

**School of Architecture, Science and Technology,
Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University**

English Communication

**Common Course
offered in
BSc & BCA**

**Programs
&
Course Codes**

V92 – AEC111

V96 – AEC111

P131 – AEC111

P133 – AEC111

**Common Course
in BSc & BCA**

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VICE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Students, Greetings!!!

I offer cordial welcome to all of you for the degree programme of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University.

English Communication is an essential course at degree level. It deals with basic communication aspects required in day to day and in professional life. If you understand this course properly, it will help to coordinate smoothly, solve issues and build good relationships. The process of learning includes appropriate thinking, understanding important points, describing these points on the basis of experience and observation, explaining them to others by speaking or writing about them.

The syllabus of this course has been structured in this book in such a way, to give you autonomy to study easily without stirring from home. During the counseling sessions, scheduled at your respective study centre, all your doubts will be clarified about the course and you will get guidance from some qualified and experienced counsellors/ professors. This guidance will not only be based on lectures, but it will also include various techniques such as question-answers, doubt clarification. We expect your active participation in the contact sessions at the study centre. Our emphasis is on 'self study'. If a student learns how to study, he will become independent in learning throughout life. This course book has been written with the objective of helping in self-study and giving you autonomy to learn at your convenience.

During this academic year, you have to give assignments, complete laboratory activities, field visits and the Project work wherever required. You may have to opt for specialization as per programme structure. You will get experience and joy in personally doing above activities. This will enable you to assess your own progress and there by achieve a larger educational objective.

We wish that you will enjoy the courses of Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, emerge successful and very soon become a knowledgeable and honorable Master's degree holder of this university. I congratulate "Development Team" for the development of this excellent high quality "Self- Learning Material (SLM)" for the students. I hope and believe that this SLM will be immensely useful for all students of this program.

Best Wishes!

- Dr. Prof M M Salunkhe

Vice-Chancellor, YCMOU

FORWARD BY THE DIRECTOR

This book aims at acquainting the students with basic fundamentals of English Communication skills required at degree level. This course is common to V92: B.Sc. (PCM), V96: B.Sc. (Actuarial Science) Programmes offered by the School of Architecture, Science & Technology and P131: B.C.A, P133: B.Sc. (Industrial Science) Programmes offered by the School of Computer Sciences. Hence this SLM book is useful learning resource to all the students of the above said B.Sc. and B.C.A. programmes of the University.

The book has been specially designed for the degree students. It has a comprehensive coverage of communication concepts and its application in practical life. The book contains numerous examples to build understanding and skills.

The book is written with self- instructional format. Each chapter is prepared with articulated structure to make the contents not only easy to understand but also interesting to learn.

Each chapter begins with learning objectives which are stated using **Action Verbs as per the Bloom's Taxonomy**. Each Unit is started with introduction to arouse or stimulate curiosity of learner about the content/ topic. Thereafter the unit contains explanation of concepts supported by tables, figures, exhibits and solved illustrations wherever necessary for better effectiveness and understanding.

This book is written in simple language, using spoken style and short sentences. Topics of each unit of the book presents from simple to complex in logical sequence. This book is appropriate for low achiever students with lower intellectual capacity and covers the syllabus of the course.

Exercises given in the chapter include MCQs, conceptual questions and practical questions so as to create a ladder in the minds of students to grasp each and every aspect of a particular concept.

02 - 04 practical activities are written in the last unit in each credit block to build application of knowledge and skills from that credit part to real world scenario, case study or problem.

I thank the students who have been a constant motivation for us. I am grateful to the writers, editors and the School faculty associated in this SLM development of the Programme.

CREDIT 01

UNIT 01-01: INTRODUCTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Recall** and **Describe** the basic theories of communication
- ❖ **Identify** the four basic modes of communication
- ❖ **Define** some ways communication is used
- ❖ **Identify** some potential barriers to successful communication

INTRODUCTION



Since the beginning of time, humans have had the need to communicate with others. Humans have only been able to progress because of the progress of communication. In the early days of humans, they had to communicate to find food, shelter, and water. Now, communication is needed in every aspect of our lives! Just imagine the situation of not being able to communicate. Could you go a full day without using your body language or words to communicate? You will certainly realize that it would not be possible for you to survive long without communicating. In this unit, we will explore some of the theories of communication, learn the basic ways to communicate, communicating with yourself and others, and explore barriers to communication.

01-01: THEORIES OF COMMUNICATION

How and why do we communicate is still a mystery to many people. Communication has evolved and changed over time. However, in order to understand how we communicate now, it is useful to learn about how and why we communicated in the past.

For most of us, communication is such a normal part of our everyday lives that we rarely pause to examine the roots of communication and study the theories around communication. Have you ever wondered how you communicate or why you say certain things? How are you influenced (or not) to communicate? Although there are many theories of communication, let us examine some basic theories.

The first theory is called Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Let us understand some key terms. The word *cognitive* is simply what we are aware of in our conscious brains. For example, if you were talking to a friend, you might say you have “cognitive awareness,” knowledge or understanding of what subjects or topics you talked about with your friend. Maybe you talked about the movie you saw or your plans for the weekend.



