liked it," or "I could not finish." Write two follow-up questions that would help you understand more.
4. Practice sharing one idea respectfully. Choose a topic such as group work, study habits, phone use, or online classes. Write one clear opinion, one reason, and one example.
5. Read this situation and write a better question: A student says, "I cannot join the class today." Instead of replying, "Again?" write one respectful question that helps understand the problem.
6. Work with a partner if possible or write alone. One person gives an opinion about a simple topic. The other person should ask one open-ended question, one follow-up question, and then share one respectful idea in response.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you usually ask questions when you are confused, or do you stay silent?
2. Which type of question is easier for you: open-ended or closed?
3. How do you feel when someone asks you a thoughtful question?
4. What makes it difficult to share your ideas in a conversation?
5. What is one question you can use this week to improve a conversation?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

A student in an online study group says, “I do not think this plan will work.” Another student quickly answers, “You always disagree,” and the conversation becomes uncomfortable.

Questions:

1. What question could the second student ask before judging the first student’s opinion?
2. Is the sentence “Do you like the plan?” open-ended or closed?
3. Write one open-ended question about the plan.
4. Write one follow-up question after the student explains her concern.
5. How could the first student share her idea more clearly and respectfully?
6. Explain how good questions could help this conversation continue in a better way.

Chapter 3: Participating in Conversations and Discussions

Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain the purpose of conversations and discussions.
2. Start and maintain conversations confidently.
3. Participate actively in discussions.
4. Demonstrate respectful communication during conversations.
5. Recognize the importance of turn-taking.
6. Develop confidence when sharing ideas with others.

Words to know

Word	Meaning
conversation	a spoken exchange between two or more people where they share thoughts, information, feelings, or questions
discussion	a conversation about a topic where people share ideas, opinions, reasons, and different points of view
participate	to take part in an activity by listening, speaking, asking questions, or sharing ideas
turn-taking	allowing each person a fair chance to speak and listen during a conversation or discussion
confidence	the ability to speak or take part with courage, even when feeling a little nervous
respectful communication	speaking and listening in a polite, fair, and considerate way
active listening	listening carefully, thinking about what is being said, and responding in a way that shows understanding
contribution	something a person adds to a conversation, such as an idea, question, example, or opinion
topic	the main subject being talked about in a conversation or discussion
interruption	speaking while another person is still talking, before they have finished their point.

What Is the Purpose of Conversations and Discussions?

Conversations and discussions help people share meaning with each other. A conversation may be simple and personal, such as asking someone about their day, explaining a problem, or talking with a family member. A discussion is usually more focused on a topic. In a discussion, people exchange

ideas, opinions, reasons, questions, and examples. Both conversations and discussions help people understand each other, solve problems, make decisions, and build relationships.

The purpose of a conversation is to speak. It is also to connect with another person. When people talk, they can share information, express feelings, ask for help, explain needs, and show care. For example, a student may speak with a classmate about an assignment, with a family member about study time, or with a supervisor about a small task. In all these situations, conversation helps people coordinate their actions and understand one another. A discussion has a slightly different purpose. It helps people think about a topic more deeply. In a discussion, one person may give an idea, another person may add an example, and another may ask a question. Through this exchange, the group may understand the topic better than one person could alone. Discussions can also help people see different sides of an issue. A person may begin with one opinion, but after hearing others, she may improve, adjust, or strengthen her thinking. For example, a group of students may discuss whether online learning is easier or harder than classroom learning. One student may say online learning is helpful because it saves travel time. Another may say it is difficult because internet access is not always stable. Another may add that recorded lessons are useful because students can watch them again. Through discussion, the students do not only repeat opinions. They understand the topic from different angles.

How Can Students Start a Conversation Confidently?

Starting a conversation can feel difficult, especially for students who are shy, unsure of their language, or worried about making mistakes. However, a conversation does not need to begin with a perfect sentence. It can begin with a simple greeting, a clear question, or a small comment about the shared situation. Confidence grows when students practice starting conversations in small and respectful ways. A student can start a conversation by greeting the other person and mentioning the topic clearly. For example, she may say, “Hello, I wanted to ask about today’s assignment,” or “Excuse me, could I ask one question about the group task?” These openings are simple, polite, and direct. They tell the listener why the conversation is beginning. In informal conversations, students can start with a friendly question. For example, “How was the lesson for you?” or “Which part of the topic did you understand best?” These questions are useful because they invite the other person to speak. A conversation becomes easier when the first sentence gives the other person a chance to respond. Starting a conversation is also easier when students prepare the first point in their mind. If a student knows what she wants to ask or say, she is less likely to feel lost. For example, before messaging a group leader, she can think: What is my question? What information do I need? What is the polite way to ask? Then she can write, “Hello, I want to confirm my part of the presentation. Should I prepare the introduction or the examples?” This is confident because it is clear and respectful. Imagine a student joins an online study group for the first time. She may feel nervous because she does not know the others well. Instead of staying silent for the whole session, she can begin with a small contribution: “Hello everyone, I am happy to join. I am still learning this topic, so I may ask some questions.” This sentence is not complicated, but it helps her enter the conversation confidently and politely.

How Can Students Maintain a Conversation?

Maintaining a conversation means helping it continue in a useful and respectful way. A conversation usually continues when people listen, respond to the main point, ask relevant questions, and add related ideas. If one person gives very short answers, changes the topic too quickly, or does not show interest, the conversation may stop. One way to maintain a conversation is to respond to what the other person has said before adding a new idea. For example, if a classmate says, “I found the listening activity

difficult,” a useful response is, “I understand. Was it difficult because the speaker was fast, or because the words were new?” This response shows listening and keeps the conversation going.

Another way is to ask follow-up questions. Follow-up questions help the speaker explain more. If someone says, “The group work was stressful,” the listener can ask, “Which part made it stressful?” or “How could the group make it easier next time?” These questions continue the conversation and help move from complaint to understanding. Students can also maintain a conversation by sharing a related idea or example. For example, if someone says, “It is hard to study when the house is noisy,” another student may say, “I understand that. I usually study early in the morning because it is quieter.” This response does not change the topic. It connects to the speaker’s idea and adds a personal example. A conversation becomes weak when people only answer with one word. If someone asks, “How was the lesson?” and the answer is only “good,” the conversation may end. A stronger answer is, “It was helpful, especially the example about open-ended questions.” This gives the listener something to respond to. Maintaining a conversation requires both sides to give enough information for the conversation to continue.

How Can Students Participate Actively in Discussions?

Participating actively in a discussion does not mean speaking all the time. Active participation includes listening carefully, asking questions, giving examples, sharing opinions, supporting or respectfully disagreeing with ideas, and helping the group stay on topic. A student can participate even with a short contribution if the contribution is useful. Some students think they must have a perfect answer before speaking. This can make them remain silent. Active participation can begin with small steps. A student may ask for clarification, agree with a point and add one example, or summarize what another person said. These small contributions show involvement and build confidence. For example, during a discussion about study habits, a student may not feel ready to give a long opinion. She can still participate by saying, “I agree that planning helps. For example, writing tasks in a notebook helps me remember deadlines.” This is a short but valuable contribution. It adds an example and supports the discussion. Another way to participate is to ask someone to explain more. A student may say, “Can you give an example of what you mean?” or “How would that work in an online class?” These questions help the discussion become clearer. They also show that the listener is thinking, sitting silently. Active participation also means staying connected to the topic. If the group is discussing how to improve speaking skills, a useful contribution should relate to speaking, practice, confidence, pronunciation, or conversation. If someone suddenly begins talking about an unrelated subject, the discussion may lose focus. A good participant respects the topic and adds information that helps the group move forward.

Why Is Respectful Communication Important in Conversations?

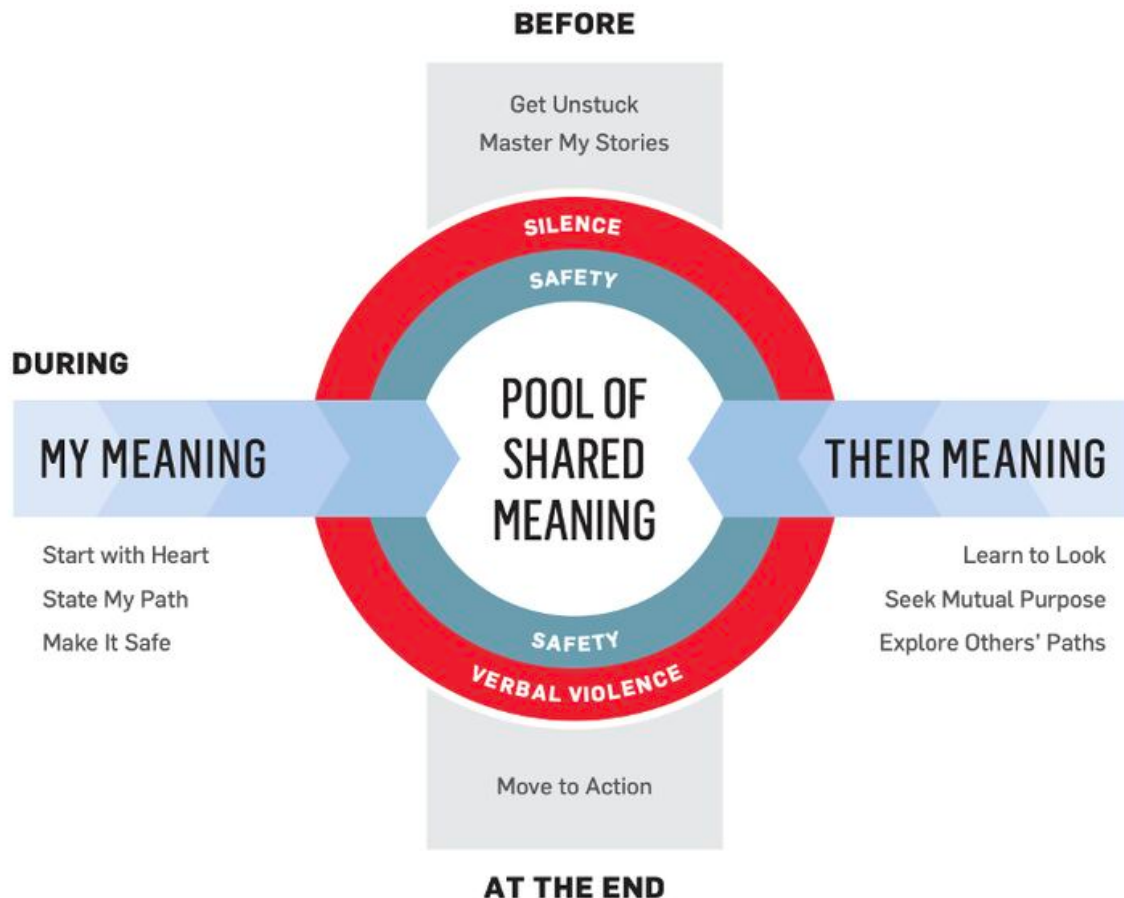
Respectful communication is important because people are more willing to speak when they feel safe and valued. If a person is mocked, interrupted, or judged harshly, she may become silent or defensive. Respectful communication helps conversations stay calm, fair, and useful. Respectful communication includes listening without laughing at someone’s mistake, disagreeing politely, using a calm tone, and choosing words carefully. It also means remembering that people may have different opinions, experiences, and levels of confidence. A person who disagrees is not automatically wrong. A person who speaks slowly is not unintelligent. A respectful communicator focuses on the idea, not on insulting the person. For example, in a discussion about whether exams are useful, one student may say, “Exams help students study seriously.” Another student may disagree. An aggressive response

would be, “That is a bad idea.” A respectful response would be, “I understand your point, but I think exams can also create stress if students only memorize. Maybe projects and exams together would be better.” This answer disagrees, but it gives a reason and keeps respect. Respectful communication is especially important when students have different backgrounds or responsibilities. One student may be able to attend every online session, while another may struggle because of internet, family duties, or shared devices. A respectful discussion does not shame the student. It asks practical questions and looks for solutions. Imagine a group is discussing why some members are late in sending work. One student says, “People who are late do not care.” This may hurt others and create conflict. A more respectful sentence is, “When work is sent late, the whole group becomes stressed. How can we set a deadline that works for everyone?” This keeps the focus on the problem and invites cooperation.

Why Is Turn-Taking Important?

Turn-taking means allowing each person a fair chance to speak. It is one of the most important parts of conversations and discussions. Without turn-taking, one person may dominate the conversation, others may stay silent, and the group may not hear all useful ideas. Good turn-taking helps communication become fair and balanced. Turn-taking requires both speaking and listening. A speaker should not speak for too long without allowing others to respond. A listener should not interrupt before the speaker finishes. When people take turns properly, the conversation feels organized and respectful. In group discussions, turn-taking is especially important because some students may be more confident while others may be shy. If confident students speak all the time, quieter students may not get a chance to share. A respectful participant notices this and may invite others by saying, “Would anyone else like to add something?” or “We have heard one idea; maybe someone else has another example.” This helps the group become more inclusive. Turn-taking also prevents misunderstanding. When people interrupt each other, they may miss important details. For example, if a student is explaining why she could not send her assignment and another person interrupts with, “You are always late,” the real reason may never be heard. If the listener waits, the student may explain that the file size was too large or the internet stopped. Waiting for the full explanation helps the response become fairer. Imagine three students are planning a presentation. One student speaks for a long time and gives many ideas. Another student wants to speak but cannot find a chance. A good turn-taking response would be, “You have shared useful ideas. Let’s also hear from the others before we decide.” This sentence does not insult the first speaker. It simply creates space for everyone. Take a look to the photo which shows the Crucial Conversations Model.

THE CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS MODEL



How Can Students Share Ideas with Confidence?

Students develop confidence in sharing ideas through preparation, practice, and small successful experiences. Confidence does not mean never feeling nervous. Many people feel nervous before speaking, especially in groups. Confidence means speaking even when there is some nervousness and improving through practice. One way to build confidence is to prepare one or two points before a discussion. If a student knows the topic in advance, she can write a short note with her opinion, one reason, and one example. This makes speaking easier. For example, if the topic is “How can students improve English speaking?” she can prepare: “Students should practice short daily speaking because regular practice builds confidence. For example, recording a one-minute voice message can help.” This prepared idea gives her a clear starting point. Another way is to begin with small contributions. A student does not need to speak for five minutes. She can start by agreeing with a point, asking a question, or giving one example. For example, “I agree with that because practice helps reduce fear,” is a simple contribution. Over time, these small moments make speaking feel more natural.

Confidence also grows when students focus on the message, not on perfection. A student may worry about pronunciation, grammar, or choosing the perfect word. These things matter, but they should not stop her from participating. A clear and respectful idea is more important than perfect language. If she makes a mistake, she can correct herself and continue. Imagine a student is in a small online discussion. She wants to share an idea but feels nervous. She has written one sentence before the discussion: "I think students should ask questions when they are confused because silence can create bigger problems later." When the right moment comes, she reads or says this sentence. After speaking once, she feels more comfortable. This small success helps her speak more confidently next time.



How Can Students Disagree Politely in a Discussion?

Disagreement is a normal part of discussion. If everyone always agrees, the conversation may not explore the topic deeply. However, disagreement must be expressed respectfully. The goal is not to defeat or embarrass another person. The goal is to understand the topic better. A polite disagreement usually begins by acknowledging the other person's point. For example, "I understand what you mean," or "That is an important point." Then the speaker can add a different view: "However, I think..." or "Another way to look at it is..." This structure keeps the conversation respectful. For example, if one student says, "Online classes are always better," another student may say, "I understand that online classes are useful because students can study from home. However, I think they are not always better because some students have internet problems or no quiet place to study." This answer disagrees clearly but respectfully. Students should avoid judgmental words such as "stupid," "wrong," "ridiculous," or "nonsense." These words attack the person or make the idea sound worthless. A respectful discussion uses reasons, not insults. It is also helpful to ask questions before disagreeing. For example, "Do you mean online classes are better for all students, or only for students who have good internet?" This question may clarify the speaker's idea and reduce unnecessary disagreement. Polite disagreement is useful in school, work, family, and community life. It helps students express their thoughts without damaging relationships. It also teaches them that respect does not mean silence. A person can speak honestly and still protect the dignity of others. To know better read the photo which shows the difference between being disagreeable and disagreeing effectively clearly.



How Can Students Keep a Discussion on Topic?

Keeping a discussion on topic means making sure the conversation stays connected to the main subject. Discussions can easily move away from the topic, especially when people bring too many personal stories, unrelated examples, or emotional arguments. A strong participant helps the group return to the main idea politely. Students can stay on topic by asking themselves before speaking: Does my point connect to the discussion? Does it help the group understand the topic better? Is this example relevant? If the answer is no, it may be better to save the idea for another time. If someone else moves away from the topic, students should not embarrass them. They can gently bring the discussion back by saying, "That is interesting, but maybe we can return to the main question," or "Can we connect this example to our topic?" These sentences are respectful and helpful. For example, if a group is discussing how to improve listening skills and someone begins talking about exam marks in general, another student can say, "That is related to studying, but our main topic is listening. Maybe we can discuss how listening carefully helps us understand exam instructions." This brings the conversation back without rejecting the speaker completely. Staying on topic is especially important when time is limited. In online discussions, meetings, or study groups, students may only have a short time. If the discussion becomes unfocused, the group may not finish the task. A focused discussion respects everyone's time.

How Can Body Language Support Participation?

Although this chapter focuses on conversation and discussion, body language still affects participation. A person may speak respectful words, but if her body language looks careless, bored, or aggressive, others may misunderstand her attitude. Open and calm body language helps show that the person is listening and ready to participate. Supportive body language may include sitting or standing in a calm way, looking toward the speaker when appropriate, nodding slightly, keeping the face attentive, and avoiding gestures that seem rude or aggressive. In online conversations, this may also include turning toward the camera when possible, keeping the microphone clear, and not appearing distracted. Body language should always be interpreted carefully because people have different comfort levels. Some students may avoid eye contact because they are shy or nervous, not because they are disrespectful. However, students can still try to show attention in ways that feel comfortable, such as nodding, giving short verbal responses, or summarizing the speaker's point. Imagine a student is listening to a classmate's idea in an online discussion. If she looks away, types unrelated messages, and gives no response, the classmate may feel ignored. But if she says, "I understand your point," or nods and then asks a question, the classmate feels heard. This shows that participation is not only about speaking; it is also about showing attention.

Brief Example

A small group is discussing how to help students improve English speaking. One student begins by saying, "I think students should practice speaking every day." Another student listens and adds, "I agree, and I think short voice recordings can help because students can listen to themselves." A third student says, "That is a good idea, but some students may feel shy. How can we make practice easier for them?" The group continues by suggesting private practice, small partner work, and simple topics.

This example shows active participation. The students listen to each other, take turns, build on ideas, ask questions, and disagree gently when needed. No one dominates the discussion, and each contribution helps the group move closer to a practical solution.

Student Practice Activities

1. Think of a conversation you had recently at home, online, or in a study group. Write what the purpose of the conversation was. Was it to share information, solve a problem, ask for help, or discuss an idea?
2. Practice starting a conversation. Write three polite opening sentences you could use to begin a conversation with a classmate, teacher, family member, or group leader.
3. Choose one discussion topic, such as online learning, study habits, time management, or group work. Write one opinion, one reason, and one example that you could share in a discussion.
4. Read a short situation where one person interrupts or dominates the conversation. Write a better response that helps turn-taking and allows others to speak.
5. Practice polite disagreement. Write two sentences that disagree with an idea respectfully, using phrases such as "I understand your point, but..." or "Another way to look at it is..."
6. If possible, join a short conversation or discussion. If this is not possible, listen to a recorded discussion or observe a family conversation. Notice one example of good participation and one example of poor participation.

Reflection Questions

1. Do you feel more confident in one-to-one conversations or group discussions?
2. What makes it difficult for you to participate in a discussion?
3. How can turn-taking make a conversation more respectful?
4. What is one polite phrase you can use when you disagree?
5. What small step can you take to share your ideas more confidently?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

Four students are discussing how to prepare for an English-speaking task. One student speaks for a long time and does not let others share their ideas. Another student interrupts and says, “Your idea is wrong.” The conversation becomes uncomfortable, and the group does not finish the plan.

Questions:

1. What was the main purpose of the discussion?
2. Which communication problem happened first?
3. Why is turn-taking important in this situation?
4. Rewrite the interrupting sentence in a more respectful way.
5. Write one sentence that could invite quieter students to participate.
6. Explain how the group could continue the discussion in a calmer and more useful way.

Chapter 4: Expressing Opinions and Handling Misunderstandings

Learning Objectives

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

1. Explain what opinions are and why people have different opinions.
2. Express personal opinions clearly and respectfully.
3. Agree and disagree politely during conversations.
4. Recognize common causes of misunderstandings.
5. Use communication strategies to clarify messages.
6. Demonstrate empathy when communicating with others

Words to Know

Word	Meaning
opinion	a personal belief, view, or judgment about a topic
point of view	the way a person thinks about or understands a situation
agree	to have the same or similar opinion as another person
disagree	to have a different opinion from another person
respectful language	words that express ideas politely and do not insult others
misunderstanding	a situation where a message is not understood correctly
clarification	a clearer explanation that helps remove confusion
assumption	something a person believes is true without checking it carefully
empathy	the ability to understand or care about another person's feelings or situation
response	what a person says or does after hearing or receiving a message

What Is an Opinion?

An opinion is a personal belief, view, or judgment about a topic. It shows what a person thinks, feels, or believes. Opinions are different from facts. A fact can be checked and proven. For example, “The class starts at 5 p.m.” is a fact if the timetable says so. An opinion is different because it depends on personal thinking. For example, “Online classes are more comfortable than classroom learning” is an opinion. Some people may agree with it, while others may disagree. Opinions are important in conversation because they help people share their thoughts and experiences. When students’ express opinions, they show how they understand a topic. They also learn how other people think. A conversation becomes richer when people do not only repeat information but also explain their own views with reasons and examples. However, opinions should be expressed carefully. A person should not present an opinion as if it is the only truth. For example, saying, “Group work is useless,” sounds too strong and may offend others. A more respectful way is, “In my



opinion, group work can be difficult when tasks are not divided fairly.” This sentence is better because it clearly shows that the speaker is sharing a personal view, not attacking everyone else’s experience. For example, a student is asked whether studying at home is better than studying in a classroom. One student may say, “Studying at home is better because it saves time and allows students to review recordings.” Another student may say, “I think classroom learning is better because students can ask questions immediately.” Both students have opinions. The important point is that each opinion should be explained with a reason and expressed respectfully.

Why Do People Have Different Opinions?

People have different opinions because they have different experiences, needs, responsibilities, cultures, knowledge, and personalities. Two people may see the same situation but understand it differently. This does not always mean that one person is right and the other is wrong. It may simply mean that they are looking at the topic from different sides. For example, one student may think online learning is helpful because she can study from home and avoid travel. Another student may think online learning is difficult because the internet is weak or the house is noisy. Both opinions are understandable because each student’s situation is different. Their views come from their real experiences. People may also have different opinions because they value different things. One person may value speed, while another values careful work. One person may prefer group work because it gives support, while another may prefer individual work because it gives independence. These differences can create disagreement, but disagreement does not need to become conflict. A mature communicator understands that different opinions are normal. Instead of becoming angry when someone disagrees, the person asks, “Why do you think that?” or “Can you explain your reason?” This helps the conversation become more thoughtful. It also shows respect for the other person’s mind and experience. Imagine two sisters share one phone for online learning. One believes the phone should be used first for live classes. The other believes it should be used first to upload an assignment before the deadline. Their opinions are different because their needs are different. A respectful conversation would help them understand each other’s reason and find a fair solution.

How Can Students Express Personal Opinions Clearly?

Students can express personal opinions clearly by stating the opinion, giving a reason, and adding an example if needed. A clear opinion does not leave the listener guessing. It shows what the speaker thinks and why.

A simple structure is:

“I think _____ because _____.”

For example, instead of saying, “This method is good,” a student can say, “I think practicing speaking with short voice recordings is useful because students can listen to themselves and notice mistakes.” This opinion is clear because it includes both the view and the reason.

Another useful structure is:

“In my opinion, _____. One reason is _____.”

For example, “In my opinion, students should ask questions when they are confused. One reason is that silence can create bigger problems later.” This is clear, respectful, and easy to understand.

Students should avoid unclear opinions such as “It is not good,” “This is wrong,” or “I do not like it,” without explanation. These sentences may be honest, but they do not help the conversation. A stronger speaker explains the reason. For example, instead of saying, “The plan is bad,” she can say, “I think the plan may be difficult because the deadline is too short for students who have limited internet access.” Clear opinions are especially useful in group work. If students only say, “I agree” or “I disagree,” the group may not understand their thinking. But if they explain their reason, the group can make better decisions. Imagine a group is planning a presentation. One student says, “We should choose the topic of time management.” Another student can express her opinion clearly by saying, “I think time management is a good topic because many students struggle with deadlines, online classes, and home responsibilities. We can give practical examples.” This opinion helps the group understand why the topic may be useful.

How Can Students Express Opinions Respectfully?

Expressing an opinion respectfully means sharing your view without insulting, embarrassing, or attacking others. A respectful opinion focuses on the topic, not on the person. It uses polite language and gives reasons instead of harsh judgment. For example, saying, “Your idea is useless,” is not respectful. It attacks the person’s contribution. A better sentence is, “I understand your idea, but I think it may be difficult to use because we do not have enough time.” This sentence disagrees, but it explains the reason politely.

Respectful opinion language often includes phrases such as:



“In my opinion...”

“I think...”

“I understand your point, but...”

“Another way to look at it is...”

“I agree with part of that, but...”

“My suggestion is...”

“One concern I have is...”

These phrases help the speaker sound thoughtful instead of rude. They also make it easier for others to listen. When people feel respected, they are more willing to continue the conversation. Respect is especially important when speaking with people who are older, more experienced, or in a position of responsibility. A student can still share her opinion, but the tone should be careful. For example, instead of saying, “This instruction is confusing,” she may say, “Could I please ask for clarification? I am not fully sure about the last instruction.” This expresses the concern respectfully.

How Can Students Agree Politely?

Agreeing politely means showing that you support another person’s idea in a respectful and thoughtful way. Agreement should not always be only “yes.” A strong agreement often explains why you agree or adds something useful to the conversation. For example, if someone says, “Students should practice speaking every day,” a weak response is only, “Yes.” A better response is, “I agree because daily practice can reduce fear and make speaking more natural.” This answer supports the idea and gives a reason.

Students can also agree and add an example. For example, “I agree with your point about practice. For example, recording a one-minute voice message each day can help students improve pronunciation.” This kind of response makes the conversation stronger because it builds on the first idea. Useful phrases for polite agreement include:

- “I agree with you because...”
- “That is a good point.”
- “I also think so.”
- “I agree with part of your idea.”
- “That makes sense because...”
- “I would like to add to your point...”

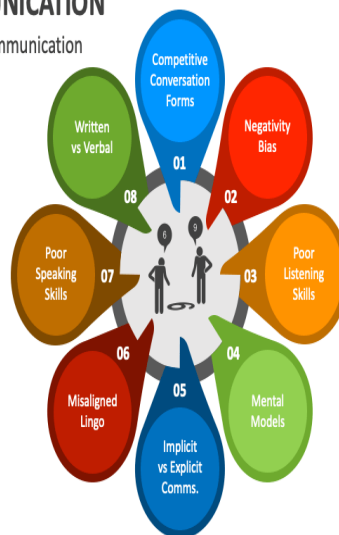
Agreement is about being polite. It also helps discussions move forward. When students acknowledge good ideas, the speaker feels heard and the group can build stronger points together. Imagine a group is discussing how to improve attendance in online classes. One student says, “Students should receive reminders before class.” Another student can agree by saying, “I agree. A reminder could help because some students share phones with family members and may forget the exact time.” This response agrees, gives a reason, and adds a realistic example.

What Are Common Causes of Misunderstandings?

Misunderstandings happen when a message is not understood in the way the speaker intended. They are common in conversations because communication depends on words, tone, context, listening, and assumptions. Even simple messages can become unclear if important details are missing. One common cause of misunderstanding is unclear language. For example, if a student says, “I will send it later,” the listener may not know what “it” means or when “later” is. A clearer sentence would be, “I will send the assignment file before 7 p.m. today.” Specific details reduce confusion. Another cause is missing context. Sometimes people understand a sentence differently because they do not know the full situation. For example, if someone says, “I cannot join today,” others may think she is careless. But the real reason may be internet problems, illness, family responsibility, or lack of access to a device. Without context, people may judge too quickly. Assumptions also cause misunderstandings. An assumption means believing something without checking it. If a group leader assumes that a student is lazy because she sends work late, the conversation may become unfair. It would be better to ask, “What made it difficult to send your part on time?” This question checks the reason before judging. Furthermore, Tone can also create misunderstanding. A short message such as “Fine” may seem normal to one person but angry or cold to another. In text messages, misunderstanding can happen more easily because the listener cannot always hear the speaker’s voice or see facial expression. Imagine a student receives a message from her group leader saying, “Send your part now.” The student may feel the message is rude, but the group leader may simply be stressed about the deadline. A better message would be, “Could you please send your part before 6 p.m.? I need time to combine the work.” This clearer message reduces misunderstanding and sounds more respectful.

MISCOMMUNICATION

8 Causes of Miscommunication



How Can Students Clarify Messages?

Clarifying messages means making them clearer so that everyone understands the same meaning. Clarification is useful when instructions, opinions, feelings, or responsibilities are unclear. It prevents mistakes and helps communication stay calm. A student can ask for clarification when she does not understand something. For example:

“Could you please explain that again?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Do you mean today or tomorrow?”

“Can you give an example?”

“Which part should I complete?”

“Let me check if I understood correctly.”

These questions are not signs of weakness. They show that the student wants to understand correctly. In learning, work, and group activities, asking for clarification can prevent serious mistakes. Students can also clarify their own messages. Instead of waiting for others to become confused, a speaker can give enough detail from the beginning. For example, instead of saying, “The list is wrong,” she can say, “Two names are missing from the attendance list, and one name is repeated.” This helps the listener respond quickly. Repeating or summarizing can also clarify meaning. For example, after receiving instructions, a student may say, “So I should write the introduction today and send it before 8 p.m., correct?” This confirms the task and gives the other person a chance to correct any mistake.

For example, a young woman helping with student records receives this instruction: “Update the file.” This is unclear. She can ask, “Do you want me to update the attendance file, the marks file, or the contact list?” This clarification saves time and prevents her from working on the wrong file.

How Can Empathy Help During Misunderstandings?

Empathy means trying to understand another person’s feelings, situation, or point of view. Empathy is very important during misunderstandings because people often become defensive when they feel blamed. If a person feels attacked, she may stop listening. If she feels understood, she is more likely to explain and cooperate. Empathy does not mean agreeing with everything. It means recognizing that the other person may have a reason, feeling, or difficulty that you do not yet fully understand. For example, if a student sends work late, an unempathetic response is, “You are careless.” An empathetic response is, “I understand that there may have been a problem. Can you explain what happened?” This response still addresses the issue, but it does not attack the person. Empathy is also useful when expressing disagreement. A student may say, “I understand why you prefer this plan because it is simple. My concern is that some students may need more time.” This sentence shows respect for the other person’s reason while sharing a different opinion. In text communication, empathy is especially important because tone can easily be misunderstood. A short message may sound harsher than intended. Adding polite words and context can help. For example, instead of writing, “Why are you late?” a better message is, “I noticed your part has not arrived yet. Is everything okay? Please let me know if you need more time.” This message is clearer and kinder. Imagine two students are preparing a presentation. One student does not send her part on time. The other feels stressed and wanted to react angrily. Instead, she writes, “I was worried because the deadline is close. Is there a problem with your

part? If you send it by 7 p.m., I can still include it.” This message expresses the concern, asks for clarification, and shows empathy.

How Can Students Handle a Misunderstanding Respectfully?

Students can handle a misunderstanding respectfully by staying calm, asking questions, explaining clearly, and avoiding blame. When a misunderstanding happens, the first reaction may be frustration. However, blaming usually makes the situation worse. A better response is to find out where the message became unclear. The first step is to pause before reacting. If a message feels rude, unclear, or unfair, the student should avoid answering immediately with anger. A short pause helps the speaker choose better words. The second step is to ask a clarification question. For example, “Did you mean that I should complete the whole task, or only my part?” This question focuses on understanding. The third step is to explain one’s own meaning clearly. For example, “When I said I would send it later, I meant before 7 p.m. I should have written the time clearly.” This kind of response accepts responsibility without unnecessary shame. The fourth step is to agree on the next action. A misunderstanding is not fully solved until both people know what should happen next. For example, “Let us agree that each person will send her part by 6 p.m. tomorrow.” This turns confusion into a clear plan. Imagine a student tells her group, “I finished the work,” but she only means her own section. The group leader thinks she means the whole project is complete. Later, the group becomes confused. A respectful clarification would be, “I am sorry, I meant I finished only my section. The conclusion and design are still not finished. Let’s divide those parts now.” This response explains the misunderstanding and helps the group move forward.

How Can Students Share Opinions in Sensitive Conversations?

Some conversations are sensitive because they involve personal feelings, family responsibilities, education challenges, culture, money, health, or disagreement. In these conversations, opinions must be expressed with extra care. A careless sentence can hurt someone or create conflict. In sensitive conversations, students should avoid general judgments. For example, saying, “Students who miss class are not serious,” may hurt someone who misses class because of internet problems, family duties, or illness. A more careful opinion is, “Regular attendance is important, but some students may need support when they face internet or home challenges.” This opinion is more balanced and empathetic. Students should also use softening phrases. These phrases make the opinion respectful without making it weak. Examples include, “From my experience,” “I may be wrong, but” “One concern I have is,” or “Another possibility is.” These phrases show humility and make discussion safer. For example, in a discussion about study responsibilities at home, one student may say, “From my experience, it is easier to study when family members know the class schedule. Maybe students can share their timetable with the family.” This opinion is clear, practical, and respectful. Sensitive conversations also require good listening. Before giving an opinion, students should understand the other person’s situation. If someone says, “I cannot attend every class,” it is better to ask, “What makes attendance difficult?” before giving advice. This prevents unfair judgment and helps the conversation become more useful.

Brief Example

A student in an online study group says, “This plan is not good.” Another student feels offended because she created the plan. Instead of replying angrily, she asks, “Which part of the plan do you think is difficult?” The first student explains, “The deadline is too short because some students cannot use the internet every evening.” Then the group understands that the problem is not the whole plan, but the timing.

A respectful response would be, “Thank you for explaining. I still think the plan can work, but we can change the deadline to make it fairer.” This example shows how opinions and misunderstandings can be handled well. The first student could have expressed her opinion more clearly, but the second student used clarification instead of blame. The group avoided conflict and improved the plan.

Student Practice Activities

1. Write three opinions about familiar topics, such as online learning, group work, study habits, or speaking practice. For each opinion, add one reason and one example.
2. Rewrite three rude or unclear opinions in a respectful way. For example, change “Your idea is wrong” into “I understand your idea, but I have a different view.”
3. Read a short message that could be misunderstood, such as “Send it later” or “The list is wrong.” Rewrite it with clearer details.
4. Practice polite agreement and disagreement. Write one sentence that agrees with an idea and one sentence that disagrees respectfully.
5. Think of a misunderstanding that could happen in a study group, online class, or home situation. Write one clarification question that could solve the problem.
6. Write a short empathetic response to someone who sends work late or misunderstands an instruction.

Reflection Questions

1. Is it easy or difficult for you to share your opinion? Why?
2. What phrase can help you disagree politely?
3. What usually causes misunderstandings in your conversations?
4. How can asking for clarification prevent conflict?
5. How can empathy make a difficult conversation calmer?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

A student writes in the group chat, “The plan is bad.” Another student replies, “You are always negative.” The conversation becomes uncomfortable, and the group stops discussing the task.

Questions:

1. What was unclear or disrespectful in the first student’s opinion?
2. How could the first student express her opinion more clearly and respectfully?
3. What misunderstanding may have happened in this situation?
4. Write one clarification question the second student could ask before judging.
5. Write one polite disagreement sentence about the plan.
6. Explain how empathy could help the group continue the conversation calmly.

Unit 3: Listening and Speaking Professionally

Unit Aim

Develop prepared and unprepared professional communication across different levels of authority and responsibility.

What You Will Learn

By completing this unit, students will learn how to:

- prepare notes and make persuasive arguments in debate
- ask and answer questions in job and university interviews
- give verbal instructions and constructive feedback
- listen to factual reports and produce clear summaries

How This Unit Supports Assessment

This unit supports assessment tasks that ask students to take part in debates, prepare arguments, respond to other speakers, participate in job and university interviews, give verbal instructions, provide constructive feedback, answer listening questions, take notes, and produce spoken summaries. These skills help students communicate more professionally in educational, workplace, volunteer, and community situations.

Chapter 1: Preparing Arguments and Taking Part in Debate

Learning Objective

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Prepare a clear position using notes, reasons, and counterpoints.
2. Present an argument logically and respectfully.
3. Respond to another speaker through rebuttal without losing focus or respect.

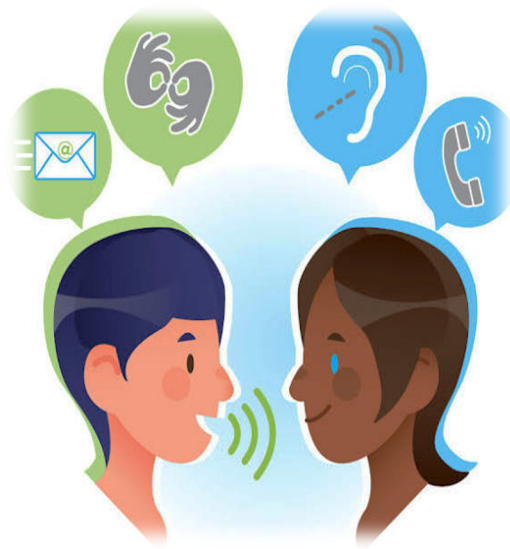
Words to Know

Word	Meaning
argument	a clear position or claim supported by reasons, examples, or evidence
counterpoint	an opposing idea or different point of view that responds to an argument
rebuttal	a response that explains why another argument or counterpoint may be weak, incomplete, or incorrect

persuasive	able to make others understand, consider, or accept an idea through clear reasons and respectful language
------------	---

What Is Professional Communication?

Professional communication means using speaking and listening skills in a careful, respectful, and purposeful way in educational, workplace, volunteer, and community situations. It is different from casual conversation because the speaker usually has a clear responsibility, task, or goal. In professional communication, people may need to explain ideas, ask questions, give instructions, answer respectfully, take part in debate, or respond to someone with more authority. Professional communication does not mean using difficult words. It means communicating clearly, politely, and appropriately for the situation. A student speaking to a university interviewer, a volunteer speaking to a team leader, or a young worker explaining a task to a supervisor should choose words carefully and stay focused on the purpose of the conversation. The message should be clear enough that the listener understands what is being said and what action is needed. For example, in an informal conversation, a student may say to a friend, “I can’t do it today.” In a professional situation, she should be clearer and more respectful: “I am not able to complete the report today because I need to confirm two pieces of information. I can send the final version tomorrow morning.” The second sentence is more professional because it explains the reason and gives a clear next step. Furthermore, professional communication also requires respect for different levels of authority and responsibility. A student may speak differently to a friend, a teacher, a supervisor, or an interview panel. The main message may be the same, but the tone, word choice, and level of detail should match the situation. This is especially important in debates, interviews, instruction tasks, and feedback conversations.



What Is the Difference Between Formal and Informal Communication?

Formal communication is used in serious, official, educational, or professional situations. It usually has a clear purpose and a respectful tone. Formal communication is common in interviews, meetings, presentations, debates, reports, instructions, and conversations with teachers, supervisors, or people in positions of responsibility. Informal communication is used in relaxed or familiar situations. It is common between friends, classmates, close family members, or people who know each other well. Informal communication may include shorter sentences, friendly expressions, and a more relaxed tone. It is useful for building relationships, sharing daily experiences, and speaking comfortably with people we trust. The main difference between formal and informal communication is not only the words. It is also the situation, purpose, relationship, and tone. For example, if a student is speaking to a close friend, she may say, “Can you send me the notes?” But if she is writing to a teacher or supervisor, she may say, “Could you please share the notes when you have time?” Both sentences ask for the same thing, but the second one is more formal and respectful. Formal communication should usually be clear, complete, and polite. Informal communication can be shorter and more personal. However,

informal communication should still be respectful. Being informal does not mean being careless or rude. A strong communicator knows how to adjust language based on the person and the situation. For example, if a student cannot attend an online meeting, an informal message to a classmate may be: “I can’t join today. Please tell me what happens.” A formal message to a group leader may be: “I am sorry, I cannot join today’s meeting because of an internet problem. Could you please send me the main points after the meeting?” The formal message gives a reason, uses polite language, and explains what help is needed.

Understanding the difference between formal and informal communication helps students speak more appropriately in professional situations. In Unit 3, students will practice formal and professional communication through debates, interviews, giving instructions, providing feedback, and summarizing factual reports.

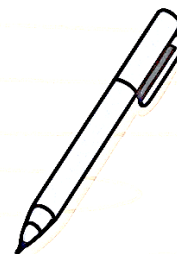
What Is an Argument?

An argument is not simply a fight or an angry disagreement. In professional communication, an argument means a clear position that is supported by reasons, examples, and evidence. A strong argument explains what the speaker believes and why that belief makes sense. It is used in debates, meetings, interviews, discussions, presentations, and many workplace or educational situations. For example, a student may say, “Online learning is useful.” This sentence gives an opinion, but it is not yet a strong argument because it does not explain why. A stronger argument would be: “Online learning is useful for many students because it allows them to study from home, review recorded lessons, and continue learning when travel or attendance is difficult.” This statement gives a clear position and supports it with reasons. A professional argument should not attack people. It should focus on the idea. If a speaker says, “People who disagree with me do not understand education,” this is not a respectful argument. It attacks others instead of proving the point. A better speaker says, “I understand that online learning has challenges, but I believe it can still support students when lessons are organized clearly and students receive regular guidance.” This response is more professional because it respects other views while presenting a position. Arguments are important because they help people explain decisions and support ideas. In a debate, a speaker may argue for or against a topic. In a workplace, a person may argue that a new system will save time. In a university interview, a student may argue that she is suitable for a program because of her experience, goals, and preparation. In each situation, the speaker needs a clear position and strong support.