The term *dissonance* means anything that is not in harmony with something. For example, imagine that your friend wants you to go the cinema with her, and you really do not want to go because you might believe that cinemas are too expensive. However, to please your friend, you say you will go with her and might even agree with her when she says she loves going to the cinema.



Basically, in this theory, what you want to do is not in harmony with your actions. Likewise, in the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, people communicate in ways that might be in opposition to how they really feel. In order to feel accepted into a group and create group peace and harmony with team members, people might change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (basically what they believe and how they act). As a result, people may make decisions that are in disharmony with how they really feel.



However, it is also natural for the human conscious to want to create harmony with differing beliefs. So, in a way, humans sacrifice what they really believe in in order to fit into a group. This “group” could be a friends circle, a neighborhood, a family, or even a cultural group.

The second interesting theory is Communication Accommodation Theory. According to this theory, humans have a natural exchange when they communicate. In other words, humans naturally adapt their speech when they talk to others. Think about all the times you have spoken with different people. Do you speak to people in the same way? Probably not. How you speak with your three-year-old nephew will be different from how you speak with your teacher or your friend. Further, the words you use will be different depending on the person and the relationship you have with that person and will also influence how you speak with them.



According to this theory, there are two ways humans change their speech. One way humans change their speech is through “divergence.” This simply means that when we disagree with someone, we change what we say to be different. Think of divergence as being different. When we diverge with people, we try to be different from them.



This could be for many reasons. Maybe you disagree with someone. Maybe you prefer to set yourself apart from that person because you are a different age, ethnicity, or gender. For whatever reason, divergence is a process in which what you say makes you different.

Another way humans change their speech is through “convergence.” Think of convergence as coming together or trying to be the same as someone. Have you ever wanted to be someone’s friend, but you know that you might be too different from them? Maybe the topics you like to talk about aren’t the same as what they like to talk about.



So, through convergence, you might change what you say to match the other person to avoid being alone. This allows you to be accepted by that person or social group. You may change the words you use or you use the words to match that person/group.

Cultivation Analysis Theory is the third theory we are going to learn now. This theory means that the media and technology influence the way we communicate.



Can you imagine what the world might have been like before the television was invented? Before the Internet? Before cell phones? Before YouTube? It was very different. How people communicated without these tools was very different from how people communicate now. In fact, our beliefs about the world have changed so much because of the media. Media can be music, movies, television, magazines, or the radio. For example, if you see many violent Hollywood movies, you might start to believe that life in the USA is violent. Also, the topics people talk about are centered on the media: the television programs and the movies you see. For example, you might talk to your friend about the latest movie that was just released or what they thought about a certain TV program.

The fourth theory that can influence our life is called Groupthink. According to this theory, a group is the strongest factor in shaping someone’s communication. A group could be a close group of friends, a family unit, a cultural group or a country. The group is very strong in what they believe. In fact, the group can be so strong in its thoughts that they fail to think of better choices or thoughts. Basically, group members

start to think alike, in the same way. Naturally, this is a good thing, as it brings group members closer.



However, the problem with Groupthink is that different opinions and thoughts are not expressed or taken seriously because they are not a part of the dominant group. If most people are thinking the same things, different thoughts will not be accepted naturally. If you are a member of a group and you have a different opinion about a topic and all the other group members think a different way, you may not express your thoughts. For example, imagine your group is thinking about how to solve a problem. All the group members are in favour of option A but you think option B is better. In order to stay connected to the group, you might not express your opinions. Or, sometimes in Groupthink, group members might not even be thinking of other options and thoughts because their minds are linked together. In this theory, as the group gets stronger, mindsets and viewpoints also start to be similar. This is a good and a bad thing. It is good for group connection but bad for diversity.

The fifth and the last theory which we are going to discuss is the Cultural Approach to Organizations. In this theory, companies are like cultural groups. There are many different cultures. There is the Japanese culture, the Indian culture, the American culture, the Maharashtrian culture, etc. Just like cultures have specific beliefs and values, so do companies. Even the languages of specific cultures are different, just like the languages used in different companies are different.



For example, the language of a corporate business company like Tata might be different from the language people use at a primary school. The communication can change based on vocabulary, tone of voice, and style. The primary school employees and students might use educational vocabulary or words, speak in a gentle way and have a

more relaxed way of speaking. On the other hand, a business employee might use more technical words; a more assertive or aggressive tone of voice and communicate quickly.

LEARNING ACTIVITY 01

- ❖ Activity: One family unit or your best friends can be defined as one group. Ask one friend or family member if he/she is influenced by Groupthink (thinking the same way as the other members of their group). Ask if Groupthink has influenced him/her in good or bad ways.
- ❖ Reflection: Think about the media. Have movies or videos influenced (changed) how you view the world? Why or why not? For example, how do you view America from the Hollywood movies?
- ❖ Reflection: Do you speak to your family members the same way you speak to your teacher? Why or why not?

SELF-TEST 01

1. Which theory best states that communication is altered based on your beliefs and values?
 - a. Cultural Approach to Organizations
 - b. Groupthink
 - c. Cultivation Analysis Theory
 - d. Cognitive Dissonance Theory
2. Imagine you are with a friend and she/he says that people in America are very rich, even though she/he hasn't been to the USA. Which theory is probably shaping her/his opinion?
 - a. Cultural Approach to Organizations
 - b. Groupthink
 - c. Cultivation Analysis Theory
 - d. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. Which theory of communication best describes how YOU use language? Give at least two examples.
2. Choose a different theory from the first question. Give at least one example of where and how you see that theory in your personal life.

01-02: TYPES AND MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a very broad term. In a general way, communication is just the transfer of information from one person to another. You can gain information from reading something or listening to someone. You can also communicate ideas from one person to another by speaking to them or writing something that someone will

eventually read. So, the four basic modes of communication are: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Let's go through each mode of communication so that you can understand clearly. Let's start with speaking.



Humans are natural speakers. Even when we were babies, we were “speaking” in our own way by crying. As we get older and increased our vocabulary, we began to talk. Words are a quick and easy way to communicate to someone what we want. You can speak in formal and informal situations. We speak to our family members and friends in informal situations and to our colleagues, teachers, and elders in formal situations.

Speaking is considered an “active” mode of communication because we have to produce something in order to speak.



In other words, we have to open our mouths and actively do something, give something (rather than receive something). Speaking is what most people think about when they think of communication, but communication is shown in other ways.

Humans have created spoken language but have also developed tools in order to preserve those words and to communicate ideas that will last a long time.





In ancient times, humans had written words on scrolls and then more recently, we have created the printing press, typewriter, computer, and now we have the text messaging. Writing conveys ideas for someone else to read. In that way, reading and writing go together.

However, one difference between reading and writing is that writing is an active way to communicate. Just like with speaking, in writing, we have to produce something in order to write. We have to “do” something, so it is active.

Many people enjoy reading and with that activity, they learn about the ideas of another person. We read written words in books, reports, in text messages, in email messages, in project proposals, and even in reading traffic signs on the road. Imagine how hard it would be to not be able to read anything. That is why reading is an essential skill taught in schools. If humans could not read, writing would have no purpose.



Reading is a passive communication mode because in reading, you are receiving something rather than producing something. However, do not think that “passive” means that you are lazy. It simply means that you are receiving input from somewhere.

The last basic communication mode is listening, which is the hardest to attain. Just like reading and writing go together, speaking goes along with listening. When someone is speaking to you, you are listening.



The reason why listening is the hardest to attain is because people do not know how to listen actively. People are distracted and do not know how to give their full attention to their speaker. Maybe they are driving while listening to you on the cell phone. Maybe the listener is hearing other noises in the background. Whatever may be the reason, active listening is very difficult.



We need to listen to spoken words in a conversation or even when we watch the TV or listen to the radio. We could also listen to a podcast, a voice message, or a fun video on YouTube.



Listening is considered a passive language mode because when you listen, you receive something and are not required to give anything. Remember, passive does not mean you are lazy. It just means you are receiving rather than giving input.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: Which type/mode of communication is easier for you in your mother tongue (your first language)?
- ❖ Reflection: When you are learning a new language (or your second language), how do you best learn the second language? By speaking, listening, reading, or writing?

SELF-TEST 02

3. What are the two passive communication modes?
 - a. Reading & Writing
 - b. Listening & Writing
 - c. Listening & Reading
 - d. Speaking & Listening
4. When someone learns a language, which mode of language is likely to be the first way you learn?
 - a. Through speaking

- b. Through listening
- c. Through writing
- d. Through reading

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. What is the main difference between passive and active communication?
4. Give one example of each mode of communication in your personal life. For example, what do you read? What do you write? What do you speak about? Lastly, who do you listen to and where? Use this outline to help you.

Reading:

Writing:

Speaking:

Listening:

01-03: THE LANGUAGE OF COMMUNICATION

Let us familiarize ourselves with some terms related to communication. The first is a monologue. A monologue is basically a long speech given by someone that prevents anyone else from talking. It could mean talking out loud to yourself or talking silently to yourself, also known as your inner voice. Monologues fall under the category of speaking and they are active ways to communicate. However, most communication involves at least two people so monologues should be avoided unless you are asked to give a speech to your classmates at school or your colleagues at work.



How many times have you been in a meeting and the person conducting the meeting did not allow anyone else to talk, ask questions or give ideas? Do you know how boring it is to listen to someone giving a long monologue and you cannot interact with that person at all? This is because in our basic nature, humans are meant to actually communicate with others, in a two-way conversation, one that involves speaking and listening by both people, not just one.

The opposite of a monologue is a dialogue, which is a two-way conversation with another person. A proper dialogue involves two people in which both people have the chance to speak and while one person is speaking, the other person is listening. Think

of a dialogue like a two-way street: cars are going in both directions. Just like those cars, people are speaking in two directions because one person is listening as the other person is speaking. After you finish speaking, the other person can speak next. So, the roles are reversed. Speaking in a dialogue can be extended to a group of people in which one person is speaking while the others are listening or smaller groups within the larger group are speaking and listening to each other.