What Makes an Argument Logical?

An argument is logical when the ideas are organized, connected, and supported by reasonable evidence. A logical argument does not jump from one idea to another without explanation. It moves step by step so that the listener can understand the speaker’s thinking. The main point should be clear, and the reasons should directly support that point. A logical argument usually has three main parts: a claim, reasons, and support. The claim is the main position. The reasons explain why the claim is believable. The support may include examples, facts, experiences, or evidence. Without these parts, the argument may sound weak or incomplete. For example, this is not a logical argument: “Students should practice debate because debate is good.” The speaker repeats the idea but does not explain it. A stronger version is: “Students should practice debate because it helps them organize ideas, speak with confidence, listen to opposing views, and respond respectfully.” This version is more logical because the reasons connect clearly to the claim.

A logical argument should also stay focused. If the topic is whether students should practice speaking through debate, the speaker should not suddenly talk about unrelated issues such as school uniforms or food prices. Staying focused helps the listener follow the argument and understand the main purpose. Imagine a student is arguing that group discussions should be included in online learning. A logical argument might be: “Group discussions should be included in online learning because they help students explain ideas, ask questions, and learn from each other. For example, when students discuss a difficult topic together, one student may understand an example that another student missed. This makes learning more active.” This argument is logical because the claim, reasons, and example work together.

A notepad with the title 'ARGUMENT FLOW CHECKLIST' in bold. Below the title are three horizontal lines, each preceded by a green checkmark.

Why Does a Debate Need Respect?

A debate needs respect because the purpose of debate is not to insult, embarrass, or defeat another person. The purpose is to examine ideas carefully. In a debate, people may strongly disagree, but they should still speak with dignity and listen to each other. Respect keeps the debate professional and useful. A respectful speaker focuses on the argument, not the person. For example, it is wrong to say, “Your idea is stupid.” A better response is, “I understand your point, but I think the evidence does not fully support that conclusion.” This sentence challenges the idea without insulting the speaker. Respect is also important because people are more willing to listen when they do not feel attacked. If a speaker uses rude language, others may stop listening even if the speaker has a good point. A calm tone, polite words, and organized reasoning make the argument stronger. In professional situations, respectful debate is especially important. A student may need to disagree with a classmate, an interviewer, a supervisor, or a team leader. If she disagrees aggressively, she may damage trust. If she stays silent, her idea may not be heard. Respectful debate gives her a middle way: she can speak clearly without

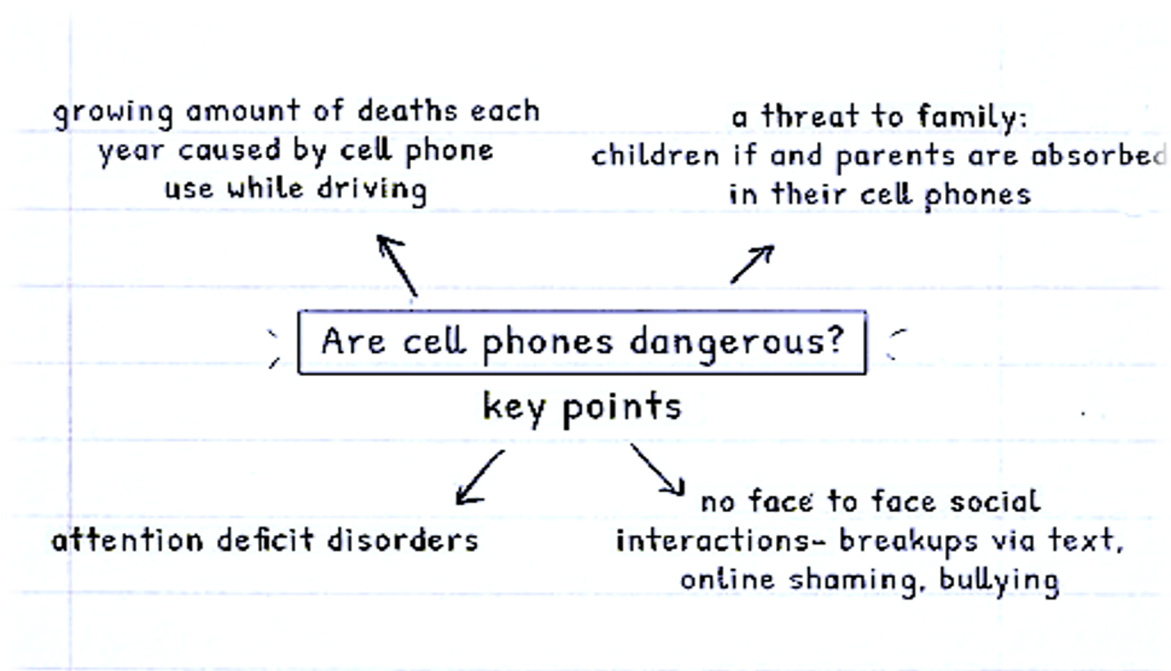
being rude. For example, in a volunteer team, one person suggests sending notices late at night because students are usually online then. Another person disagrees. A rude response would be, “That is a terrible idea.” A respectful response would be, “I understand why late messages may reach some students, but I am concerned that it may disturb others. Maybe we can send notices earlier in the evening.” This response gives a counterpoint while keeping respect.

How Should Students Prepare Notes for a Debate?

Students should prepare debate notes before speaking because notes help them organize ideas and avoid losing focus. Debate notes do not need to be full paragraphs. They should be short, clear, and easy to use while speaking. Good notes remind the speaker of the main position, the reasons, the examples, and possible counterpoints. The first step is to write the main position. This is the claim that the student wants to defend. For example: “Students should practice short debates to improve professional speaking.” This position is clear and focused. If the position is too broad, the argument becomes difficult to manage. The second step is to write two or three reasons that support the position. For example:

- Debate helps students organize ideas.
- Debate builds confidence in speaking.
- Debate teaches respectful disagreement.

These reasons are short, but they give the speaker a clear plan. The student can then add one example under each reason. The third step is to prepare counterpoints. A counterpoint is an opposing idea that someone else may raise. Preparing counterpoints helps the speaker avoid surprise. For example, someone may say, “Debate is stressful for shy students.” The speaker can prepare a response: “That is true for some students at first, but short and guided debates can help students build confidence gradually.” The fourth step is to prepare a short conclusion. A conclusion reminds the listeners of the main point. For example: “For these reasons, short debates should be used because they help students think clearly, speak confidently, and respond respectfully to different views.” Good debate notes are not written to be read word by word. If a student reads every sentence from paper, the speech may sound weak or unnatural. Notes should guide the speaker, not replace speaking. The student should look at the notes briefly, then speak naturally. For better understanding look the photo, which shows a sample of note-taking.



What Is a Counterpoint?

A counterpoint is an opposing idea or a different point of view. It does not always mean the other person is completely against the topic. Sometimes a counterpoint agrees with part of the argument but adds a concern, limitation, or different perspective. Counterpoints are important because they make debate more realistic and thoughtful. For example, if one student argues, "Online learning is helpful because students can study from home," another student may give a counterpoint: "Online learning is helpful, but it can be difficult for students who have weak internet or no quiet place to study." This counterpoint does not completely reject online learning. It adds another side of the issue. A strong speaker should prepare for counterpoints before the debate. This shows that the speaker has thought carefully about the topic. If the speaker only knows her own side, she may become confused when someone disagrees. But if she has already considered opposing views, she can respond calmly and logically. Counterpoints also help students avoid one-sided thinking. Many topics have more than one reasonable view. For example, group work can be useful because students learn cooperation. At the same time, group work can be unfair if some members do not do their part. A good debate recognizes both sides and then explains which side is stronger and why. Imagine a debate topic: "Students should be allowed to submit assignments by voice recording." One argument may be that voice recordings help students who struggle with writing. A counterpoint may be that voice recordings can be difficult to assess if the sound quality is poor. A prepared speaker can respond by saying, "That concern is valid, so students should be given clear recording instructions and a short time limit." This response respects the counterpoint and offers a solution.

What Is a Rebuttal?

A rebuttal is a response to another speaker's argument or counterpoint. It explains why that argument may be weak, incomplete, unclear, or less convincing. A rebuttal is not a personal attack. It should respond to the idea, not insult the speaker. For example, one student says, "Debate is not useful because it makes students nervous." A rebuttal could be: "It is true that debate can make students nervous at first, but this does not mean debate is useless. With short practice, clear topics, and

respectful rules, debate can help students reduce fear and become more confident.” This rebuttal accepts part of the concern but explains why the main conclusion is not strong enough. A good rebuttal should be focused. Sometimes students hear one sentence and respond to something different. This makes the debate confusing. A rebuttal should answer the actual point made by the other speaker. If the counterpoint is about internet access, the rebuttal should respond to internet access, not pronunciation or exam marks. A good rebuttal should also be supported. It is not enough to say, “I disagree.” The speaker should explain why. For example, “I disagree because...” or “That point is important, but...” These phrases help the speaker give a clear response. In professional debate, a rebuttal often has three steps. First, acknowledge the other speaker’s point. Second, explain the weakness or limitation. Third, return to the main argument. For example: “I understand that some students may feel nervous in debate. However, nervousness is part of learning many speaking skills. If debate is practiced in short and supportive activities, it can build confidence. Therefore, debate should not be avoided; it should be taught carefully.”

How Can Students Make an Argument Persuasive?

An argument is persuasive when it helps listeners understand and consider the speaker’s position. Persuasion does not mean forcing others to agree. It means presenting ideas so clearly and respectfully that others can see the strength of the argument. A persuasive argument needs a clear claim. If the claim is unclear, the listener may not know what the speaker wants to prove. For example, “Education should improve” is too general. A clearer claim is, “Students should receive more speaking practice because communication skills are important for interviews and future work.” A persuasive argument also needs strong reasons. Reasons answer the question “Why should people accept this idea?” For example, students should practice speaking because it helps them explain ideas, answer questions, build confidence, and prepare for professional situations. These reasons make the claim stronger. Examples also make arguments persuasive. A speaker can explain how an idea works in real life. For example, “A student who practices debate learns how to organize her opinion, answer questions, and stay calm when someone disagrees. These same skills can help her later in a university interview.” This example connects debate practice to a real professional situation. Tone also affects persuasion. A calm and respectful speaker is often more convincing than an angry speaker. If the speaker sounds insulting or careless, the listeners may reject the message. If the speaker sounds prepared, respectful, and confident, the listeners are more likely to take the argument seriously.

How Can Students Present an Argument Logically and Respectfully?

Students can present an argument logically and respectfully by organizing their speech before they begin. A simple structure can help state the position, give reasons, support the reasons with examples, recognize one counterpoint, and end with a clear conclusion.

For example, a student may say:

“My position is that students should practice debate in communication classes. First, debate helps students organize their ideas. Second, it teaches them to listen to different opinions. Third, it builds confidence for interviews and professional discussions. Some students may feel nervous at first, but short and guided debates can help them improve gradually. For these reasons, debate is a useful communication activity.” This argument is clear because the speaker gives a position, several reasons, a counterpoint, a response, and a conclusion. It is respectful because it does not insult people who disagree.

Students should also use polite language during debate. Useful phrases include:

“I understand your point, but I see it differently.”

“That is an important concern; however,...”

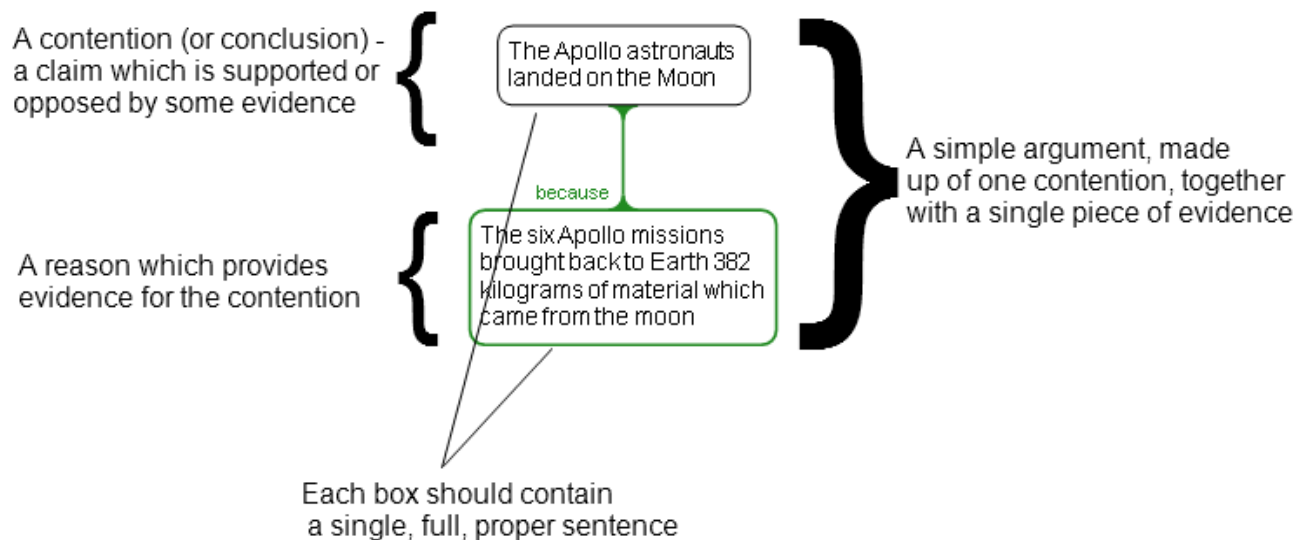
“My reason for this position is...”

“Another example is...”

“I would like to respond to that point.”

“Based on these reasons, I believe...”

These phrases help the debate stay professional. They also help students speak with confidence without sounding aggressive. Imagine a student is debating whether group assignments should be used in online classes. She may say, “I believe group assignments should be used, but they should be carefully organized. They help students communicate and share responsibility. However, if tasks are not divided clearly, one student may do too much work. Therefore, group assignments should include clear roles, deadlines, and follow-up.” This argument is balanced, logical, and respectful.



How Can Students Respond Without Losing Focus or Respect?

Students can respond without losing focus or respect by listening carefully, answering the actual point, and avoiding emotional reactions. In debate, it is easy to become nervous or defensive when someone disagrees. However, a professional speaker remains calm and responds to the argument. The first step is to listen fully before responding. If a student interrupts, she may misunderstand the other speaker's point. Waiting until the speaker finishes allows the response to be more accurate. The student can also take a short note while listening. The second step is to identify the main point. Sometimes another speaker may say many things, but only one or two ideas are central. The student should respond to the main idea instead of becoming distracted by small details. The third step is to use respectful language. Instead of saying, “You are wrong,” the speaker can say, “I understand your concern, but I think there is another way to look at this.” This keeps the debate calm. The fourth step is to return to the main

argument. For example, if the topic is debating practice, the student should not move into unrelated topics. A focused rebuttal may say, “Your point about nervousness is important, but my argument is that guided debate can reduce nervousness over time.” Imagine a debate about whether students should give short presentations. One speaker says, “Presentations are not useful because many students are shy.” A respectful rebuttal would be: “I understand that shyness is a real problem. However, avoiding presentations may keep students shy for longer. If presentations begin with short one-minute tasks, students can build confidence step by step.” This response stays focused and respectful.

Why Is Preparation Important in Debate?

Preparation is important because it helps students speak with confidence and clarity. Without preparation, a student may know her opinion but struggle to explain it. She may forget examples, repeat the same point, or become confused when someone disagrees. Preparation gives the speaker a plan. Preparation does not mean memorizing a full speech. It means understanding the topic, choosing a position, writing key notes, thinking about opposing views, and preparing possible rebuttals. This makes the speaker more flexible because she knows the main ideas well. For students who feel shy, preparation is especially helpful. A student may feel nervous in debate because she worries, she will not know what to say. If she prepares her position and two or three reasons, she has a clear starting point. Even if she feels nervous, her notes can guide her. Preparation also helps students use evidence. Evidence can be a fact, example, experience, observation, or information from a reliable source. In professional communication, evidence makes an argument stronger. A speaker who only says, “I think this is good,” may not persuade others. A speaker who explains why and gives support is more convincing. For example, before a debate on online learning, a student can prepare notes under three headings: benefits, challenges, and solutions. Under benefits, she may write “study from home” and “recorded lessons.” Under challenges, she may write “internet problems” and “less direct support.” Under solutions, she may write “clear deadlines,” “recorded explanations,” and “simple communication channels.” These notes help her speak in a balanced way.

Brief Example

A student is preparing for a debate on the topic: “Short speaking activities should be included in online classes.” Her position is that these activities should be included. She writes three reasons in her notes: speaking activities build confidence, help students organize ideas, and prepare them for interviews. She also prepares one counterpoint: some students feel shy or have weak internet. Her rebuttal is that speaking activities can be short, optional at first, and supported by voice recordings when live speaking is difficult. During the debate, another speaker says, “Speaking activities will make shy students uncomfortable.” The student listens and responds respectfully: “I understand that concern. Many students feel nervous when speaking. However, if the activities are short and supportive, they can help students build confidence gradually. Students can start with one-minute voice recordings before speaking live. For this reason, speaking activities should be included carefully, not removed completely.” This example shows preparation, a clear argument, a counterpoint, and a respectful rebuttal. The student does not ignore the other speaker’s concern, but she also does not lose focus on her own position.

Student Practice Activities

1. Choose one debate topic related to study, online learning, group work, interviews, or communication skills. Write one clear position on the topic. Then write two reasons and one example to support your position.

2. Prepare short debate notes for this topic: “Students should practice speaking through short voice recordings.” Your notes should include your position, two reasons, one counterpoint, and one possible rebuttal.
3. Read this counterpoint: “Debate is not useful because it makes students nervous.” Write a respectful rebuttal that responds to this idea without insulting the speaker.
4. Write three persuasive sentences using these phrases: “My position is...,” “One reason is...,” and “For this reason...” Make sure each sentence is clear and connected to the same argument.
5. Think of a situation where two people disagree about a study plan, group task, or deadline. Write one logical argument from each side. Then write one respectful sentence that could help them continue the debate calmly.

Reflection Questions

1. What makes an argument stronger: more emotion or better reasons?
2. Why is it helpful to prepare notes before a debate?
3. What counterpoint might someone give against your opinion?
4. How can a rebuttal stay respectful?
5. What is one debate skill you want to improve?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

A group is debating this topic: “Students should complete more speaking tasks to improve communication skills.” One student says, “Speaking tasks are important because they help students become confident.” Another student says, “I disagree. Speaking tasks are stressful and make shy students feel embarrassed.”

Questions:

1. What is the first student’s main argument?
2. What counterpoint does the second student give?
3. Is the second student’s response respectful? Explain briefly.
4. Write one logical reason to support speaking tasks.
5. Write one respectful rebuttal to the counterpoint about shyness.
6. Write a short conclusion that supports your final position on the topic.

Chapter 2: Interviews, Questions, and Professional Response

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Answer interview questions clearly and confidently.
2. Ask relevant follow-up questions when role-playing the interviewer.
3. Use professional language to discuss background, skills, interests, and plans.

Words to Know

Word	Meaning
interview	a formal conversation where one person asks questions to learn about another person's background, skills, experience, interests, or suitability
follow-up question	an extra question asked after an answer to get more detail, clarification, or explanation
KSA	knowledge, skills, and abilities that show what a person knows, can do, and is able to perform in a role
professional response	a clear, respectful, focused answer that matches the question and the situation

What Is an Interview?

An interview is a formal conversation where one person or a group asks questions to learn more about another person. Interviews are common in job applications, university admissions, scholarship selection, volunteer programs, internships, and leadership opportunities. The person answering the questions is usually trying to show that she is suitable, prepared, and serious about the opportunity. An interview is different from an ordinary conversation because it has a clear purpose. In a friendly conversation, people may speak freely about many topics. In an interview, the answers should stay focused on the question and the role. The interviewee should speak clearly, give useful information, and show respect for the interviewer's time. For example, if an interviewer asks, "Why are you interested in this program?" a weak answer would be, "Because I like it." This answer is too short and does not explain the reason. A stronger answer would be, "I am interested in this program because it will help me improve my communication skills and prepare for future work in education. I also want to learn how to organize activities and support students more professionally." This answer gives a clear reason and connects the student's interest to future. Furthermore, Interviews can feel stressful because the person being interviewed may worry about making mistakes. However, an interview does not require perfect language. It requires clear thinking, respectful words, and relevant answers. A student who prepares her background, skills, interests, and plans can answer with more confidence.



What Makes an Interview Answer Effective?

An effective interview answer is clear, focused, honest, and connected to the question. It should give enough information without becoming too long or moving away from the topic. A good answer helps the interviewer understand who the person is, what she can do, and why she is suitable for the opportunity. A strong interview answer usually has three parts. First, it gives a direct answer to the question. Second, it gives a reason or example. Third, it connects the answer to the role, program, or future goal. This structure helps the answer sound organized and professional. For example, if the question is, “What is one of your strengths?” a weak answer is, “I am hardworking.” This may be true, but it is too general. A stronger answer is, “One of my strengths is responsibility. When I am given a task, I try to finish it on time and communicate if there is a problem. For example, in a study group, I helped collect students’ answers and reminded members before the deadline.” This answer is stronger because it gives a quality, explains it, and provides an example. Effective answers should also match the opportunity. If the interview is for a university program, the student should connect answers to study goals, subject interests, learning habits, and future. If the interview is for a job or volunteer role, the student should connect answers to skills, responsibility, teamwork, communication, and service. An effective interview answer does not need to sound memorized. If an answer sounds too artificial, the interviewer may feel that the person is only repeating prepared words. A natural professional answer sounds prepared but still personal. It uses clear language, real examples, and a calm tone.

How Can Students Answer Interview Questions Clearly and Confidently?

Students can answer interview questions clearly and confidently by listening carefully, pausing briefly, answering the exact question, and giving a relevant example. Confidence does not mean speaking loudly or pretending to know everything. Confidence means speaking with calmness, honesty, and preparation. Before answering, the student should make sure she understands the question. If the

question is unclear, it is acceptable to ask for clarification. For example, she may say, “Could you please repeat the last part of the question?” or “Do you mean my academic experience or my volunteer experience?” This is better than guessing and giving an unrelated answer. A student can also use a simple answer structure: answer, explain, example, connection. For example, if asked, “Why should we select you for this volunteer role?” she may answer: “I believe I am suitable for this role because I am responsible and interested in helping students. I have experience organizing learning materials and communicating with classmates about deadlines. For example, I helped prepare a list of students’ assignments and followed up with those who had not submitted. This experience will help me support the team in this role.” This answer is clear because it does not only say, “I am good.” It explains why the student is suitable and gives an example. It is confident because the speaker speaks about her strength without sounding proud or rude. Students should avoid answers that are too short, too general, or too unrelated. For example, “I want this job because I need it” may be honest, but it is not enough. A better answer is, “I am interested in this job because it matches my communication skills and my interest in working with students. I also want to gain experience in a professional environment.” This sounds more focused and professional.

How Can the STAR Method Help Interview Answers?

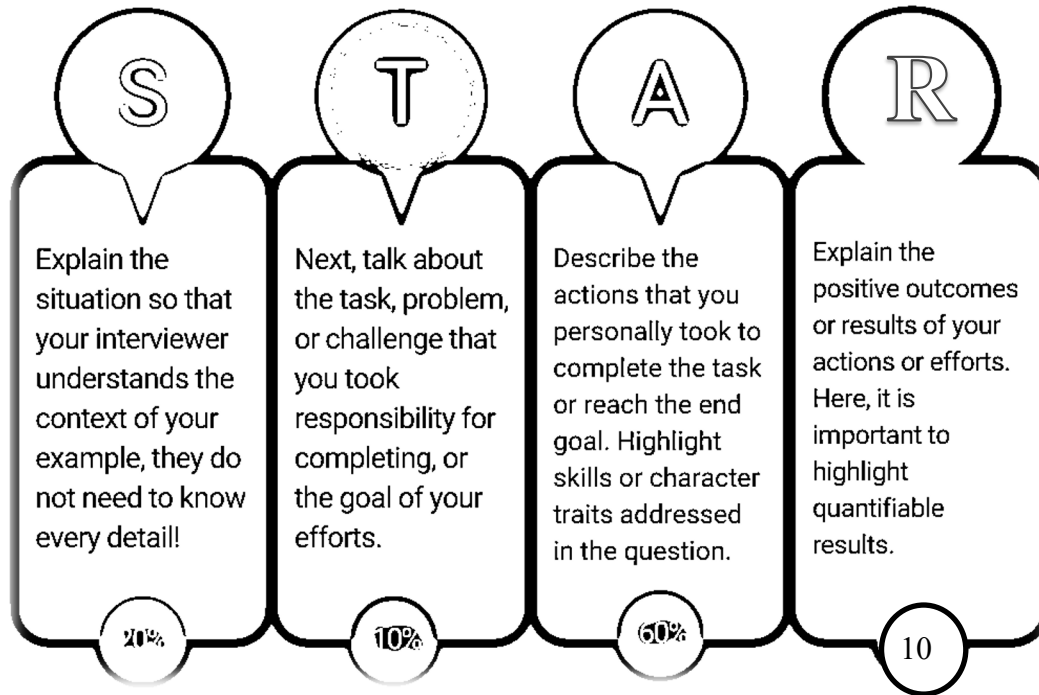
The STAR method is a helpful way to answer interview questions that ask about experience or behavior. STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. It helps the speaker tell a short, organized story instead of giving a vague answer. Situation means the background of the example. Task means the responsibility or problem. Action means what the student did. Result means what happened because of the action. This structure is useful because many interviewers want real examples, not only general claims. For example, if the question is, “Tell me about a time you solved a problem,” a weak answer is, “I solve problems well.” A STAR answer would be stronger: Situation: “In an online study group, some students were not sending their work on time.”

Task: “I was responsible for collecting all parts and sending the final file.”

Action: “I made a simple list of names, sent polite reminders, and asked students to inform me early if they had internet problems.”

Result: “The group submitted the final work on time, and the next task became more organized.” This answer is effective because it shows the skill through a real example. The interviewer can understand the student’s responsibility, communication, and problem-solving ability. Students should not make STAR answers too long. The answer should include only the most important details. If the story becomes too long, the interviewer may lose the main point. A good STAR answer is clear, brief, and connected to the question. STAR can be used for many interview questions, such as “Tell me about a time you worked in a team,” “Describe a challenge you faced,” “Give an example of leadership,” or “Tell me about a time you learned from a mistake.” It helps students answer with confidence because they already know the order of the answer. For better understanding of STAR Method read the photo carefully.

The STAR Method

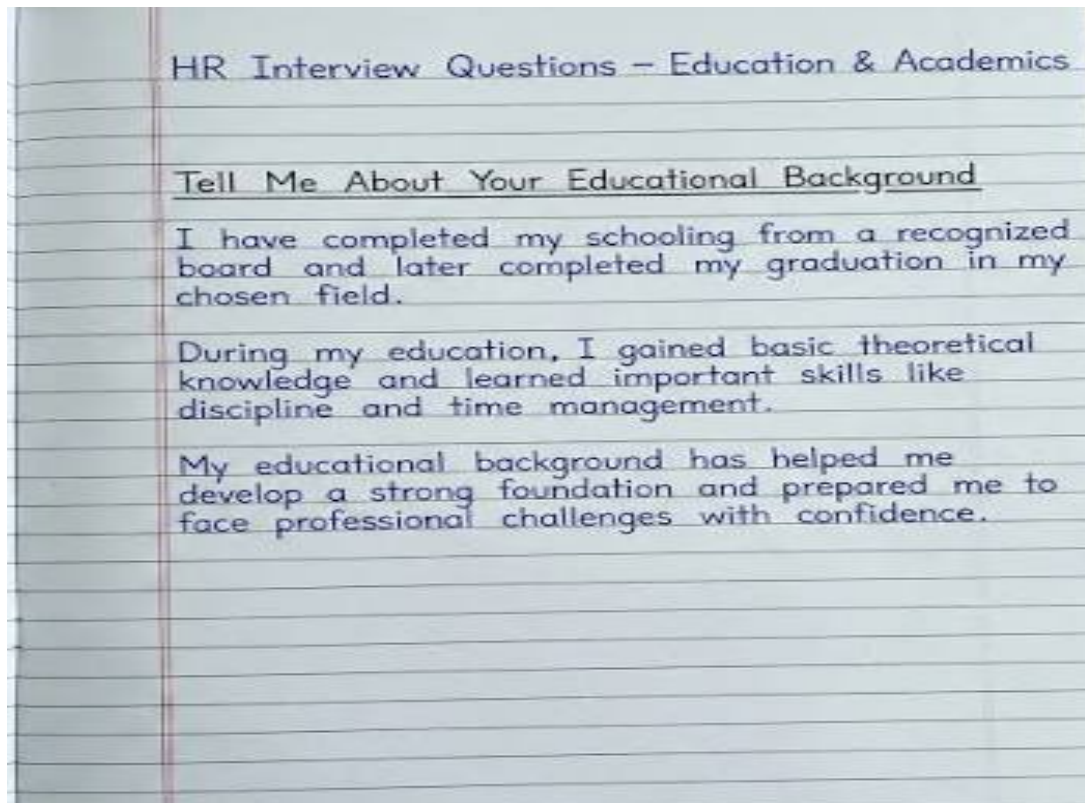


What Is KSA and Why Is It Important in Interviews?

KSA stands for knowledge, skills, and abilities. These three areas help show whether a person is suitable for a role, program, or responsibility. In an interview, students often need to talk about their KSA even if the interviewer does not use the term directly. Knowledge means what a person knows. This may come from education, training, reading, or experience. For example, a student may have knowledge of English grammar, computer use, communication skills, child learning, health topics, or office procedures. Skills are things a person can do through practice. For example, writing emails, organizing files, speaking clearly, translating short texts, using spreadsheets, leading a group, preparing notes, or explaining lessons are skills. Skills usually improve with practice and feedback. In addition, abilities are broader qualities that help a person perform tasks. For example, the ability to learn quickly, solve problems, manage time, stay calm under pressure, work with others, and take responsibility are important abilities. These may be shown through behavior and examples. In an interview, students should not only list their KSA. They should connect them to the role. For example, instead of saying, “I have communication skills,” a stronger answer is, “I have communication skills because I have practiced explaining tasks clearly to classmates and following up respectfully when work is delayed. This can help me communicate with students and team members in this role.” Imagine a student is applying for an education volunteer position. She can discuss her KSA like this: “I have knowledge of basic English learning, skills in organizing student records, and the ability to communicate patiently with learners. These qualities can help me support the program’s learning activities.” This answer is professional because it connects the student’s background to the opportunity.

How Can Students Discuss Their Background Professionally?

A professional background answer should introduce the student in a focused and relevant way. It should not include every detail of the person's life. It should include information that helps the interviewer understand the student's education, experience, interests, and goals. When asked, "Tell me about yourself," students often feel confused because the question is broad. A good answer should be short and organized. It may include current study or work, relevant experience, important skills, and future interest. For example: "I am a student interested in communication, education, and community service. I have experience working in study groups, organizing assignments, and helping classmates understand lessons. I am especially interested in improving my speaking and writing skills because I want to use them in future educational or professional work." This answer is better than giving unrelated personal details. It is professional because it focuses on learning, experience, and goals. It also sounds natural because it uses simple language. Students should also be careful not to sound too modest or too proud. Some students speak too little about themselves because they feel shy. Others may exaggerate. A balanced answer is honest and confident. For example, "I am still learning, but I am responsible and willing to improve," sounds honest and professional. A background answer should match the interview. For a university interview, the student can focus more on study interests, academic preparation, and future goals. For a job or volunteer interview, she can focus more on skills, responsibilities, teamwork, and service. In the photo below read a respond to an interview question from a student.



How Can Students Talk About Skills and Experience?

Students should talk about skills and experience by giving clear examples. It is not enough to say, "I am good at teamwork," or "I am a good communicator." The interviewer needs to understand how the student has used those skills in real situations.

A good way to discuss skills is to name the skill, describe where it was used, and explain the result. For example: “I have practiced teamwork in group assignments. In one task, I helped divide the work and reminded members about the deadline. This helped the group complete the assignment on time.” Students may think they have no experience if they have not had a formal job. However, experience can also come from study groups, family responsibilities, volunteer work, online learning, class projects, helping younger students, organizing materials, or solving small problems. The important point is to explain the experience professionally. For example, a student who helps at home may say: “I have developed time management through balancing study responsibilities with home responsibilities. I learned to plan tasks earlier and communicate when I need more time.” This answer turns daily responsibility into a professional skill. Students should choose examples that are relevant. If the interview is for a communication role, examples about speaking, listening, writing, organizing, and teamwork is useful. If the interview is for a university program, examples about study habits, subject interest, learning discipline, and future goals are useful. A professional answer should also be specific. Instead of saying, “I helped many people,” the student can say, “I helped three classmates understand the assignment instructions by explaining the steps in simple language.” Specific examples sound more believable and useful.

How Can Students Talk About Interests and Plans?

Interviewers often ask about interests and plans because they want to understand motivation. They want to know why the student wants the opportunity and how it connects to her future. A good answer should show both personal interest and practical purpose. When talking about interests, students should explain what they enjoy or care about and why. For example, “I am interested in education because I believe learning can give students more confidence and future opportunities.” This answer gives a reason and sounds thoughtful. When talking about plans, students should be realistic. A plan does not need to be perfect or final. It should show direction. For example, “My plan is to improve my English communication skills, gain experience in student support, and later apply for university studies in education or public health.” This answer shows purpose without sounding artificial. Students should avoid answers that are too general, such as “I want to be successful.” Success can mean many things. A stronger answer explains what kind of success and what steps the student wants to take. For example, “I want to become more confident in professional communication so I can take part in interviews, presentations, and community projects.” A good answer connects interests and plans to the opportunity. For example, if applying for an internship, the student may say, “This internship interests me because it will help me practice communication, teamwork, and responsibility. These skills are important for my future plan to work in education and student support.”

Why Are Follow-Up Questions Important?

Follow-up questions are important because they help the interviewer understand more than the first answer. In interviews, the first answer may be short, general, or incomplete. A follow-up question helps bring out more detail, examples, reasons, or clarification. When role-playing the interviewer, students should not only read prepared questions and stop. They should listen to the answer and ask a question that connects to it. For example, if the interviewee says, “I have experience working in a team,” the interviewer can ask, “Can you give an example of a time you worked successfully with a team?” This follow-up question asks for evidence. Follow-up questions are also useful when an answer is unclear. If the interviewee says, “I helped with student work,” the interviewer may ask, “What kind of student work did you help with?” or “What was your responsibility?” These questions help the answer become more specific. A good follow-up question should be relevant and respectful. It should not embarrass the interviewee or move away from the topic. Its purpose is to understand more, not to trap the person. For example, instead of saying, “Are you sure you can do that?” a better follow-up question is, “What experience has prepared you for that responsibility?” Imagine a student role-playing an interviewer for a university admission interview. She asks, “Why do you want to study this subject?” The interviewee answers, “Because I like helping people.” A useful follow-up question would be, “Can you describe one experience that made you interested in helping people through this subject?” This question encourages a deeper and more meaningful answer.



How Can Students Ask Relevant Follow-Up Questions as Interviewers?

Students can ask relevant follow-up questions by listening carefully to the answer and choosing one important point to explore. A follow-up question should connect directly to what the interviewee said. If it does not connect, the interview may feel confusing or unnatural. One way to ask a follow-up question is to ask for an example. For instance, “Can you give an example?” or “When did you use this skill?” Examples help show whether the answer is real and practical. Another way is to ask for explanation. For example, “Why is this skill important for the role?” or “How did this experience help you improve?” These questions help the interviewee reflect more deeply. A third way is to ask about future use. For example, “How would you use this skill in our program?” or “How would this experience help you in this position?” This connects the interviewee’s background to the opportunity. Students should avoid asking follow-up questions that are too broad or unrelated. For example, if the interviewee is talking about teamwork, it is not helpful to suddenly ask about favorite food or personal family details. The interviewer should remain professional and focused. A useful role-play pattern is main question, answer, follow-up question, final clarification. For example:

Main question: “What is one skill you can bring to this role?”

Answer: “I can communicate well with students.”

Follow-up question: “Can you give an example of when you used that skill?”

Clarification: “How would that help you in this role?”

This pattern helps students practice both interviewing and listening.

How Can Students Sound Professional Without Sounding Unnatural?

Students can sound professional without sounding unnatural by using clear, respectful, and simple language. Professional language does not mean using difficult words, memorized sentences, or exaggerated expressions. It means speaking in a way that fits the situation and helps the listener understand the answer. A natural professional answer sounds like a real person speaking carefully. For example, “I am interested in this opportunity because it matches my experience in student support and my future goals,” sounds professional and natural. But saying, “I possess an extraordinary passion for the implementation of communicative excellence,” sounds unnatural and too complicated. Students should avoid slang, rude expressions, and careless wording in interviews. For example, “I just want to try this thing” sounds weak. A better sentence is, “I am interested in this opportunity because I want to develop my skills and contribute to the team.” This is simple but professional. Professional language also includes polite phrases. Students can say, “Thank you for the question,” “Could you please repeat that?” “One example from my experience is...,” “I would like to improve in this area,” or “I am willing to learn.” These phrases help the interview sound respectful. A student should also avoid sounding like she has memorized a script. Interviewers usually appreciate honest, thoughtful answers. If the student forgets a word, she can pause and continue. If she does not know something, she can say, “I do not have experience with that yet, but I am willing to learn.” This answer is professional because it is honest and positive.

How Can Students Respond to Difficult Interview Questions?

Difficult interview questions are normal. They may ask about weaknesses, mistakes, challenges, lack of experience, or future. Students should not panic when they hear a difficult question. A good response should be honest, calm, and focused on learning or improvement. For example, if asked, “What is one weakness you are working on?” a poor answer is, “I have no weakness.” This sounds unrealistic. A better answer is, “I sometimes feel nervous when speaking in front of new people, but I am working on this by practicing short speaking tasks and asking for feedback.” This answer is honest and shows improvement. If asked about a mistake, the student should not blame others. She can explain what happened, what she did, and what she learned. For example, “In one group task, I did not confirm the deadline clearly, so my part was late. After that, I learned to ask for exact deadlines and write them down.” This answer shows responsibility. If a student does not have experience, she can connect the question to related learning. For example, if asked, “Have you worked in an office before?” she may answer, “I have not worked in a formal office yet, but I have practiced organizing student records and communicating with group members. I am ready to learn the office procedures.” This is honest and still positive. Difficult questions are an opportunity to show maturity. The interviewer does not expect the student to be perfect. The interviewer wants to see whether the student can think clearly, accept responsibility, and communicate professionally.

How Can Students Prepare for an Interview?

Students can prepare for an interview by learning about the role or program, practicing common questions, preparing examples, and thinking about their KSA. Preparation reduces nervousness because the student enters the interview with a clear idea of what she wants to say. The first step is to understand the opportunity. If it is a job, the student should know the main duties. If it is a university interview, she should know the subject and why she wants to study it. If it is a volunteer role, she should know what kind of support the program needs. The second step is to prepare answers to common questions. These may include: “Tell me about yourself,” “Why are you interested in this role?” “What are your strengths?” “What is one challenge you faced?” and “What are your future plans?” Students should not memorize every word, but they should know the main points they want to include. The third step is to prepare examples. Examples make answers stronger. A student can prepare examples about teamwork, responsibility, communication, problem-solving, leadership, learning from mistakes, or helping others. These examples can be used in many interview answers. The fourth step is to practice speaking aloud. Reading silently is not enough. When students practice aloud, they notice if their answers are too long, unclear, or unnatural. They can also practice with a family member, friend, voice recording, or alone in front of a mirror. For example, a student preparing for a scholarship interview may write notes about her education, goals, challenges, achievements, and future. She can then practice answering in short, organized paragraphs. This preparation helps her speak more confidently during the real interview.

Brief Example

A student is applying for a volunteer role in an education program. The interviewer asks, “Why are you interested in this role?” The student answers, “I am interested in this role because I want to support students and improve my professional communication skills. I have experience helping classmates understand assignment instructions and reminding group members about deadlines. I believe this role will help me become more organized and useful in student support.”

The interviewer asks a follow-up question: “Can you give an example of when you helped classmates?” The student responds, “In one study group, several students were confused about how to submit their work. I explained the steps in simple language and sent a short reminder before the deadline. As a result, more students submitted their work correctly.”

This example shows a professional interview response. The student answers clearly, gives a relevant example, discusses her skills, and connects her experience to the role.

Student Practice Activities

1. Write an answer to the interview question, “Tell me about yourself.” Include your study background, one useful skill, and one future interest.
2. Choose one common interview question, such as “What is one of your strengths?” or “Why are you interested in this role?” Write an answer using a clear example.
3. Prepare one STAR answer about a time you solved a problem, worked in a team, helped someone, or learned from a mistake.
4. Role-play as an interviewer. Write three main interview questions and two follow-up questions that ask for examples or clarification.
5. Write three professional sentences using these phrases: “One example from my experience is...,” “I am interested in this opportunity because...,” and “I am willing to improve...”
6. Practice improving an unnatural answer. Change “I am the best person and I can do everything” into a professional and realistic interview answer.

Reflection Questions

1. What interview question makes you feel most nervous?
2. Why are examples important in interview answers?
3. What is one skill or ability you can discuss confidently?
4. How can follow-up questions help an interview?
5. What can you do to sound professional but still natural?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

A student is in a role-play interview for a university program. The interviewer asks, “Why do you want to join this program?” The student answers, “Because it is good and I like it.” The interviewer then asks, “Can you explain more?” The student becomes nervous and says, “I do not know.”

Questions:

1. What makes the student’s first answer weak?
2. Rewrite the answer in a clearer and more professional way.
3. What follow-up question did the interviewer ask?
4. Write one better follow-up question the interviewer could ask.
5. Choose one KSA the student could mention in the answer.
6. Write a short professional response that includes background, interest, and future plan.