Some examples of group discussions might be a debate at school, a social function like a party where there are many people talking or a meeting at school or work where people are encouraged to add information or ask questions.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Reflection: Think about a situation in your life when someone did not understand you. Why didn't he/she understand you?
- ❖ What is the importance of monologues or dialogues in our life? Do you prefer monologues or dialogues? Why?

SELF-TEST 03

5. What is the definition of a dialogue?
 - a. A conversation with yourself and your inside thoughts
 - b. A conversation with at least two people where everyone is both speaking and listening
 - c. A conversation with two people where one person is doing all the talking
 - d. A lecture where one person is talking to another person only through Skype

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. When are monologues important? Where have you seen monologues?

01-04: BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

Communication is very important to survive and to live a happy life. However, many people do not know how to communicate. You might think that it would be easy to speak and listen, but there is much more in the process of communication.



Take for example someone who is speaking to you, but you do not have any clue as to what he/she is saying. There is either a problem with the person who is speaking or the person who is listening. This is a problem when you talk with someone of a different language, but this can even happen when speaking to someone of the same language! How many times have you spoken to auto rickshaw drivers in their language, but they still do not know what you are saying, or those times you were talking to your friend but she did not seem to understand you? Problems can happen at either the giving (speaker) or the receiving end (listener).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Experiment: This week, think about a conversation you had with your friend or family member. Ask him/her to repeat exactly what he/she said to you. Did he/she understand everything? Yes or no? If no, why?
- ❖ Experiment: Have a conversation with someone outside where it is noisy and then talk to the same person in a quiet environment. What was the difference? Did you understand more in the noisy or quiet environment? Why?

SELF-TEST 04

6. What is a barrier to successful communication?
 - a. Talking/listening while checking your Facebook
 - b. Talking outside where there is a lot of noise and horns
 - c. Yelling at your friend from across the room
 - d. All of the above
7. Why is successful communication important?
 - a. So that we can learn from one another
 - b. So that the other person feels respected
 - c. So that information is accurate
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

6. Talk about an experience in your life when you spoke to some people and he/she did not understand your message. Why didn't he/she understand you? Give at least two possible reasons.

SUMMARY

In this section, you learned about why humans started to communicate. We also explored ways communication is used, in active and passive ways and within ourselves or with another person or group. You also learned the basic communication process and some barriers to successful communication.

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YOUTUBE VIDEOS

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Groupthink>

BOOKS

“[Active Listening 101: How to Turn Down Your Volume to Turn Up Your Communication Skills](#)” by Emilia Hardman

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit [Here](#) for Course Companion website for this course:

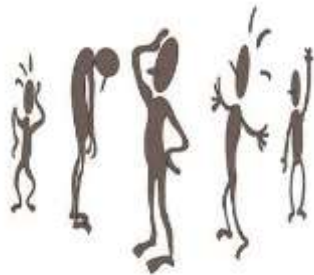
UNIT 01-02: VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- ❖ **Recall** the communication process and **Plan** to develop your communication skills by using voice elements effectively
- ❖ **Define** the terms verbal and non-verbal communication and **Identify** the examples of verbal and non-verbal communication styles
- ❖ Make effective **use** of body language in your everyday communication
- ❖ **Recognize** the need for developing trust among your colleagues, friends, and family members and Apply the tips for developing trust
- ❖ **Recall** the process of giving and receiving feedback and Apply the techniques for giving feedback
- ❖ **Overcome** the barriers to effective communication
- ❖ **Explain** the importance of ethics in personal and professional communication
- ❖ **Apply** the tips on cross-cultural communication to Communicate successfully with people from different cultures

INTRODUCTION

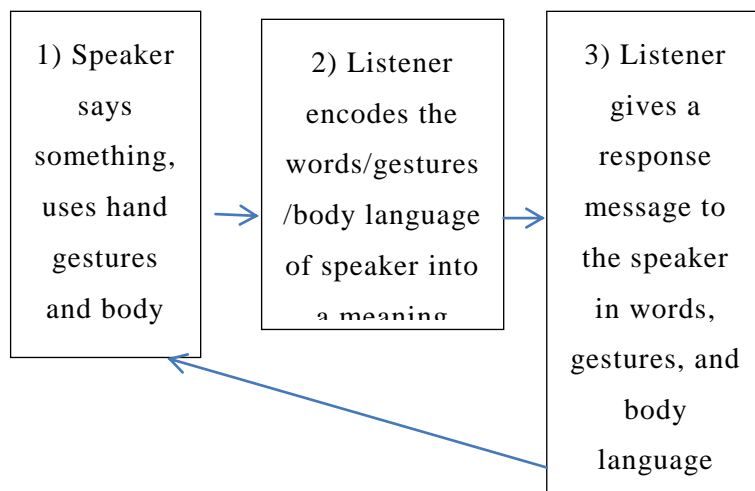


What do you mean by the term “communication?” When people think about communication, they generally think about speaking. Although speaking is only one mode of communication, it is difficult to master. In this section, you will unlock the secrets to become a great speaker.

02-01: ORGANIZING YOUR MESSAGES

How you speak is much more important than what you say. It is important for the speaker to do some planning of how he/she will speak so that the listener will be able to understand. Otherwise, the listener risks not understanding the speaker. Communication is a process and there are steps in the process with the speaker and the listener. The communication process starts from the time the speaker sends a message to the time the listener receives a message.