Chapter 3: Giving Instructions and Constructive Feedback

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

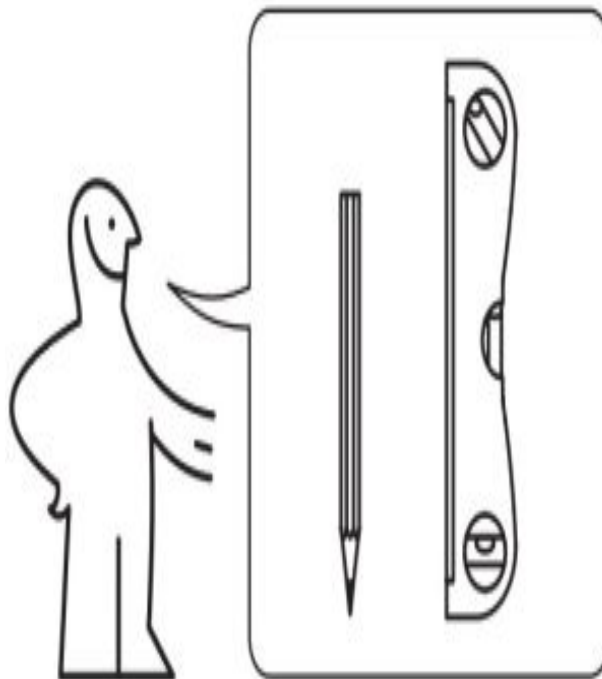
1. Give clear spoken instructions for a moderately complex task.
2. Observe another person's performance and offer useful feedback.
3. Use sequencing language and practical detail in spoken guidance.

Words to Know

Word	Meaning
instruction	clear guidance that tells someone what to do and how to do it
sequence	the correct order in which steps should happen
constructive feedback	useful comments that help someone improve without insulting or discouraging them
observation	careful watching or listening in order to understand what someone does well and what needs improvement

What Are Instructions?

Instructions are spoken or written guidance that explain how to do something. In professional communication, instructions are important because they help people complete tasks correctly, safely, and efficiently. Good instructions do not only tell someone the final goal. They explain the steps needed to reach that goal. Instructions are used in many educational, workplace, volunteer, and community situations. A student may explain how to submit an assignment online. A team leader may explain how to prepare attendance records. A volunteer may explain how to organize student files. A teacher may explain how to complete a speaking activity. In all these situations, clear instructions help prevent confusion and mistakes. Spoken instructions are especially important because the listener may not be able to read them again later. If the speaker explains too quickly, skips steps, or uses unclear words, the listener may misunderstand the task. For this reason, spoken instructions should be organized, simple, and detailed enough for the listener to follow. For example, saying, "Upload the homework properly," is not a clear instruction. The listener



may not know where to upload it, what file format to use, or what time it is due. A clearer instruction would be, “First, save your homework as a PDF. Then open the class group link. After that, upload the file before 7 p.m. Finally, send a short message saying, ‘Submitted.’” This instruction is clearer because it gives steps in order.

What Makes Spoken Instructions Clear?

Spoken instructions are clear when the listener knows exactly what to do, how to do it, and in what order. A clear speaker does not assume that the listener already understands the task. Instead, the speaker explains the task step by step and includes the practical details that are needed. Clear spoken instructions usually include the purpose of the task, the materials or information needed, the steps in order, the expected result, and the deadline if there is one. For example, if a student is asked to prepare a short report, the instruction should explain the topic, length, format, and submission time. Without these details, the student may complete the task incorrectly. Therefore, a clear instruction should also use simple language. Professional communication does not mean using difficult words. It means giving guidance that the listener can understand and use. If the listener is new to the task, the speaker should avoid unexplained technical terms. If technical words are necessary, the speaker should explain them briefly. For example, if a group leader says, “Compile the data and finalize the document,” some students may not understand the exact action. A clearer version is, “Please collect the answers from all group members, place them in one Word file, check that the names are written correctly, and send the final document to me before 8 p.m.” This gives practical detail and makes the task easier to complete. The speaker should also check understanding. After giving instructions, the speaker can ask, “Is the task clear?” or “Can you repeat the main steps, so I know I explained them clearly?” This does not make the speaker weak. It shows responsibility. Good instructions are not only spoken; they are understood.

Why Is Sequence Important in Instructions?

Sequence means the order in which steps happen. Sequence is important because many tasks must be completed in the correct order. If the listener does the steps in the wrong order, the result may be confusing, incomplete, or incorrect. For example, if a student is explaining how to submit an online assignment, she should not begin with “send a message to the teacher” before explaining how to save and upload the file. The correct order may be finishing the assignment, save the file, rename the file, upload it to the correct link, and then send a confirmation message. This order helps the listener follow the task from beginning to end. So, sequencing language helps make instructions clear. Useful sequencing words include: first, second, next, after that, then, before, once, finally, and at the end. These words guide the listener through the process. They also help the speaker avoid jumping between steps. For example, a clear spoken instruction may sound like this: “First, write your full name at the top of the page. Next, answer questions one to five. After that, check your spelling. Finally, take a clear photo and send it to the class group before 6 p.m.” The sequence is easy to follow because each step has a place. Sequence is especially important in moderately complex tasks. A simple task may only need one instruction, but a moderately complex task has several steps. For example, preparing a group presentation, collecting attendance records, making a graph, organizing survey answers, or giving feedback on a speaking activity all require steps. If the steps are not ordered well, the listener may become confused.

How Can Students Give Instructions for a Moderately Complex Task?

First, students can give instructions for a moderately complex task by breaking the task into smaller steps. A moderately complex task is not extremely difficult, but it has more than one action. The speaker should not give all the information in one long sentence. Instead, the speaker should divide the task into clear parts. So, the first part is the goal. The speaker should explain what the listener is trying to complete. For example, “Today, you will prepare a short speaking practice recording.” This tells the listener the purpose of the task. The second part is preparation. The speaker should mention what the listener needs before starting. For example, “You need your notebook, your phone, and the topic we discussed yesterday.” This prevents the listener from stopping in the middle because something is missing. The third part is the sequence of steps. The speaker should explain each step in order. For example, “First, write three main ideas. Next, practice saying them aloud. Then record yourself for one minute. After that, listen to the recording and notice one thing you did well and one thing to improve.” The fourth part is the expected result. The speaker should explain what the final work should look or sound like. For example, “Your recording should be about one minute, clear enough to hear, and focused on the topic.” This helps the listener know the standard. The final part is checking understanding. The speaker can ask, “Do you want me to repeat any step?” or “Which step will you do first?” This gives the listener a chance to ask questions before beginning.

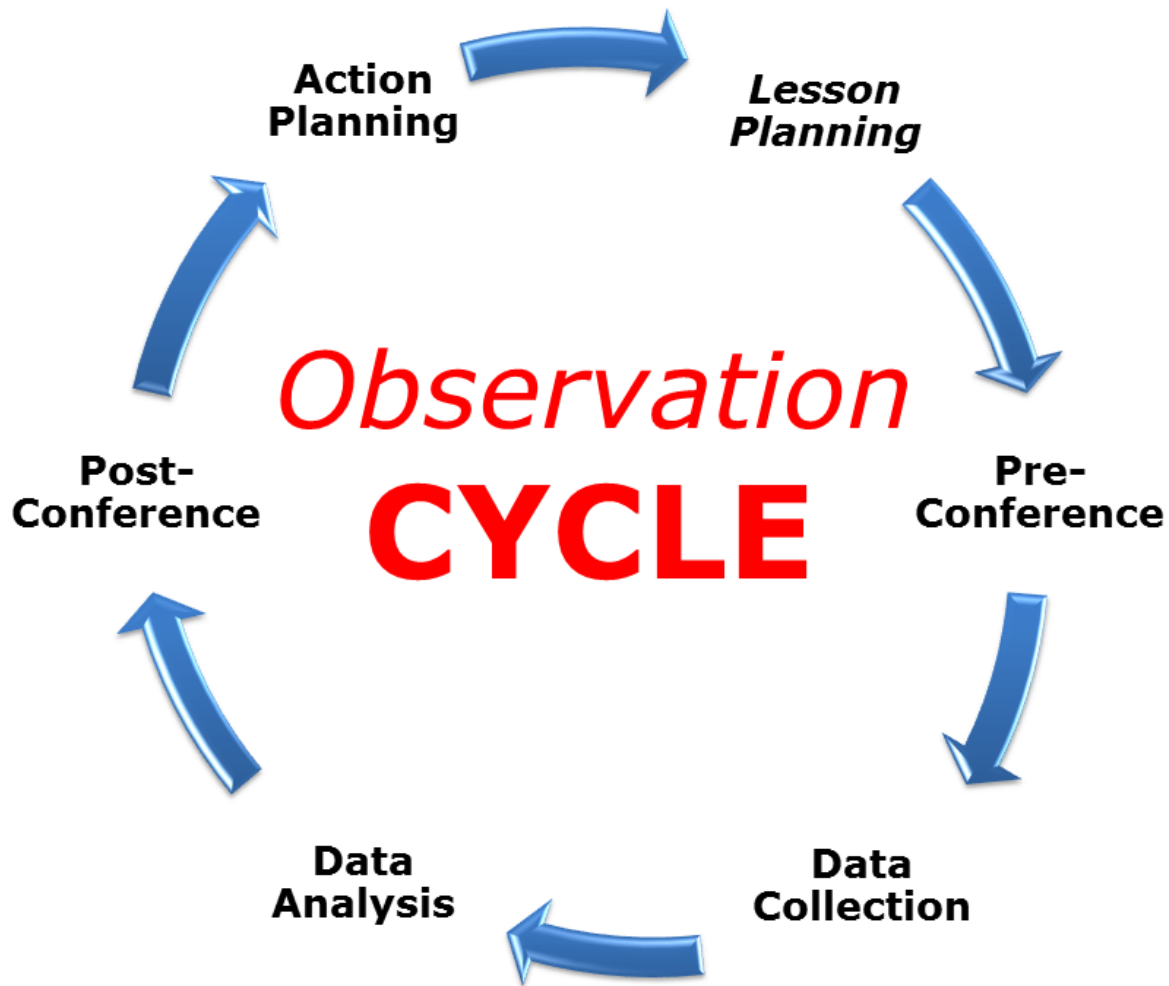
Imagine a young woman is explaining how to prepare a simple attendance report. She may say, “First, open the attendance list. Next, check the names of students who joined today’s session. After that, mark present or absent beside each name. Then count the total number of present students. Finally, send the completed list and the total number to the group leader before 7 p.m.” This instruction is professional because it is clear, ordered, and practical.

What Is Observation?

Observation means carefully watching or listening to someone’s performance to understand what they are doing well and what may need improvement. Observation is important before giving feedback because feedback should be based on what happened, not on assumptions. In professional communication, observation should focus on behavior, task performance, and results. It should not focus on personal judgment. For example, “You spoke too quietly during the first part of the presentation” is an observation. “You are not confident” is a judgment. The first sentence is more useful because it describes something specific that can be improved. Observation helps feedback become fair. If a person gives feedback without observing carefully, the feedback may be wrong or unhelpful. For example, if a student says, “You did not prepare,” but she did not actually check the person’s notes or effort, this may be unfair. A better observation would be, “During the presentation, you had good examples, but the points were not in a clear order.” This focuses on the performance. When observing, students should notice both strengths and areas for improvement. Good feedback should not only mention mistakes. It should also recognize what the person did well. This helps the person feel respected and understand what to continue doing.

For example, while observing a classmate give instructions, a student may notice: the speaker used clear sequencing words but forgot to mention the deadline. This observation can lead to useful

feedback: “Your steps were clear because you used first, next, and finally. To make the instruction complete, you could also add the deadline.”

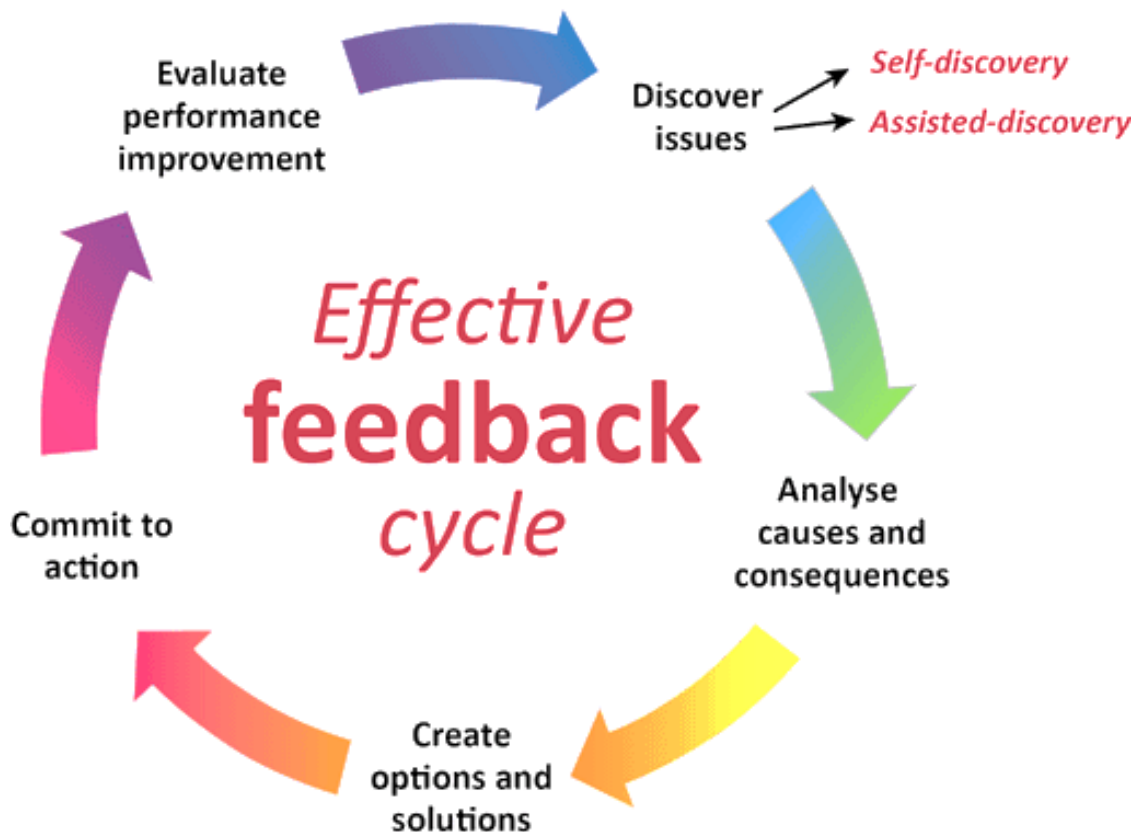


What Is Constructive Feedback?

Constructive feedback is useful information given to help someone improve. It is different from insult, blame, or general criticism. Constructive feedback explains what happened, why it matters, and how the person can improve next time. Constructive feedback should be specific. For example, “Your explanation was not good” is too general. The listener may not know what to change. A better sentence is, “Your explanation had good information, but the steps were not in order. Next time, try using first, next, then, and finally.” This feedback is useful because it identifies the problem and gives a practical suggestion. Constructive feedback should also focus on behavior, not personality. For example, saying, “You are careless,” attacks the person. Saying, “Two names were missing from the list, so please check the list once more before sending it,” focuses on the task. The second sentence is more professional and easier to accept. Therefore, feedback should also be forward-focused. This means it should help the person know what to do next time. If feedback only says what was wrong, it may discourage the person. If it explains how to improve, it becomes constructive. For example, after a student gives a short presentation, feedback may be: “Your voice was clear, and your example was useful. To improve, try organizing your points into three parts before speaking.” This feedback recognizes a strength and gives one clear improvement point.

Why Should Feedback Focus on Improvement, Not Insult?

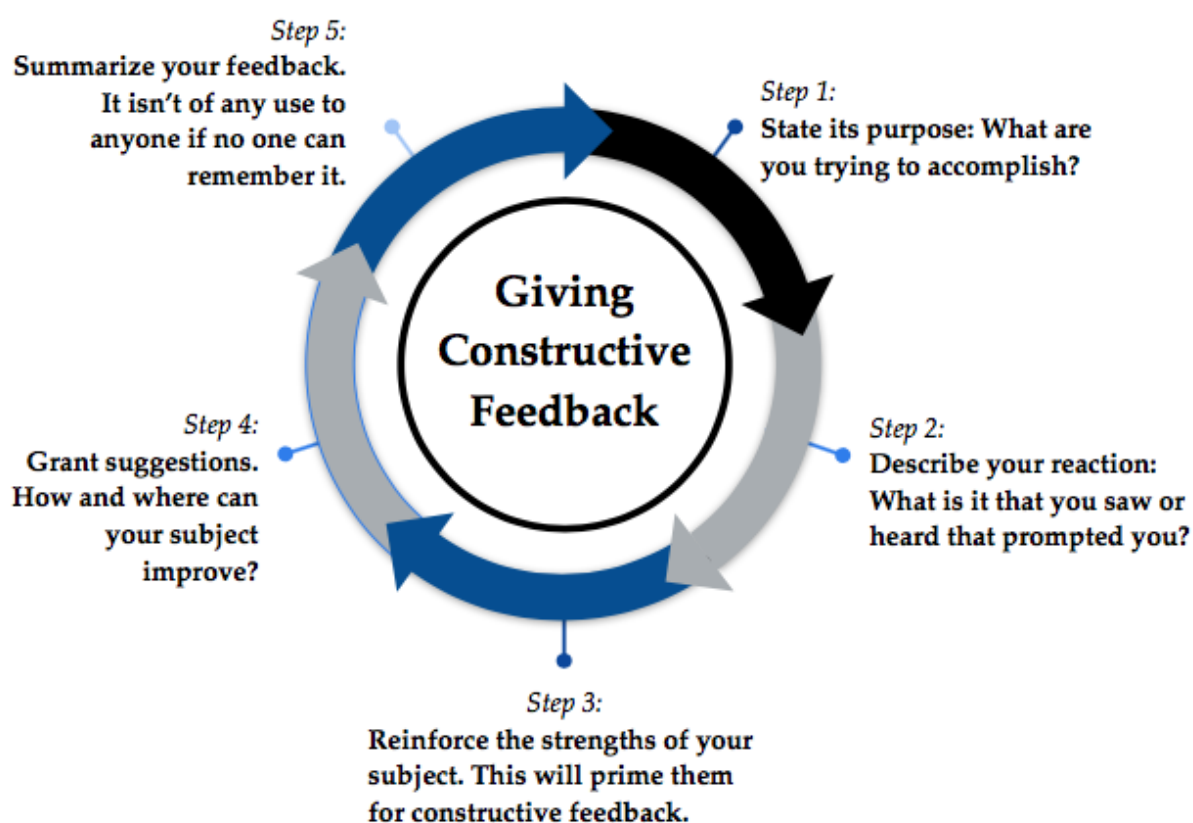
Feedback should focus on improvement because the purpose of feedback is to help someone do better. Insults do not help people improve. They usually make people feel embarrassed, defensive, or discouraged. When people feel attacked, they may stop listening to the message, even if part of the message is true. For example, saying, “You always speak badly,” is insulting and unclear. It does not explain what the person should change. A constructive version would be, “Today, your voice was too low during the last part, so some listeners may not have heard you. Next time, try speaking a little louder and pausing between points.” This feedback is more useful because it gives a specific action. In addition, improvement-focused feedback also protects relationships. In school, work, and volunteer settings, people often need to continue working together after feedback is given. If feedback is harsh or personal, trust may be damaged. If feedback is respectful and practical, the relationship can remain positive. Feedback should not avoid the truth, but it should deliver the truth carefully. Being kind does not mean saying everything was perfect. Being professional means explaining the concern clearly and respectfully. A person can say, “This part needs improvement,” without saying, “You are bad at this.” Think about a student who prepares a group report but forgets to include the conclusion. An insulting response would be, “You ruined the report.” A constructive response would be, “The introduction and main points are clear, but the conclusion is missing. Please add a short conclusion that summarizes the main idea before we submit it.” This feedback helps the student fix the problem without humiliation. You can see the effective feedback cycle through the picture below.



How Can Students Give Constructive Feedback?

Giving feedback is important but how to give constructive feedback? students can give constructive feedback by using a clear and respectful structure. A helpful structure is mentioned the strength, describe the specific issue, explain the impact, and suggest the next step. This helps the feedback feel

balanced and useful. The first part is the strength. This does not mean giving false praise. It means noticing what the person did well. For example, “Your instructions were easy to hear,” or “Your example helped explain the idea.” This helps the person know what to continue doing. The second part is the specific issue. This should be based on observation. For example, “The steps were not in order,” or “You forgot to mention the deadline.” The issue should be clear enough that the person understands what needs to change. The third part is the impact. The speaker can explain why the issue matters. For example, “If the steps are not in order, the listener may do the task incorrectly,” or “Without the deadline, students may not know when to send the work.” The fourth part is the next step. This is the improvement suggestion. For example, “Next time, write the steps first and then explain them using sequencing words.” A next step makes feedback practical. For example, feedback on spoken instructions could be: “Your voice was clear, and you explained the goal well. One thing to improve is the order of the steps. Some steps came before the materials were mentioned, so the listener may feel confused. Next time, start with what is needed, then explain the steps one by one.” This feedback is specific, respectful, and focused on improvement.



How Can Students Receive Feedback Professionally?

Receiving feedback professionally is also an important communication skill. A person may feel nervous or uncomfortable when hearing feedback, especially if the feedback mentions something that needs improvement. However, feedback can help a student grow if she listens carefully and uses it wisely. The first step is to listen without interrupting. Even if the student feels defensive, she should allow the speaker to finish. Interrupting may make the conversation tense and may prevent the student from understanding the feedback fully. The second step is to ask for clarification if needed. For example, the student may say, “Could you explain which step was unclear?” or “Can you give me an example of where I spoke too fast?” These questions help the feedback become more useful.