The listener basically has to encode and decode the message in his/her brain which means he/she is interpreting what the message is until he/she can fully understand it.



Sometimes, the listener can encode or decode wrong. This is what we call miscommunication, or communication that is not successful. The communication process can turn bad with either the speaker or the listener. The speaker can interfere with the communication process by not communicating the ideas clearly. The listener can make the communication bad by not actively listening. Let us share some suggestions on how to improve the communication process for the speaker.



The first suggestion for the speaker is to share things that the listener either needs to know or will be interested to know. This is important because the listener can only handle (or process) that much information. It is hard for a typical listener to remember everything a speaker said.



Have you ever listened to someone speaking to you about things that were not important to your life or talked to you about subjects that were boring for you? How much did you remember? Probably not a lot. That is why it is important for the speaker to customize his/her message to what the listener needs to know at that moment. Generally speaking, a typical listener mostly remembers what the speaker said at the beginning and end of his/her message. Knowing that, the speaker should say the main points of their message at the very beginning and at the very end just to make sure the listener understands the most important points. What the speaker says in the middle of the message could be details or extra information about the main points. The best advice for formal communication is to keep the message short. This will make it easier for the listener to understand your message better.



Also, many times we communicate in places that are noisy. There are horns, other cars, other people and outside elements like birds, wind, and maybe rain. This is why you

must keep your message short, because your listener may be distracted by these elements. Or, in other cases, your listener may be distracted by his/her own thoughts. For all these reasons, keep your message short.

Humans love to communicate and some love the sound of their own voice, so much that they use so many words, even words that are not required when communicating. When speaking informally with friends, it is OK to use words that have little meaning or repeat certain words. However, in formal communication, you should pay special attention to use of words that are required for your message. Keep your message simple. In business, time is money. The less time you use to communicate unnecessary things, the more time you have to do business. Try not to repeat the same words. Eliminate useless words like “sure,” “yeah,” “um,” “like,” etc. Imagine that you want to invite your friend for tea. See the difference in these two examples. Example A: “So, um, do you wanna like, go for tea? Let’s go for tea!” Example B: “Would you like to go for tea?” Example B uses less words and the message is direct. In example A, the word “tea” is repeated and there are some useless words like “um” and “like.”

Here are a few more suggestions for the speaker. If you would like the listener to really understand, the speaker should tell the listener how she/he can benefit from the message. For example, if you are talking to someone and the topic or subject is something that is not familiar to the listener, the speaker should explain why it is important. This helps the listener to become more interested. Think that you are a salesperson trying to sell hair oil. You are talking to a customer from a different country who does not know the benefits of hair oil. As a speaker, you should talk about how hair oil can be beneficial to your customer, who is also the listener. Lastly, if you can speak slowly and pause as you are speaking, the listener will remember more because it will give his/her brain more time to process the information. This is very important when speaking about a new topic that the listener has little knowledge in. If you can see from your listener’s body language that he/she is not understanding your message, you should pause more or use simpler language.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Experiment: This week, talk about a topic that your listener has no knowledge of or awareness of. For example, if you know your sister does not know anything about baseball, talk to her about that topic for two minutes. Next, watch your listener. What do you see your listener doing? What is her body language telling you? Does she seem interested and engaged? Why?
- ❖ Experiment: Next time you talk to your friend or family member, ask him/her to count how many times you say an unnecessary word like “um,” “eh” or “like.” If

you cannot find anyone, record your speech on your smart phone and listen to it later.

SELF-TEST 01

1. Why is it important to know your listeners' values and interests when talking with them?
 - a. So they can have a conversation about their interests
 - b. So that they will not be bored
 - c. So that they will want to communicate with you in the future
 - d. All of the above
2. Scenario: You are meeting someone for the first time, and you do not know what their interests are. What is the best way to start a conversation with them?
 - a. Tell them about your whole life story
 - b. Ask simple questions about their life and share a little about yourself
 - c. Talk about controversial topics like religion and politics
 - d. Use all the difficult vocabulary words you are learning in your class so you can show them you are smart

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. Why is it important to talk about topics important to the listener?
2. In business, why is it important to keep your message short and direct (Not long and boring)? If you do not have any experience in the business world, talk about why you think it might be important.

02-02: USING VOICE ELEMENTS EFFECTIVELY

Let us take some time to talk about how you use your voice when you are speaking, since how you speak is more important than what you say. Many people do not know that your voice can change a lot in speed, pitch, and volume. Let us talk about each one separately.



First, let us talk about the speed of your voice. Speed is simply how fast you speak. You can speak fast or slow. Your listener will enjoy listening much more if the speaker changes the speed. Imagine talking to someone who speaks at the same speed. You might get bored listening to him/her. If you speak slowly at certain parts, your listener

will anticipate the next word and listen more attentively. On the other hand, speaking faster shows you are excited about a topic.