The third step is to thank the person or acknowledge the feedback. This does not mean the student must agree with every word. It means she respects the effort to help. For example, “Thank you. I will try to organize my steps more clearly next time.” The fourth step is to decide what action to take. Feedback is only useful if it leads to improvement. If a student receives feedback that her instructions were too general, she can prepare clearer notes next time. If she receives feedback that her voice was too low, she can practice speaking louder. For example, after giving instructions for making a simple graph, a student receives this feedback: “Your explanation was clear, but you did not explain the labels on the axes.” A professional response would be, “Thank you. Next time, I will include the title, x-axis label, and y-axis label in my instructions.” This response shows maturity and willingness to improve.

How Can Sequencing Language Improve Spoken Guidance?

Sequencing language improves spoken guidance because it helps the listener follow the order of the task. Without sequencing language, instructions may sound like a group of disconnected ideas. With sequencing language, the listener understands what comes first, what comes next, and what should happen at the end. Common sequencing words include first, next, then, after that, before, once, finally, and at the end. These words act like signposts. They guide the listener through the task.

For example, compare these two instructions:

“Write your name, answer the questions, send the file, check your work, save it as a PDF.”

This instruction has useful information, but the order is not clear. A better version is:

“First, write your name at the top of the page. Next, answer all the questions. After that, check your work. Then save the file as a PDF. Finally, send it before 6 p.m.”

The second version is easier to follow because the sequence is clear.

Sequencing language is especially useful when giving instructions by voice message. A student may not be able to ask questions immediately, so the instruction must be clear from the beginning. The speaker should use short sentences and clear order. For example, a group leader may send this voice message: “First, read the short text. Next, underline three important points. Then write a five-sentence summary. After that, take a photo of your work. Finally, send the photo before 8 p.m.” This spoken guidance gives the task in a clear sequence.

Brief Example

A student is asked to explain how to prepare a short speaking recording. She gives the following instruction:

“First, choose one topic from the list. Next, write three main ideas in your notebook. After that, practice speaking for one minute. Then record your voice clearly. Finally, listen to your recording and write one thing you did well and one thing you want to improve.”

Another student follows the instructions and completes the task, but her recording is very quiet. The first student observes carefully and gives constructive feedback:

“Your ideas were organized, and your topic was clear. One thing to improve is your voice level. In some parts, the listener may not hear you easily. Next time, try recording in a quieter place and speak a little closer to the phone.”

This example shows clear instruction, observation, and constructive feedback. The feedback does not insult the student. It mentions a strength, identifies a specific issue, explains the effect, and gives a practical suggestion for improvement.

Student Practice Activities

1. Choose a moderately complex task, such as submitting homework online, preparing a short voice recording, making a simple graph, organizing attendance records, or preparing a group presentation. Write spoken instructions for the task using sequencing words.
2. Rewrite unclear instructions into clearer instructions. For example, change “Send the work properly” into detailed steps that explain what to send, where to send it, and when to send it.
3. Observe someone completing a simple task or imagine a classmate giving a short presentation. Write two things the person did well and one thing that could be improved.
4. Write constructive feedback for this situation: A student gave good information in a presentation, but she spoke too fast and did not pause between points.
5. Practice giving feedback without insult. Change “You are careless” into a constructive sentence that focuses on the behavior and the next step.
6. Record or write a short instruction for a task. Then check whether it includes the goal, needed materials, steps in sequence, expected result, and deadline.

Reflection Questions

1. What makes instructions easy for you to follow?
2. Why is sequence important when explaining a task?
3. How do you feel when feedback is given respectfully?
4. What is the difference between feedback and insult?
5. What is one thing you can improve when giving instructions or feedback?

Assessment Practice

Read the situation below and answer the questions.

Situation:

A student explains a task to her group and says, “Prepare the report and send it soon.” Some group members become confused because they do not know what sections to write, what format to use, or when to send it. Later, one student sends a report with missing information. The group leader says, “You did it wrong again.”

Questions:

1. What was unclear in the original instruction?
2. Rewrite the instruction using clear sequencing language and practical details.
3. What did the group leader observe about the student’s work?

4. Why is “You did it wrong again” not constructive feedback?
5. Write one constructive feedback sentence that focuses on improvement.
6. Explain how clear instructions and respectful feedback could help the group complete the task better next time.

Chapter 4: Listening to Factual Reports and Producing Summaries

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Identify the main points in a moderately long factual report.
2. Take notes while listening.
3. Produce a short but complete spoken or written summary.

Words to Know

Word	Meaning
factual report	a spoken or written report that gives real information, events, results, or findings without focusing mainly on opinion
main point	the most important idea or message that the listener needs to understand and remember
note-taking	writing short words, phrases, numbers, or symbols while listening to remember important information
summary	a short version of a longer report that includes the main points without unnecessary details

What Is a Factual Report?

A factual report is a communication that gives information about real events, results, situations, or findings. It may be spoken or written. In professional communication, factual reports are used in meetings, classes, offices, organizations, volunteer teams, health programs, education programs, and community work. Their purpose is usually to inform people, not to entertain them or persuade them emotionally. A factual report may include information such as numbers, dates, names, changes, problems, progress, results, or recommendations. For example, a student leader may give a report about weekly attendance. A volunteer may report how many students submitted assignments. A team member may explain the result of a small survey. A teacher may report common mistakes from an exam. In all these situations, the report gives information that others may need for decisions or future action. Because factual reports often contain several pieces of information, the listener must pay attention carefully. Unlike a casual conversation, a report may not stop after every point. The speaker may continue from one section to another, and the listener must decide what is most important. Therefore, listening to a factual report requires focus, organization, and note-taking. For example, imagine that a group leader gives this report: “This week, 42 students joined the online English session. Thirty-six students submitted their speaking recording, but six students could not submit because of internet problems. The most common difficulty was pronunciation of new vocabulary. Next week, we will add a short pronunciation practice before the speaking task.” This report includes attendance, submission numbers, a problem, and a next step. A good listener should not try to memorize every word. Instead, she should identify the main points and write short notes.

Why Is Listening to Factual Reports Important?

Listening to factual reports is important because many professional decisions depend on accurate information. If a listener misunderstands a report, the next action may also be wrong. For example, if a student hears that “six students did not submit” but writes “six students submitted,” the information becomes completely incorrect. This kind of mistake can affect planning, records, and follow-up. In professional situations, listening to reports also shows responsibility. A person who listens carefully can answer questions, prepare a summary, explain the situation to others, or decide what action should happen next. On the other hand, a person who listens carelessly may miss deadlines, confuse numbers, or repeat inaccurate information. Furthermore, factual reports often contain both main points and smaller details. The listener needs to separate them. If she writes down every small detail, her notes may become too long and confusing. If she writes too little, she may miss important information. Therefore, the skill is not only listening; it is listening with judgment. For instance, if a report says, “The class met on Monday, 38 students attended, three students joined late, and the main problem was that many students did not understand the second listening activity,” the main point is not simply that the class met on Monday. The more important point is that attendance was high, but students had difficulty with the second listening activity. This information helps the group plan improvement. In this way, listening to factual reports supports professional communication because it helps students understand information accurately, remember key points, and share the message with others in a clear and useful form.

What Is the Difference Between a Detail and a Main Point?

A main point is the most important idea in a report. It tells the listener what the report is mainly saying. A detail gives extra information that supports, explains, or illustrates the main point. Both are useful, but they do not have the same level of importance. For example, if a report says, “Most students submitted their homework on time, but several students had difficulty uploading files because of weak internet,” the main point is that homework submission was mostly successful, but internet problems affected some students. A detail may be the exact number of students, the upload platform, or the time the files were due. Details are important when they help explain the main point. However, not every detail needs to be included in a summary. A listener should ask, “Does this detail help explain the main message?” If the answer is yes, it may be useful. If the answer is no, it may not need to be written in the final summary. For example, in a report about an online class, the speaker may say that the session started at 5:02 p.m., the teacher used a blue slide design, and 40 students attended. The number of students may be important. The blue slide design is probably not important unless the report is specifically about teaching materials or visual design. A good listener must decide which details matter. In conclusion, main points usually answer larger questions such as: What happened? What changed? What problem was found? What result was important? What action is needed next? Details

usually answer smaller questions such as how many, when, where, who, or which example. A good summary includes the main points and only the details needed to make the meaning complete.



MAIN IDEA

The main idea is the central thought or point.

- Pretend you are writing a tweet about your story.
- Summarize the main idea in one sentence.
- Don't retell every event in the story.
- What does the author want you to know?
- What is the story mostly about?

SUPPORTING DETAILS

- Are important details to support the main idea.
- May be events, examples, or changes in characters.
- Do not retell the main idea.
- Answer who, what, why, when, or how.
- Further the story line.

How Can Students Identify Main Points in a Factual Report?

Students can identify main points by listening for repeated ideas, important numbers, changes, problems, results, and next steps. In a factual report, the speaker may not always say, “This is the main point.” Therefore, listeners need to notice signals in the report. One helpful signal is repetition. If the speaker repeats an idea several times, it is probably important. For example, if a report mentions “late submission” at the beginning, in the middle, and again near the end, late submission is likely one of the main points. The listener should write it down. Another signal is a number or result. Numbers often show important information, especially in reports about attendance, performance, surveys, or progress. For example, “Out of 50 students, 43 completed the task” is likely important because it shows the result of an activity. However, the listener should not write every number without thinking. The number should be connected to the main message. A third signal is a problem or challenge. Reports often explain what went well and what needs attention. If the speaker says, “The main challenge was that students did not understand the instructions,” the listener should record this clearly. Problems are often main points because they lead to action. A fourth signal is a recommendation or next step. If the report ends with “Next week, we will...” or “The team should...,” this is usually important. A factual report is often used to guide decisions, so the next step should be included in notes and summaries. For example, if a report says, “This month, student participation improved. More students joined speaking activities, but several students still need support with pronunciation. The team recommends adding five minutes of pronunciation practice before each speaking task,” the main points are: participation

improved, pronunciation remains a challenge, and pronunciation practice is recommended. These points give the real meaning of the report.

How Do Notes Help Listening?

Notes help listening because they reduce the pressure on memory. When a person listens to a moderately long report, she cannot remember every important point by memory alone. Note-taking allows the listener to record key information while the report is being delivered. Later, the notes can be used to answer questions or prepare a summary. However, note-taking is not the same as writing every word. If a student tries to write full sentences while listening, she may miss the next point. Good notes are short. They may include keywords, numbers, arrows, abbreviations, or short phrases. The goal is to capture meaning, not to copy the report word for word. For example, if the speaker says, “Thirty-two students attended the training, but five students could not join because they had internet problems,” the listener can write: “32 attended; 5 absent internets.” This note is short, but it keeps the important information. Notes also help the listener stay focused. When students write key points, they are more likely to pay attention to the structure of the report. They notice what the speaker is emphasizing. In addition, notes help students organize information into sections such as topic, main points, problems, results, and next steps.

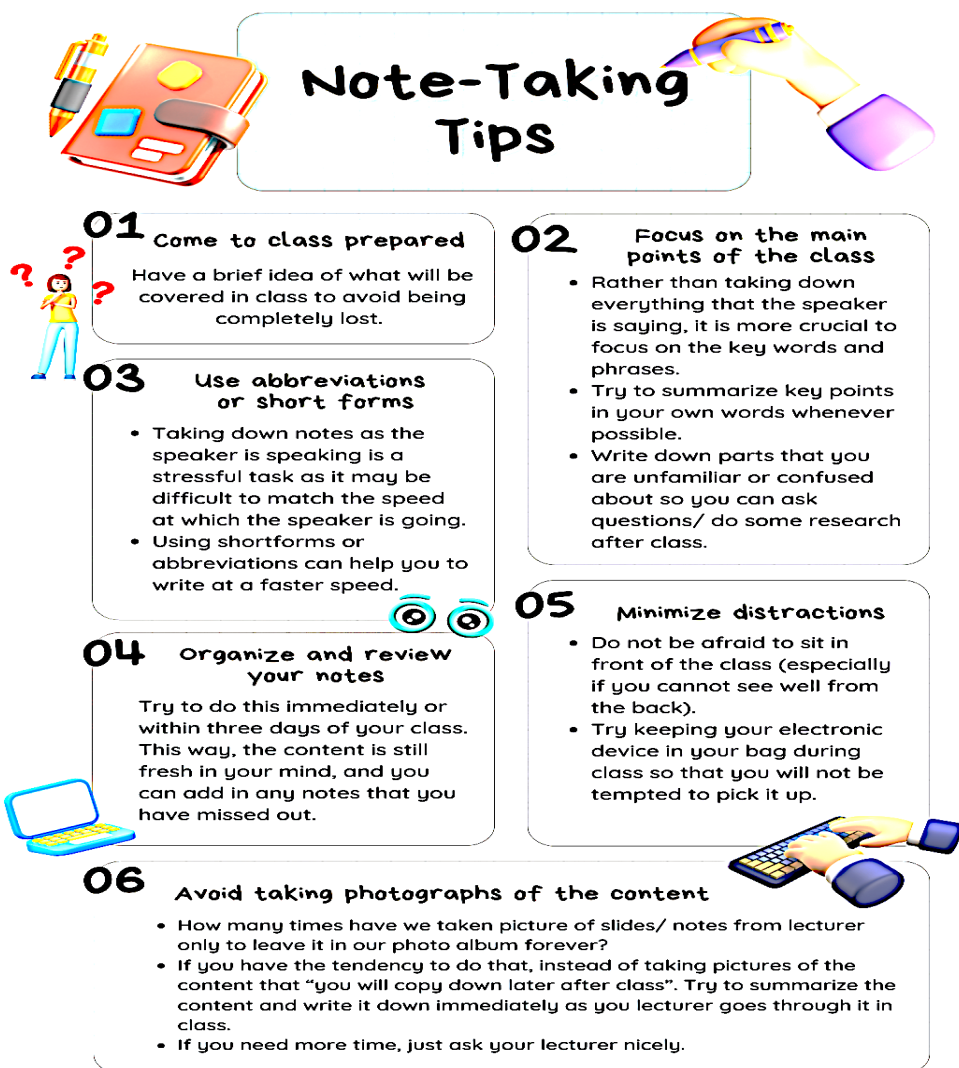
For instance, while listening to a report about student progress, a student may divide her notes like this:

Topic: Weekly English-speaking task
Main result: most students submitted
Problem: pronunciation + late upload
Next step: add practice + clearer deadline

These notes are not complete sentences, but they are useful. They help the student later produce a clear summary.

How Should Students Take Notes While Listening?

Students should take notes while listening by writing only the most important information. Before the report begins, they should prepare their page. They can write the title or topic at the top, then leave space for main points, details, and next steps. This simple organization makes the notes easier to use later. During listening, students should focus first on the speaker’s main message. They should listen for the topic, the key results, the major problem, and any action needed. After that, they can add important supporting details such as numbers, dates, or examples. If they focus only on small details, they may miss the main point. Students should also use abbreviations when possible. For example, they can write “stds” for students, “att.” for attendance, “prob.” for problem, “rec.” for recommendation, and arrows to show cause and effect. For example: “weak internet → late upload.” These short notes save time and help the listener keep up with the speaker. In addition, students should leave space between points. If all notes are written in one crowded paragraph, they become difficult to review. A better method is to use short lines, headings, or bullet points. The notes do not need to look perfect, but they should be readable. After the report ends, students should review the notes quickly. This is important because some notes may be too short or unclear. The student can add missing words while the information is still fresh. For example, if she wrote “6 no submit,” she can clarify it as “6 students did not submit speaking recording.” This makes the notes easier to use for a summary. And you can see the note taking tips in the photo.



Note-Taking Tips

01 Come to class prepared
Have a brief idea of what will be covered in class to avoid being completely lost.

02 Focus on the main points of the class

- Rather than taking down everything that the speaker is saying, it is more crucial to focus on the key words and phrases.
- Try to summarize key points in your own words whenever possible.
- Write down parts that you are unfamiliar or confused about so you can ask questions/ do some research after class.

03 Use abbreviations or short forms

- Taking down notes as the speaker is speaking is a stressful task as it may be difficult to match the speed at which the speaker is going.
- Using shortforms or abbreviations can help you to write at a faster speed.

04 Organize and review your notes
Try to do this immediately or within three days of your class. This way, the content is still fresh in your mind, and you can add in any notes that you have missed out.

05 Minimize distractions

- Do not be afraid to sit in front of the class (especially if you cannot see well from the back).
- Try keeping your electronic device in your bag during class so that you will not be tempted to pick it up.

06 Avoid taking photographs of the content

- How many times have we taken picture of slides/ notes from lecturer only to leave it in our photo album forever?
- If you have the tendency to do that, instead of taking pictures of the content that “you will copy down later after class”. Try to summarize the content and write it down immediately as you lecturer goes through it in class.
- If you need more time, just ask your lecturer nicely.

What Makes a Summary Brief but Complete?

A summary is brief when it gives the main information in fewer words than the original report. It is complete when it includes all the important points needed to understand the report. Therefore, a good summary is not simply short. It must also be meaningful. A summary should not include every detail. If it does, it becomes too long and stops being a summary. At the same time, a summary should not be so short that it removes important information. For example, “The report was about attendance” is too short and incomplete. A better summary is: “The report explained that attendance improved this week, but some students still missed the session because of internet problems. The group plans to send reminders earlier next week.” A complete summary usually includes the topic, the main result or message, one or two important details, and the next step if there is one. This structure helps the listener understand what the report was about and why it matters. For example, after listening to a report about assignment submission, a student might summarize: “The report showed that most students submitted their assignments on time, but several students had difficulty uploading files. The main problem was

weak internet, so the group will allow earlier submission and provide a backup sending method.” This summary is brief, but it includes the result, problem, cause, and next action. A summary should also use the student’s own words. Copying long sentences from the report is not necessary. The purpose of summarizing is to show understanding. Therefore, students should ask themselves: What was the report mainly about? What were the most important findings? What should happen next?

How Can Students Produce a Spoken Summary?

A spoken summary is a short oral explanation of the main points of a report. It should be organized clearly so the listener can follow it. Because spoken summaries happen in real time, the speaker should use simple structure and clear transition phrases. A useful spoken summary may begin with the topic. For example, “The report was about student attendance in this week’s online English class.” This opening tells the listener what the summary is about. After that, the speaker can give the main result: “The main point was that attendance improved compared with last week.” Then she can add one important detail: “However, some students joined late because of internet problems.” Finally, she can mention the next step: “The group will send reminders earlier before the next session.” Spoken summaries should not sound like a long speech. They should be short, focused, and complete. A student should avoid adding personal opinions unless she is asked to evaluate the report. The summary should report what was said, not what the student personally feels about the topic. Transition phrases can help the spoken summary sound organized. Useful phrases include: “The report focused on...,” “The main point was...,” “Another important point was...,” “The report also mentioned...,” and “The next step is...” These phrases guide the listener through the summary. For example, a spoken summary may sound like this: “The report focused on this week’s speaking activity. The main point was that most students completed the task, but some recordings were unclear because of low voice level. The report also mentioned that students need clearer instructions before recording. The next step is to give an example recording before the next task.” This spoken summary is brief, clear, and complete.

How Can Students Produce a Written Summary?

A written summary is a short-written version of a longer report. It should be clear enough that someone who did not hear the original report can still understand the main information. Written summaries may be used in classwork, meeting notes, reports, emails, or group records. Before writing the summary, students should review their notes and underline the main points. They should remove repeated ideas and unnecessary details. Then they should write the summary in a logical order. Usually, the order should follow the report: topic, main findings, problem or important detail, and next step. A written summary should use complete sentences. Notes can be short and informal, but the final summary should be clear and professional. For example, notes may say: “45 stds; 39 submit; 6 no internet; next—deadline reminder.” The written summary can say: “The report explained that 45 students joined the activity and 39 submitted their work. Six students did not submit because of internet problems. The next step is to send deadline reminders earlier.” Students should also be careful not to add new information that was not in the report. A summary should represent the original report accurately. If the report did not say that students were careless, the summary should not add that judgment. Instead, it should say what the report stated. A good written summary is short, complete, and neutral. It does not exaggerate. It does not include unnecessary examples. It gives the main message in a professional way.

How Can Students Avoid Common Summary Mistakes?

Students often make several mistakes when producing summaries. One common mistake is including too many details. When a summary includes every number, example, and small comment, it becomes too long. The reader or listener may not understand which points are most important. Another mistake is making the summary too general. For example, “The report talked about students” is not enough. It does not tell what happened, what the result was, or why the report matters. A better summary should include the specific main point. A third mistake is adding opinion. If the task is to summarize, the student should not write, “I think the students were lazy” unless the report said that. A summary should be fair and accurate. Opinion can be added only if the task asks for evaluation. A fourth mistake is using unclear pronouns such as “it,” “they,” or “this” without explaining what they mean. For example, “They did not complete it” is unclear. A clearer sentence is, “Six students did not complete the speaking recording.” A fifth mistake is missing the next step. Many factual reports include recommendations or actions. If the summary leaves out the next step, it may feel incomplete. Therefore, students should listen carefully for phrases such as “next week,” “we recommend,” “the team will,” or “the main action is.” By avoiding these mistakes, students can produce summaries that are both brief and complete.

Brief Example

A student listens to this factual report:

“This week, 50 students were expected to complete the English-speaking task. Forty-two students submitted their recordings on time. Five students submitted late, and three students did not submit. The main problem was that some students were not sure how long the recording should be. Next week, the instruction will include a time limit and one example recording.”