Another element of speed is pausing. You can pause to add dramatic effects. There is another benefit to pausing. Pausing allows the listener to decode and encode (interpret or understand) your message. When you pause, you are also articulating your words or separating them, which makes the message clearer. Many times, people speak so fast and they forget to separate their words. Separating your words is called enunciating. You are enunciating when you separate your words with pausing in between each word. Enunciating or articulating your words means to separate them. Look at this example. In this sentence, each space means you need to put a pause. For each period or comma, you need to add more separation:

“I need to go to the market. I need to
 buy bananas, bread and juice.”

Sometimes people who speak the same language can speak fast with one another, but your speed should be reduced when speaking with someone who has a different first language than you.

The next element is pitch. The term pitch means the degree of highness or lowness of speaking voice. Your voice frequency can be a high pitch, like singing a high note or like an opera singer or you can sing at a lower pitch.



Women and children generally have higher pitches while men have lower pitches. Your pitch can show how confident you are.



For example, a higher pitch typically shows you are not certain about something and does not show confidence. You can also raise your pitch when you want to ask questions. When you ask a question, be sure to raise your pitch so that the listener knows you are asking a question. Lowering your pitch shows confidence.

Volume is the last element. It simply means how soft or loud you speak. Volume is important and it will impact how your message is received. Volume is on a spectrum of soft to loud.

Soft ←-----→ Loud

For example, if you want your listener to hear you, you need to speak loud enough. However, speaking too loudly might be annoying for your listener and he/she may feel attacked.



Also, other people may be disturbed. You can also raise the volume of your voice on a particular word to make it more important. If you have a lower volume, your listener may not hear you and you give the impression that you are shy. However, one benefit to lowering your voice is that it requires the listener to pay special attention to you in order to hear you. It is best to change the volume of your voice to add variety and it is more fun for the listener.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: Which voice element is the most difficult for you? Pitch? Volume? Articulation? Pausing? What can you do to improve that aspect of your speech?
- ❖ Experiment: Read a paragraph in a book, magazine, etc. Every time you see a comma (,) or a full stop (.) pause your voice for one second. Also, make sure you pause in between each word (enunciate). Do you notice a difference in your articulation? Apply the same pausing exercise when you are speaking to someone (without a book, magazine, etc.)

SELF-TEST 02

3. Scenario: You are talking to a person and you can see from his/her body language that he/she does not understand you. What is the best thing you can do to improve your communication?
 - a. Speak so loud that others can hear you too
 - b. Change your vocabulary to match their skill level
 - c. Ask them if they have any questions
 - d. Make them feel comfortable by talking about a lot of new ideas
4. What is the best way to speak to someone about a new idea they are unfamiliar with?

- a. Prepare by anticipating what others might ask and be prepared to answer questions
- b. Make sure to pause between main points so the listener can fully comprehend your ideas
- c. Listen to what your listener asks and read their body language
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- 3. What is the definition of pitch? What are the different pitches? Which pitch is important when talking to friends? To your business partner?
- 4. What is the definition of articulation/enunciation? Why is articulation important?

02-03: UNDERSTANDING NON -VERBAL LANGUAGE

As mentioned earlier, communication can be expressed by reading, writing, speaking, and listening. What do you think about speaking? Do you think about words? Yes, speaking involves words but it also involves your body. You can “speak” with your body! Research has shown that 93% of communication is expressed through our bodies, while only 6% is expressed through our words. Speaking with our bodies is called body language or nonverbal language. It is nonverbal because you are not using your words.



Parts of your body that speak are your hands, legs, shoulders, back, eyes, mouth, and forehead. Using your body can add more meaning to your words and the body language helps the listener to understand your message. There is a common phrase that states “actions speak louder than words”. This could not be farther from the truth. Let us go through some tips on using your body language (actions) to help your listener understand your message better.

The first element of body language is your eyes. Your eyes are very important because the eyes can show what you are feeling inside.



When our eyes are smaller, it means we do not believe something or are skeptical. When our eyes get bigger, it shows excitement or surprise. Also, you can either have good or bad eye contact. Giving eye contact to your listener shows that you care about him/her as a person. Trust is also established through eye contact, as the listener feels more comfortable with the speaker who has good eye contact. However, if you stare at a person for too long, you may be seen as aggressive. Also true, your listener may not trust you or will feel at conflict with you if you do not have good eye contact.

As with your eyes, there are other parts of your face that are important with body language. When speaking to someone (and even with listening), you should have a pleasant smile. Smiling too much show you have too much energy but a light smile shows you are interested in what the person has to say and that you are a happy person.



Smiling will also encourage people to feel more comfortable and will participate in meetings and job tasks more. A person will listen better if the person he/she is talking to is smiling and he/she will also remember the message clearly. Smiling brings positive emotions too, and both the speaker and the listener will feel at ease.

There are other parts of your body that are important to notice in your body communication. Your arms can add a lot of meaning to your message. For example, when you want to say something important, you should use your arms. Moving your arms and hands makes your message less boring for the listener.



Imagine talking to someone who does not move his/her arms at all; you might get bored. You can try this with your friends. Try talking to your friend without moving your arms or hands and see how your friend reacts. Then, talk to the same friend later and use your arms and hands to show excitement at certain points. Do you notice a difference? You will see that body language is very important.

Your back or posture can also show the listener how lazy or professional you are. For example, if you have bad back posture, you may look diffident, lazy, or bored. Rather, straight back posture shows that you are a confident person and you know what you want to do or have a goal/mission. It also shows you are attentive and ready to work. As with posture, turning your back to someone while he/she is speaking is considered rude and should be avoided at all costs if you want to maintain a good relationship with anyone.



Lastly, how far away you stand from someone (distance) can communicate things to your listener. Distance changes based on the culture you are from. For example, in the United States of America, people typically prefer to be one arm length away from others in business. This is the standard distance and it shows that you are formal and respect personal boundaries. However, if you stand too close to someone, your listener may feel uncomfortable and/or think you have a personal interest in him/her outside the workplace. That is why it is important to learn about the standard distance that is accepted for the culture you are interacting with. One way to know if your listener is feeling comfortable or not is to look at the eyes as you are standing next to him/her. If the eyes show he/she is uncomfortable or scared, the speaker should increase their distance more.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Experiment: Have a conversation with someone and have bad eye contact. Ask your listener how he/she felt. Then, have another conversation with the same person and maintain good eye contact. Ask him/her how he/she felt. Ask your listener to tell you the difference in how they reacted to you in each conversation (one conversation with bad eye contact and the other conversation with good eye contact).
- ❖ Experiment: Have a conversation with someone new from the previous experiment. Do not have any facial expressions. Ask your listener how he/she felt. Then, have

another conversation with the same person and smile and show expression in your eyes. Ask him/her how he/she felt. Ask your listener to tell you the difference in how he/she reacted to you in each conversation (one conversation with bad facial expressions and the other conversation with good facial expressions).

SELF-TEST 03

5. Scenario: You have a job interview. What is the best body language you can use during the job interview?
 - a. Use your hands a lot to show you are very excited
 - b. Smile when it is appropriate and use your hands only when talking about things you want to show importance to
 - c. Keep a neutral face the whole time to show you are calm
 - d. Keep the distance that is appropriate for your listener
6. What are some examples of aggressive body language?
 - a. Pointing your finger a lot
 - b. Turning your back to your listener
 - c. Starting or keeping your eye contact for too long
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. What is the definition of formal body language? What is the definition of informal body language? Give one example of a formal body language. Give one example of an informal body language (Hint: think about your posture, arm movement, facial expressions, etc.)
6. Why is body language important?

02-04: DEVELOPING CREDIBILITY

You are familiar with the term trust? Trust is essential for someone to have good communication with you. Trust has another name, which is called credibility. If others believe what you say with your words and body language, you have credibility. Credibility is important in the workplace because in order for people to be open to new ideas and to trust someone on your team, you have to have credibility with that person. How can you know if you can believe someone in your team? This is why credibility is very important. So, how does a person develop credibility? There will be certain things you can do while you speak to someone that will help you to have credibility.

The first thing you can do is to speak about facts, not people personally. The more you can keep your information about objective things, which are also known as facts, the more people will believe you. If you give the correct information, people will learn to

trust you to get the right information. When you talk about other people, it is easy to misinterpret or say something that is not true.



So, it is important to speak about true things and not discuss things related to people. For example, if you are a team leader and you need to discuss a report, you should talk about the report only and not focus on who wrote the report or put blame on that person.

Also, make sure your listener understands you by asking if he/she has any questions. When you are concerned about the other person's wellbeing, he/she will learn to trust you more. You can ask your listener questions like: "Do you have any questions?" "Can I help you to understand anything?" Try not to use words that your listener will not understand. If your listener does not understand, he/she will remember less. Use the words that are appropriate at that level.

Some other things that help credibility are body language and empathy. Body language and your words can either go together or apart. If your words match your body language, people will more likely believe you. Empathy is showing concern for another person. If your listener believes that you care about him/her, his/her opinions, and viewpoints, he/she will trust you more and therefore have more credibility with you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Reflection: Has anyone ever lied to you or told you incorrect information by accident? How did it affect you? How did you feel?
- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever exaggerated something to make yourself look better? In other words, have you ever added extra information about anything (like a story) to make it sound better?

SELF-TEST 04

7. Why is credibility important?

- a. Trust is the only way to have good communication among friends, family, or colleagues
- b. People will make decisions based on what you say
- c. People want to know you care about them
- d. All of the above

8. Scenario: You just started a new class and you want to develop credibility with your new teacher. What is one way to do that?
- a. Do not exaggerate or give information that is too vague
 - b. Ask if your listener has any questions
 - c. Match your body language to your words
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. In your own words, what is trust?
8. Explain a situation in which you did not trust someone. Why? Was it something he/she said? Was it his/her body language?

02-05: GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

In the communication process, both the speaker and the listener need to work at understanding one another. This process is called feedback. Feedback is defined as useful information that is given to someone so that he/she can improve himself/herself. The speaker should pay attention to the listener to make sure he/she understands what he/she is trying to say. Also, the listener should pay attention to the speaker. When this happens, both the speaker and the listener are changing how and what they say to better understand the other person. Feedback can be given both through verbal (words) or non-verbal (body language). First, let us talk about how to give verbal feedback to someone.