The student takes these notes:

Topic: English speaking task

50 expected

42 on time

5 late

3 no submit

Problem: unclear recording length

Next: add time limit + example recording

A strong summary would be:

“The report explained the results of this week’s English-speaking task. Out of 50 students, 42 submitted their recordings on time, five submitted late, and three did not submit. The main problem was unclear instruction about the recording length. Next week, the task instructions will include a time limit and an example recording.”

This summary is brief because it does not repeat every word from the report. At the same time, it is complete because it includes the topic, main numbers, main problem, and next step.

Student Practice Activities

1. Listen to a short factual report from a recording, family news discussion, class voice message, or written report read aloud. Write the topic, two main points, and one important detail.
2. Read this report and identify the main point: “This week, most students joined the online session, but many joined late because the reminder was sent too close to the class time. Next week, reminders will be sent one day earlier.” Then write one main point and one supporting detail.
3. Practice note-taking from a short-spoken message. Write only keywords, numbers, and short phrases. Do not write full sentences while listening. Afterward, use your notes to explain the message in your own words.
4. Choose a factual topic such as attendance, assignment submission, exam preparation, or student participation. Write a short factual report of five or six sentences. Then write a two-sentence summary of your report.
5. Rewrite a long summary into a shorter one. Remove repeated ideas, unnecessary examples, and personal opinions. Keep only the topic, main point, important detail, and next step.
6. Practice producing a spoken summary. Listen to or read a short report, take notes, and then give a 30-second spoken summary using phrases such as “The report focused on...,” “The main point was...,” and “The next step is...”

Reflection Questions

1. What is easier for you: finding details or finding main points?
2. How do notes help you remember a report?
3. What makes a summary too long?
4. Why should a summary avoid opinion?
5. What is one note-taking habit you want to improve?

Assessment Practice

Read the factual report below and answer the questions.

Report:

“This month, the student support team reviewed assignment submission in three online classes. In total, 90 students were expected to submit weekly assignments. Seventy-two students submitted on time, eleven submitted late, and seven did not submit. The main reason for late submission was weak internet access. The team also noticed that some students did not understand the file naming instruction. Next month, the team will send a clearer instruction message and provide one example of the correct file name.”

Questions:

1. What is the topic of the report?
2. Identify two main points from the report.
3. Identify two important details from the report.
4. Write short notes from the report using keywords and numbers.
5. Write a brief but complete summary of the report in three or four sentences.

6. Why is the file naming problem important for the next step?

Unit 4: Reading Comprehension

Unit Aim

Develop the ability to read, understand, explain, and judge different kinds of written communication in education, work, and daily life.

What you will learn

- identify tone, formality, urgency, and cultural clues in messages
- follow and rewrite long instructions more clearly
- recognize perspective, bias, and weak reasoning in opinion writing
- understand and explain the main points of factual popular articles

How this unit supports assessment

This unit supports oral or written reading tasks, instruction-following tasks, analysis of opinions, and responses to factual articles.

Lesson 13: Reading Messages for Tone, Formality, and Urgency

Intended learning outcomes	Identify the purpose and main points of a message.; Judge whether the tone is formal or informal.; Decide how urgent the message is and what type of response it needs.
Study questions	What is the purpose of a message? How can tone and formality be recognised? How do you judge urgency?
Key terms focus	tone, formality, urgency, purpose
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

When people read a message, they need to understand more than the words on the page. A good reader also notices how the message sounds, how formal it is, how urgent it is, and why it was written. This is important in school, work, and daily life because emails, letters, notices, and online messages often require different kinds of responses. This lesson supports Unit 4 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to read moderately long messages and identify tone, formality, urgency, and main purpose.

➤ Tone

Tone is the feeling or attitude carried by a message. In communication, tone helps the reader understand whether the message is serious, polite, friendly, angry, or urgent.

➤ Formality

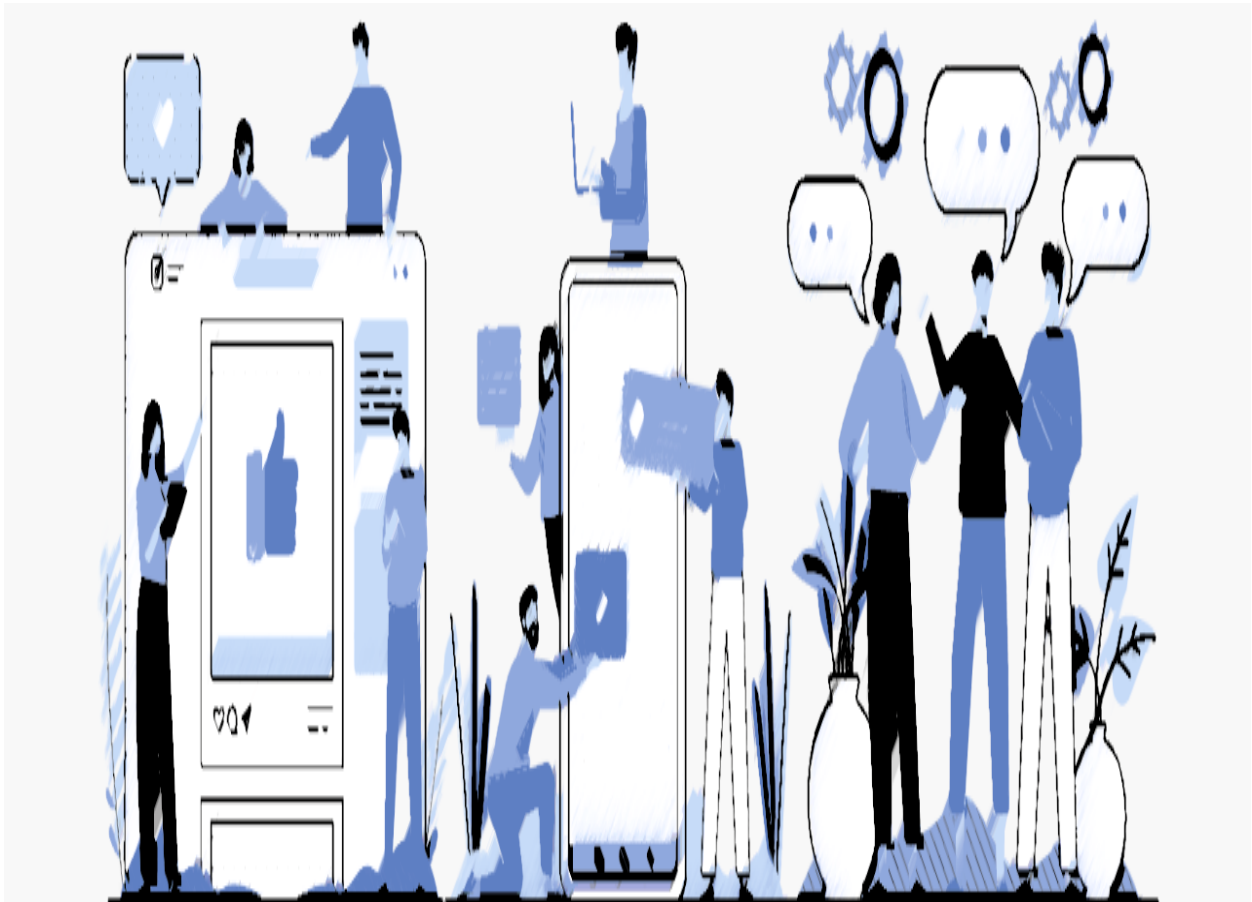
Formality means the level of seriousness or professionalism in language. In communication, formality helps the reader decide what kind of reply or behavior is suitable.

➤ Urgency

Urgency means how quickly attention or action is needed. In communication, urgency helps the reader decide whether the message should be answered now, soon, or later.

➤ Purpose

Purpose is the reason a message was written. In communication, understanding purpose helps the reader know what the writer wants and how to respond.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
tone	the writer's attitude or feeling in a message
formality	how formal or informal the language is
urgency	how quickly action is needed
purpose	the reason the message was written

Worked example

A message that says, "Please submit the corrected document by 3 p.m. today" is formal and urgent. It needs a short but timely response or action.

Student activity

Read two short messages. For each one, write the purpose, tone, level of urgency, and what kind of response is needed.

Check your understanding

1. What is the difference between tone and urgency?
2. How can a reader identify formality?
3. Why is purpose important when replying to a message?

Reflection question

When you read messages, do you focus first on the topic, the tone, or the action required?

Assessment practice

Read a model email and answer questions about its main purpose, tone, urgency, and the type of response needed.

Lesson 14: Following and Rewriting Instructions

Intended learning outcomes	Read long instructions for a moderately complex task.; Carry out or explain the task correctly.; Rewrite over-complex instructions in simpler and clearer language.
Study questions	Why do some instructions fail? What makes instructions easy to follow? How can you simplify instructions without changing the meaning?
Key terms focus	step-by-step, action verb, rewrite, clarity
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

In school, work, and daily life, people often need to follow instructions to complete a task correctly. These instructions may be written in emails, notices, forms, manuals, or online guides. A strong reader does not only read the words; they understand the order of steps, the action needed, and the meaning of each instruction. Sometimes instructions are too long, too complicated, or unclear, so a good communicator must also know how to rewrite them in a simpler way. This lesson supports Unit 4 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to read long step-by-step instructions, follow them, and rewrite overly complex instructions more clearly and briefly.

➤ Step-by-step

Step-by-step means arranged in a clear order, one stage after another. In communication, step-by-step instructions help the reader complete a task in the correct sequence.

➤ Action verb

An action verb is a word that tells someone what to do. In communication, action verbs make instructions direct and easier to follow.

➤ Rewrite

Rewrite means express the same meaning again in a better or simpler way. In communication, rewriting helps improve understanding without changing the purpose of the message.

➤ Clarity

Clarity means being easy to understand. In communication, clarity helps the reader know exactly what the message means and what action is needed.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
step-by-step	presented in a clear sequence of stages
action verb	a word that tells the reader what to do
rewrite	write again in a clearer or more suitable form
clarity	being easy to understand

Worked example

Original: “Prior to completion of the online form, authentication of your personal identity is required.”
 Better: “Before you complete the online form, confirm your identity.”

Student activity

Take one difficult instruction and rewrite it in shorter, clearer English. Then explain what you changed and why.

Check your understanding

4. What are two signs that instructions are unclear?
5. Why must meaning stay the same when you rewrite instructions?
6. How does order affect understanding?

Reflection question

Do you find instructions easier to follow when they are short, numbered, and direct? Why?

Assessment practice

Read a set of instructions for a moderately complex task. Explain the steps in your own words and then rewrite the instructions more clearly.

Lesson 15: Reading Opinion Writing Critically

Intended learning outcomes	Identify the writer’s argument and perspective.; Recognize bias and weak reasoning.; Rewrite biased or flawed statements in a more neutral way.
Study questions	What is bias? How can a writer’s reasoning be weak? Why should critical reading go beyond agreement or disagreement?
Key terms focus	bias, argument, reasoning, neutral language
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Not every text is written to give facts only. Some texts are written to persuade, influence, or defend a point of view. These are often called opinion pieces. In school, work, media, and daily life, students need to read these texts carefully instead of accepting every statement immediately. A good reader asks what the writer believes, what reasons are given, whether the reasoning is strong, and whether the language is fair or biased. This lesson supports Unit 4 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to read opinion writing, identify argument and reasoning, notice bias and flaws in logic, and rewrite biased or weak statements in neutral language.

➤ Bias

Bias means unfair preference for one side of an issue. In communication, bias appears when the writer uses one-sided language or ignores other important views.

➤ Argument

An argument is the writer’s main claim or position. In communication, the argument helps the reader understand what the writer is trying to prove or defend.

➤ Reasoning

Reasoning is the explanation or support behind an argument. In communication, good reasoning makes an opinion stronger because it shows why the writer believes the point is true or important.

➤ Neutral language

Neutral language is fair and balanced language that avoids unnecessary emotion or one-sided judgment. In communication, neutral language helps the reader focus on meaning without being pushed too strongly by loaded words.



shutterstock.com · 2549961039

Key terms

Term	Meaning
bias	unfair preference or one-sided thinking in a text
argument	the main claim the writer wants the reader to accept
reasoning	the logic and support used to justify a claim
neutral language	language that does not push one side unfairly

Worked example

Biased statement: “Only lazy students dislike homework.” Neutral version: “Some students dislike homework for different reasons, including workload or lack of time.”

Student activity

Read one short opinion paragraph. Identify the argument, underline one biased phrase, and rewrite that phrase in neutral language.

Check your understanding

- How can bias appear in wording?
- What makes reasoning weak?
- Why is neutral rewriting useful?

Reflection question

When you read opinions online, do you usually notice the writer’s evidence or only the strength of the language?

Assessment practice

Read a short opinion article and write: the writer's argument, one sign of bias, one possible flaw in reasoning, and one neutral rewrite of a loaded statement.

Lesson 16: Reading Factual Articles

Intended learning outcomes	Identify the main points and conclusions in factual popular writing.; Answer specific questions about content.; Summaries information accurately and clearly.
Study questions	What is factual writing? How do you identify main points in an article? Why is summary important in reading comprehension?
Key terms focus	factual writing, main point, conclusion, summary
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

In school, work, and daily life, people often need to read articles that give information about real topics such as science, history, technology, health, or society. These articles are not mainly written to argue or persuade. Their purpose is usually to explain, inform, or report. A strong reader needs to understand the important facts, find the main point, notice how the article ends, and summarize the information clearly. This lesson supports Unit 4 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to read factual writing in moderately complex popular articles, explain the main points and conclusions, and answer specific questions about the text.

➤ **Factual writing**

Factual writing is writing that gives real information, explanation, or description about a topic. In communication, factual writing helps people learn, understand, and share accurate knowledge.

➤ **Main point**

A main point is the central idea the writer wants the reader to understand. In communication, finding the main point helps the reader focus on the most important meaning in the text.

➤ **Conclusion**

A conclusion is the ending part of a text that brings the information together. In communication, a conclusion helps the reader understand the result, message, or importance of the topic.

➤ **Summary**

A summary is a short and clear restatement of the most important parts of a text. In communication, a summary shows understanding and makes long information easier to explain to others.



shutterstock.com • 2040566963

Key terms

Term	Meaning
factual writing	writing that explains real information rather than mainly opinion
main point	the most important idea in a section or whole text
conclusion	the final main message or finding of a text
summary	a short restatement of the key information

Worked example

A factual article about recycling may include data, process explanation, and a conclusion about local policy changes. A strong reader can state the article's main message in a few clear sentences.

Student activity

Read a factual article. Write the main point of each paragraph in one short sentence, then write a summary of the whole article.

Check your understanding

10. How is factual writing different from opinion writing?
11. What helps you find the main point of a paragraph?
12. Why should a summary stay accurate and brief?

Reflection question

Which is harder for you: understanding a factual article or summarizing it clearly?

Assessment practice

Read a short factual article and answer 3–5 questions about the text. Then write a summary of its main points and conclusion.

Unit 5: Writing Professionally

Unit Aim

Develop clear, purposeful, and professional writing for education, workplace, and group communication.

What you will learn

- write persuasively about personal achievement for essays and cover letters
- create reports and summaries from quantitative and qualitative data
- take notes and prepare them for others' use
- write instructions, guidelines, rules, plans, and simple organizational documents

How this unit supports assessment

This unit supports written tasks such as cover letters, personal statements, reports, summaries, notes, meeting records, instructions, guidelines, and bylaws.

Lesson 17: Audience, Purpose, and Register in Professional Writing

Intended learning outcomes	Identify the audience and purpose of a writing task.; Choose an appropriate register and format.; Organise writing so the reader understands the message easily.
Study questions	Why do audience and purpose shape writing? What is register? How does format support communication?
Key terms focus	audience, purpose, register, format
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Professional writing is not only about correct grammar or neat sentences. A strong piece of writing also fits the reader, the purpose, and the situation. A message to a friend is not written in the same way as an email to a teacher, a report for work, or a cover letter for a job. This lesson helps you understand how good writers make choices before they start writing. It supports Unit 5 of the specification, especially the part that prepares learners to write clear, structured, and appropriate documents for education, work, and everyday professional communication.

➤ Audience

Audience means the person or group who will read the writing. In communication, audience matters because the writer must choose words, tone, and detail that match the reader.

➤ Purpose

Purpose means the reason for writing. In communication, purpose helps the writer decide what kind of message is needed and what result the writing should achieve.

➤ **Register**

Register means the level and style of language used in a situation. In communication, register helps the writer sound appropriate, respectful, and suitable for the reader and context.

➤ **Format**

Format means the shape or structure of a piece of writing. In communication, format matters because different tasks need different layouts and conventions, such as emails, reports, or letters.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
audience	the person or group the writing is for
purpose	the reason the writing is produced
register	the level of formality and style in language

format	the arrangement and type of writing used for the task
--------	---

Worked example

A cover letter to an employer needs formal language, a clear purpose, and strong structure. A message to a classmate about meeting time can be shorter and less formal.

Student activity

Look at three writing tasks: an email to a teacher, a short report, and a social media post. For each one, identify audience, purpose, and appropriate register.

Check your understanding

13. Why is audience important in writing?
14. What is register?
15. How does purpose affect structure?

Reflection question

Do you usually think about your reader before you start writing, or only after you finish?

Assessment practice

Choose one writing task and write a short planning note that identifies the audience, purpose, format, and tone you will use.

Lesson 18: Cover Letters and Personal Achievement Writing

Intended learning outcomes	Write about achievements and strengths appropriately and persuasively.; Use clear structure for a cover letter or personal statement.; Connect skills and experience to a real opportunity.
Study questions	What should a cover letter include? How can you write persuasively about yourself without exaggeration? What is the difference between personal statement and simple self-description?
Key terms focus	cover letter, personal statement, achievement, evidence
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

In professional writing, students often need to present themselves clearly and positively. This happens when applying for a job, a volunteer role, a training programme, or a place in further study. A strong piece of self-presentation writing is not only about saying good things about yourself. It is about choosing the right information, showing real achievement, and supporting your claims with evidence. This lesson supports Unit 5 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to write appropriately and persuasively about personal achievement for university essays and job cover letters.

➤ Cover letter

A cover letter is a formal letter written to support an application. In communication, it helps the writer explain interest, suitability, and purpose in a direct and professional way.

➤ Personal statement

A personal statement is a piece of writing that explains your background, strengths, interests, and goals. In communication, it helps the reader understand who you are and why you are applying.

➤ Achievement

Achievement means something positive you have done, completed, improved, or contributed to. In communication, achievement helps show your strengths and suitability for a role or opportunity.

➤ Evidence

Evidence is the example, detail, or result that supports a claim. In communication, evidence makes your writing more believable and persuasive because it proves that what you say is based on something real.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
cover letter	a formal letter sent with an application
personal statement	a short piece of writing that explains your background, interests, and goals
achievement	something you have done well or completed successfully
evidence	specific detail that supports a claim about yourself

Worked example

Instead of writing “I am hardworking,” a stronger sentence is “I managed a group presentation, met the deadline, and organized the research notes for the team.”

Student activity

Write three sentences that show your skills through evidence. Then choose one school, work, or community opportunity and draft the opening of a cover letter for it.

Check your understanding

16. Why is evidence stronger than general praise?
17. What should a cover letter connect clearly to?
18. How is a personal statement different from a casual self-description?

Reflection question

Which is harder for you: identifying your strengths or explaining them clearly?

Assessment practice

Write the first paragraph of a cover letter or personal statement. Make the purpose clear and include one relevant achievement with evidence.

Lesson 19: Reports, Summaries, and Notes

Intended learning outcomes	Create short reports based on quantitative and qualitative information.; Take useful notes from spoken or written information.; Prepare summaries for other people's use.
Study questions	What is the purpose of a report? How are notes different from summaries? How can data be turned into clear writing?
Key terms focus	report, summary, quantitative data, qualitative data, notes
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

In professional writing, students often need to record information, shorten it, organize it, and present it clearly for other people. This happens in class work, project tasks, meetings, workplace communication, and community activities. A good writer must know when to write a report, when to make notes, and when to produce a short summary. This lesson supports Unit 5 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to create brief reports and summaries from quantitative and qualitative data, and to take notes on moderately complex verbal and written information for other people's use.

➤ Report

A report is a piece of writing that presents information in a clear and organized way. In communication, a report helps the writer explain findings, results, or important details for a specific purpose.

➤ Summary

A summary is a short and clear version of the main information. In communication, a summary helps reduce long information into the most important points.

➤ Quantitative data

Quantitative data is information shown in numbers, such as totals, percentages, measurements, or counts. In communication, quantitative data helps show facts and results clearly and exactly.

➤ Qualitative data

Qualitative data is information shown in words, ideas, opinions, or descriptions instead of numbers. In communication, qualitative data helps explain experience, attitude, or observation in a more detailed way.

➤ Notes

Notes are short written points used to record important information quickly. In communication, notes help a person remember key ideas and prepare information for later use.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
report	a structured piece of writing that explains findings or information
summary	a short version of the main information
quantitative data	information based on numbers
qualitative data	information based on description, opinion, or observation
notes	brief recorded points for later use

Worked example

Survey data shows that 68% of students prefer morning sessions. A report sentence might say, “Most students preferred morning sessions, while only a small number chose late afternoon.”

Student activity

Read a short data set or meeting extract. Produce 1) five notes, 2) a three-sentence summary, and 3) a short report heading and conclusion.

Check your understanding

19. What is the difference between notes and a summary?
20. How can numbers be turned into clear report language?
21. Why should reports be concise and accurate?

Reflection question

Do you find it easier to take notes from spoken information or written information?

Assessment practice

Use a short chart or meeting note sample to write a brief report and a short summary for another reader.

Lesson 20: Instructions, Guidelines, Rules, and Organizational Writing

Intended learning outcomes	Write clear instructions and guidelines for group tasks.; Write rules that are practical and easy to follow.; Draft simple plans and basic organizational documents such as bylaws.
Study questions	What makes written instructions effective? How are rules different from guidelines? What is the purpose of a simple bylaws document?
Key terms focus	instruction, guideline, rule, plan, bylaws
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

In professional communication, writing is often used to organize people, tasks, and behavior. This happens in schools, workplaces, community groups, and projects. People may need written instructions for a task, guidelines for good practice, rules for behavior, a plan for action, or bylaws for how an organization should operate. A strong communicator must understand how these forms are different and how each one helps people work together clearly. This lesson supports Unit 5 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to write clear instructions, guidelines, and rules for group projects and organizations.

➤ **Instruction**

An instruction is a clear direction that tells someone what action to take. In communication, instructions help tasks happen correctly and in the right order.

➤ **Guideline**

A guideline is advice or recommended direction about how something should be done. In communication, guidelines support good practice and help people work in a consistent way.

➤ **Rule**

A rule is a fixed statement about what must or must not happen. In communication, rules help create order, fairness, and clear expectations in a group or organization.

➤ **Plan**

A plan is an organized, written outline of actions, steps, responsibilities, or goals. In communication, a plan helps people know what needs to happen and how work should be arranged.

➤ **Bylaws**

Bylaws are formal written rules used by a group or organization to explain how it operates. In communication, bylaws help define structure, roles, decision-making, and standards of behavior.



shutterstock.com · 2324373929

Key terms

Term	Meaning
instruction	a direct statement explaining what to do
guideline	advice or direction that supports correct action
rule	a statement of what is allowed, required, or forbidden
plan	an organized outline of tasks and steps
bylaws	basic written rules and procedures for a group or organization

Worked example

A group project plan may include the objective, deadline, member roles, task steps, communication rule, and method for solving problems if one person is late.

Student activity

Create a short plan for a small group project. Include the objective, deadline, task list, one guideline, and two rules.

Check your understanding

22. How is a guideline different from a rule?
23. Why must instructions be direct and clear?
24. What information belongs in a simple project plan?

Reflection question

When working in groups, which causes more problems: unclear roles, weak rules, or poor communication?

Assessment practice

Write either: a) a short instruction set for a group task, or b) simple bylaws outline for a student organization with mission, roles, procedures, and rules.

Lesson 21: Follow-Up and Thank-You Emails

Intended learning outcomes	Understand the purpose of follow-up and thank-you emails; Use a professional tone after an application, interview, or meeting; Write short emails that are respectful, clear, and relevant
Study questions	What is a follow-up email? Why is a thank-you email useful? How do you keep an email professional and brief?
Key terms focus	follow-up email, thank-you email, status update, professional tone
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and understanding

A follow-up email is a short message sent after an earlier contact, such as a job application, interview, meeting, or request. Its purpose is usually to ask for a status update, confirm receipt, or continue a professional conversation. A thank-you email is written to show appreciation after someone has helped you, interviewed you, or met with you. In both forms, the message should be polite, direct, and brief. A strong message reminds the reader who you are, gives the reason for writing, and uses a professional tone. This matters because many opportunities are lost when communication stops too early or sounds careless. In addition, Professional writing does not always end when you send an application or attend a meeting. In many real situations, you need to write again to ask politely about progress, confirm the next step, or thank someone for their time. These short messages are common in education, work, and formal communication.

➤ Follow-up email

A follow-up email is a message you send after an earlier email, meeting, interview, or application. It is used to check progress, ask politely for an update, or continue communication in a professional way. In communication, a follow-up email helps show responsibility, interest, and good organization.

➤ Thank-you email

A thank-you email is a short professional message sent to show appreciation after help, an interview, a meeting, or an opportunity. It is important because it shows politeness, respect, and professionalism. In communication, a thank-you email helps leave a positive impression and keeps the relationship respectful.

➤ Status update

A status update is a short message that explains the current position of a task, application, plan, or piece of work. It tells what has been done, what is still in progress, or what happens next. In communication, a status update helps people stay informed and reduces confusion.

➤ Professional tone

Professional tone means writing in a respectful, clear, and suitable way for formal communication. It avoids rude, careless, or overly casual language. In communication, professional tone is important because it helps the writer sound serious, mature, and appropriate for school, work, and official situations.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
follow-up email	a short professional message sent after earlier contact to ask about progress or next steps
thank-you email	a message that shows appreciation after support, an interview, or a meeting
status update	information about the present stage of an application, task, or request
professional tone	clear, respectful, formal language suitable for education or workplace writing

Worked example

After a university interview, a student writes: “Dear Admissions Team, thank you for meeting with me yesterday. I appreciated the chance to discuss the course. I remain very interested in the programme and would be grateful for any update when decisions are available.” This works because it is polite, clear, and brief.

Student activity

Write two short emails: one follow-up email after a job or course application, and one thank-you email after a meeting or interview. Keep each email between 60 and 100 words and make sure the subject line matches the purpose.

Check your understanding

1. What is the difference between a follow-up email and a thank-you email?
2. Why should these emails stay brief?
3. What makes the tone professional?

Reflection question

Have you ever missed a useful opportunity because you did not write back after an interview, meeting, or request?

Assessment practice

Write one complete follow-up or thank-you email for a real or imaginary situation. Include an appropriate subject line, greeting, clear purpose, and professional closing.

Lesson 22: Minutes, Action Items, and Points to Revisit

Intended learning outcomes	Understand what meeting minutes are for; Record action items and important follow-up points clearly; Write notes that other people can use after a meeting
-----------------------------------	---

Study questions	What are meeting minutes? What is an action item? Why should some points be marked for later review?
Key terms focus	meeting minutes, action item, summary point, follow-up task
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and understanding

Meeting minutes are a structured written record of a meeting. They do not try to copy every word. Instead, they show the main discussion points, decisions, action items, and anything that needs to be revisited later. An action item is a task that must be completed after the meeting, usually with a person responsible and a deadline if possible. A point to revisit is a matter that is not yet finished and needs further discussion later. This kind of writing matters because a meeting without clear notes often leads to confusion, forgotten tasks, and repeated discussion. In school projects, workplace meetings, and community groups, people need a written record of what was discussed and what must happen next. Minutes and action points help everyone remember decisions, responsibilities, and unfinished matters.

➤ Meeting minutes

Meeting minutes are the written record of what happened in a meeting. They usually include the main points discussed, decisions made, and important information that people need to remember later. In communication, meeting minutes help keep a clear record so that everyone understands what was agreed.

➤ Action item

An action item is a task that must be completed after a meeting or discussion. It usually shows what needs to be done, who will do it, and sometimes when it should be finished. In communication, action items are important because they turn discussion into real next steps.

➤ Summary point

A summary point is a short statement that gives the most important idea from a discussion or section of a meeting. It does not include every detail. In communication, summary points help people understand the main meaning quickly and clearly.

➤ Follow-up task

A follow-up task is a task that needs to be done after a meeting, decision, or earlier action. It may be a reminder, a check, a second step, or extra work connected to the main task. In communication, follow-up tasks help make sure work continues properly and does not stop after the first discussion.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
meeting minutes	a clear written record of the main points, decisions, and next steps from a meeting
action item	a task that someone must complete after the meeting
summary point	a short statement of the main idea or decision discussed
follow-up task	a next step that continues the work after the meeting

Worked example

During a student committee meeting, the group agrees to hold a reading event. Good minutes may include: “Decision: hold the event on 15 June. Action item: Amina will book the room by Friday. Point to revisit: decide the guest speaker next week.” This is useful because other members can see both the decision and the next responsibility.

Student activity

Listen to a short meeting or read a meeting transcript. Then write three summary points, two action items, and one point to revisit. Organize them under clear subheadings.

Check your understanding

1. Why should minutes not include every spoken sentence?
2. What information makes an action item useful?
3. Why are points to revisit important?

Reflection question

When you are in a discussion, do you usually remember the decisions and responsibilities clearly afterwards?

Assessment practice

Take minutes for a short, role-played meeting. Include the topic, key discussion points, one decision, two action items, and one point to revisit

Lesson 23: Personal Essays for University Applications

Intended learning outcomes	Understand the purpose of a university personal essay; Write about background, interests, and ambition in a focused way; Support claims with relevant detail and reflection
-----------------------------------	---

Study questions	What is a personal essay? How is it different from a cover letter? What makes personal writing convincing in an application?
Key terms focus	personal essay, motivation, background, ambition, supporting detail
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Clear explanation of the topic

A personal essay for university application explains your background, interests, reasons for choosing a course, and hopes for the future. Unlike a short cover letter, it usually gives more space for reflection and personal development. Strong personal writing does not only say, “I am interested in this subject.” It explains how that interest developed, what experiences shaped it, and what goals the student now has. Motivation is the reason you want to study the course. Background includes your educational and personal experience that connects to the application. Ambition means your future aim or direction. Supporting detail gives your writing credibility because it shows real examples instead of general claims. This lesson supports the specification requirement to write a personal essay for university application including background, ambitions, and interests. This matters because a university application often asks more than grades and certificates. It may also ask for a piece of writing that shows who you are, what matters to you, and why you want to study a particular subject.

➤ **Personal essay**

A personal essay is a written piece that introduces you to the university. It shows your interests, experiences, and future goals in a personal but organized way.

➤ **Motivation**

Motivation is the reason you want to study a subject or apply for a course. It explains what encourages you to continue and why the course is important to you.

➤ **Background**

Background is the personal, school, or life experience that helps explain who you are. It gives the reader a picture of what has shaped your interest and progress.

➤ **Ambition**

Ambition is the goal you want to reach in the future. It shows what you hope to do, become, or achieve after your studies.

➤ **Supporting detail**

Supporting detail is the extra information that proves your point. It makes your writing stronger by giving examples, facts, or real experiences.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
personal essay	a focused piece of application writing that explains your background, interests, and goals
motivation	the reason you want to study a course or follow a path
background	the personal, educational, or practical experience that has shaped you
ambition	the future goal or direction you hope to achieve
supporting detail	real information or examples that make your writing stronger and more believable

Worked example

A strong sentence in a personal essay might say: “My interest in community health developed when I helped with local awareness sessions and saw how clear communication changed people’s understanding.” This is better than simply saying, “I like health work,” because it gives a real experience and shows reflection.

Student activity

Plan a short personal essay for one course or university program. Write a simple outline with four parts: background, interest in the subject, key strength or experience, and future ambition. Then turn the outline into one short introductory paragraph.

Check your understanding

1. What should a personal essay explain?
2. Why is supporting detail important?
3. How is a personal essay different from a general self-description?

Reflection question

If you had to explain your future goal in one clear paragraph, would you know what experiences to include and which to leave out?

Assessment practice

Write one short personal essay section of 150–200 words for a university application. Include your interest in the subject, one relevant background point, and one future ambition

Unit 6: Online Communication and Digital Literacy

Unit Aim

Develop safe, responsible, and effective use of digital communication, online research, and public online writing.

What you will learn

- respond to online harassment and protect privacy and security
- research across multiple websites and identify misinformation or fake news
- write appropriate public social media posts and recognize harmful or artificial content
- use digital tools to understand issues and plan positive social action

How this unit supports assessment

This unit supports website-based tasks, digital checklists, fact-check reports, citation tasks, social media writing, and planning activities based on online content.

Lesson 24: Online Harassment, Privacy, and Digital Safety

Intended learning outcomes	Explain how to respond to online harassment on different platforms.; Use basic privacy and security checks for websites and personal files.; Recognize flaws in digital safety examples.
Study questions	What should you do if online harassment happens? How can privacy be protected when using websites and personal devices? What signs show poor cybersecurity practice?
Key terms focus	online harassment, privacy setting, cybersecurity, evidence
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Online communication can be useful, fast, and convenient, but it can also create problems if people act harmfully or carelessly. In school, work, and daily life, people use messages, emails, websites, and social media every day. Because of this, students need to know how to stay safe, protect their information, and respond properly when something goes wrong. This lesson supports Unit 6 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to address and report online harassment and maintain digital security and privacy.

➤ Online harassment

Online harassment is repeated or harmful behavior carried out through digital communication. In communication, it damages safety, respect, and trust in online spaces.

➤ Privacy setting

A privacy setting is a control used to limit who can view or access your online information. In communication, privacy settings help protect your identity, content, and personal details.

➤ Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity means protecting digital accounts, devices, and information from attack, misuse, or unauthorized access. In communication, cybersecurity helps people communicate safely and protect their personal or professional data

➤ Evidence

Evidence is the proof kept when something harmful happens online, such as screenshots, saved messages, dates, usernames, or web links. In communication, evidence is important because it supports reporting and helps show what really happened



Key

terms

Term	Meaning
online harassment	harmful or abusive behavior through digital platforms
privacy setting	a control that manages who can see or use your information
cybersecurity	safe practice for protecting accounts, files, and digital systems
evidence	saved information such as screenshots or messages used to report a problem

Worked example

A student receives repeated insulting messages in a group chat. A correct response includes taking screenshots, blocking the sender if needed, reporting the behavior, and informing a trusted adult or instructor.

Student activity

Create a short digital safety checklist for one social media platform and one personal computer folder system. Include privacy, passwords, and reporting steps.

Check your understanding

- 25. Why is saving evidence important in online harassment cases?
- 26. What are two signs of poor digital security?
- 27. How can privacy settings reduce risk?

Reflection question

Do you check privacy settings before using a new app or website?

Assessment practice

Review a short digital scenario. Identify the safety problem, write the correct response procedure, and list two privacy improvements.

Lesson 25: Research, Trustworthiness, Fake News, and Citation

Intended learning outcomes	Research a topic using multiple websites.; Identify misinformation, fake news, and weak site trustworthiness.; Fact-check claims and cite websites correctly.
Study questions	How can you tell if a website is trustworthy? What is the difference between fact-checking and simple opinion? Why do citations matter in academic and professional work?
Key terms focus	trustworthy source, misinformation, fact-check, citation
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Online communication gives people quick access to a large amount of information, but not all of that information is reliable. Some websites are accurate and well supported, while others spread false, weak, or misleading claims. Because of this, students need more than reading skill. They need research skill, critical thinking, and digital responsibility. This lesson supports Unit 6 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to conduct research using multiple websites, identify misinformation and fake news, fact-check information, and cite sources clearly.

➤ **Trustworthy source**

A trustworthy source is a source that gives information that is reliable, well supported, and credible. In communication, a trustworthy source helps the reader make decisions based on stronger evidence instead of weak or doubtful claims.

➤ **Misinformation**

Misinformation is false or misleading information presented as if it were true. In communication, misinformation can confuse readers, spread fear, or influence people unfairly if it is not questioned carefully.

➤ **Fact-check**

Fact-check means checking whether a statement is true by comparing it with reliable evidence from trusted sources. In communication, factchecking helps protect people from false claims and improves the quality of research and discussion.

➤ **Citation**

A citation is a reference that tells the reader where information, ideas, or evidence came from. In communication, citation is important because it gives credit, supports trust, and allows others to check the source for themselves.



Photos by vectorjuice | Freepik

Key terms

Term	Meaning
trustworthy source	a source that is reliable, evidence-based, and transparent
misinformation	false or misleading information shared as if it were true
fact-check	the process of testing a claim against reliable evidence
citation	the written record of where information came from

Worked example

A post claims that a new rule begins next week, but gives no source. A student checks the official website, a recognized news source, and a policy statement before deciding whether the claim is true.

Student activity

Research one topic using three websites. For each source, write one note about trustworthiness and one note about possible weakness. Then cite the source correctly.

Check your understanding

28. What are three signs of a trustworthy source?
29. How is misinformation different from opinion?
30. Why must websites be cited in research writing?

Reflection question

When you see a strong claim online, what do you usually check first: the headline, the source, or the comments?

Assessment practice

Fact-check three short online claims. Write whether each one is true, false, or unclear, explain your reasoning, and cite the sources you used.

Lesson 26: Public Social Media Writing and Harmful Content

Intended learning outcomes	Write a suitable and non-harmful social media post on an important issue.; Recognize harmful, manipulative, or artificial content in posts.; Explain basic ideas of copyright, fair use, and privacy law.
Study questions	What makes a public online post appropriate? How can harmful or artificial content be recognized? Why do copyright and privacy matter online?
Key terms focus	public post, harmful content, artificial content, fair use
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Social media writing is often public, which means other people can see it, react to it, and share it widely. Because of this, students need to think carefully before posting online. A strong digital communicator does write clearly. They also think about safety, truth, respect, and responsibility. This lesson supports Unit 6 of the specification, especially the part that requires learners to create longer social media posts on important issues, identify artificial content, identify mentally or physically harmful content, and understand laws around privacy and content use

➤ **Public post**

A public post is online content shared in a space where many people can view it. In communication, public posts matter because they can reach large audiences and have wider effects than private messages.

➤ **Harmful content**

Harmful content is digital material that can hurt people emotionally, mentally, socially, or physically. In communication, harmful content is important to recognize because it can spread fear, abuse, misinformation, or dangerous behavior.

➤ **Artificial content**

Artificial content is content that has been created, edited, or generated with digital tools in a way that may change how real it appears. In communication, artificial content matters because people need to know whether something is genuine, altered, or potentially misleading.

➤ **Fair use**

Fair use means using a limited amount of someone else's content for a lawful and reasonable purpose, such as comment, teaching, or review. In communication, fair use matters because people should share content responsibly and give proper respect to ownership and source.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
public post	online writing shared for a wider audience
harmful content	content that may cause physical, emotional, or social harm
artificial content	content generated or altered digitally in a misleading way
fair use	limited legal use of copyrighted material under specific conditions

Worked example

A student writes a public post about exam stress that shares support resources and helpful advice. This is stronger than an emotional post that blames or humiliates specific people.

Student activity

Write one short social media post about a school, community, or global issue. Then review it for tone, safety, and clarity. Also identify one example of harmful or misleading content from a given set of posts.

Check your understanding

31. What makes a public post suitable for sharing?
32. How can harmful content affect people?
33. Why should you understand copyright and privacy before posting?

Reflection question

Before posting online, do you think more about what you want to say or about how other people may receive it?

Assessment practice

Create a moderately long social media post about a current issue. Then explain why it is appropriate, non-harmful, and suitable for public sharing.

Lesson 27: Digital Action for Social Issues

Intended learning outcomes	Use online content to understand local and global issues.; Identify different online perspectives, feelings, and misunderstandings.; Create a short digital action plan for addressing a social issue.
Study questions	How can online content reveal different public perspectives? Why do misunderstandings spread online? How can digital tools support social action?
Key terms focus	perspective, digital action, petition, discussion board
Assessment practice	See lesson assessment practice at the end of this lesson.

Definition and Understanding

Digital communication is not only for private messages, entertainment, or sharing daily updates. It is also used to discuss social issues, raise awareness, organize support, and encourage action. People use websites, social media, petitions, and discussion boards to share viewpoints and respond to local or global problems. This lesson supports Unit 6 of the specification, especially the part that asks learners to demonstrate understanding of social issues through online content and to use digital resources to plan action in response to those issues.

➤ **Perspectives**

Perspective is the way a person views or understands an issue. In communication, perspective matters because different people may explain the same social issue in different ways.

➤ **Digital action**

Digital action means using online tools to support a cause or respond to a problem. In communication, digital action helps people raise awareness, share information, and encourage public response.

➤ **Petition**

A petition is a public request that asks people to support a change by signing or approving it. In communication, a petition helps show that many people support the same concern or goal.

➤ **Discussion board**

A discussion board is an online place where people share posts and replies about a topic. In communication, a discussion board helps people exchange ideas, ask questions, and discuss issues in an organized way.



Key terms

Term	Meaning
perspective	a particular way of viewing an issue
digital action	using online tools to support change or awareness
petition	a public request for action supported by signatures
discussion board	an online space where people post and reply to ideas

Worked example

A student researches online reactions to local air pollution and creates a brief digital action plan that includes an information post, a shared evidence sheet, and a petition to the local authority.

Student activity

Choose one local or global issue. Note three online perspectives about it, then write a short digital action plan with one goal, two tools, and one safety or accuracy check.

Check your understanding

34. Why is it risky to depend on only one online perspective?
35. How can digital tools support social issues responsibly?
36. What makes an action plan realistic and safe?

Reflection question

Which digital tools do you think are most useful for positive change: awareness posts, petitions, forums, or another tool?

Assessment practice

Write a short plan for addressing one social issue using digital resources. Include the issue, the purpose, the audience, the tools, and how you will keep the communication accurate and responsible.

Appendix: Student Checklist for Success

- I read the explanation before I start the task.
- I think about audience, purpose, tone, and clarity.
- I support my ideas with examples or reasons.
- I check whether my response matches the task.
- I revise grammar, spelling, and punctuation before I finish.
- I stay respectful in discussion, writing, and online communication.

This handbook is designed to support the Level 2 Communication Skills qualification in a student-friendly way while staying aligned to the uploaded specification and real-life communication contexts.