You can give verbal (spoken) feedback if someone asks you to provide it. Telling someone how to improve can be a sensitive topic so it is important to be sensitive to feelings. Perhaps you are giving a presentation for work or school. You can ask your team leader or supervisor for the feedback. If that is the case, then the person giving feedback should be positive. A person will receive your feedback better if you start with a positive message. If you have something unpleasant to say, you should make sure the message is as positive as possible. A good test of your feedback is to ask yourself: “Will my relationship with the person still be good after I give the feedback?” If the answer is “yes,” then you have provided feedback in a nice way that maintained the relationship. If you have to give any feedback that is not pleasant, a nice way to do it is to avoid using the person’s name. Keep the negative feedback neutral. Suppose you

gave a presentation and you asked for feedback from your friend. Look at these differences: Example A: “Deepti, you talk too fast.” Example B: “Try talking slower.” Which one was better? Example B was better feedback because it was more positive and it offered a solution.

Where you provide the feedback and when are the important factors to think about as well. The location is important. If other people are present, perhaps that is not the best location for the feedback because giving feedback can be a sensitive issue and people’s feelings should be considered. A private location is best. Talking about personal matters is not best shared with other people. The person might feel embarrassed if that is the case. Also, provide the feedback in a location where both people will feel comfortable, such as a private office, coffee shop, or another comfortable location.

In summary, when giving feedback verbally to someone, you should avoid being negative. Instead, focus on the positive. For example, instead of saying: “You are always late!” You could say: “Please come on time.”

Do not attack a person when you are helping him/her improve his/her communication. This can be done by avoiding sentences that start with “you.” For example, “You are always late” starts with the word “you.” This should be avoided. Also, never give a criticism without providing a suggestion. “Please come on time” is a suggestion to come back on time the next time.

Without knowing it or not, you are constantly giving feedback through your bodies through non-verbal ways to person you are speaking to. In the communication process, a listener is giving feedback through his/her body to the speaker. It is the speaker’s job to read the body signals of the listener. You should look at your listener’s eyes, posture, and forehead. Let us have more details.



If your listener’s eyes are wandering around and not focusing, it might be an indication that he/she is bored! It is your job as a speaker to try and make your speech fun and interesting to the listener. Try using easier vocabulary or words that he/she may understand. Or, perhaps your listener has no clue what you are saying. You should do a better job at making the topic interesting and relevant (important) to your listener. Tell him/her how he/she can benefit from the topic.

Communication can also be expressed in other ways. If the listener's back posture is slumped (not straight), that could also be an indicator that he/she is bored. If his/her forehead is wrinkly, it could mean the listener is confused. If any of these things happen, the speaker is receiving feedback that what he/she is saying either is not fun, important or interesting to their listener. The speaker should change what/how he/she is speaking.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever had to tell a person something negative about himself/herself? How did he/she receive the feedback?
- ❖ Reflection: When someone disagrees with you or tells you something negative about yourself, how do you usually feel? Describe how you handle negative feedback.

SELF-TEST 05

9. Scenario: You are talking to a person and he/she crosses arms in front of the chest. He/she seems defensive. What is one thing you can do to help your communication?
 - a. Use "You" statements
 - b. Focus on the positive
 - c. Show empathy
 - d. Increase the volume of your voice
10. How can you change this statement into a better one to increase communication? "You did not finish your work on time."
 - a. "You should not be late so you can finish your work."
 - b. "How can I help you finish your work on time?"
 - c. "When you do not finish your work, the department cannot finish their deadlines."
 - d. "I would like to know why you did not finish your work on time."

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9. What is the definition of feedback (in the communication process)?
10. Explain why it is important to give feedback in a positive way. (In other words, what would happen if the other person did not receive your feedback in a helpful way)?

02-06: OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

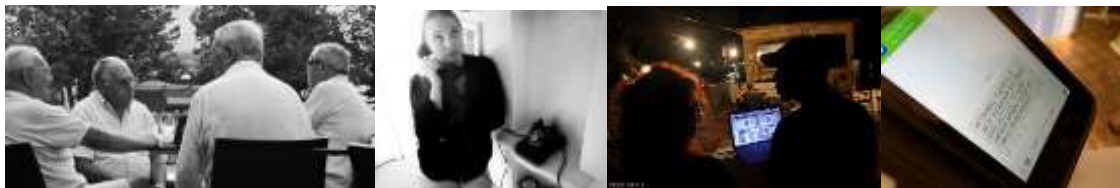
As mentioned before, communication is not easy. In fact, most relationships get ruined due to lack of good communication. Let us know some basics on how to have effective communication with any person, at any time.



The words you use are very important. You should not use the words that your listener will not understand. It is safe to assume that if your listener speaks a different language than you, you should choose words that are easier for him/her to understand. This is also true if your listener has a different educational level than you. Always use words that connect you to your listener, not set yourself apart. If the words are too difficult or not interesting, your listener will feel bored. As a speaker, always look at your listener, especially his/her eyes. If the listener looks like he/she does not understand, then the speaker should change his/her vocabulary. For example, if the listener gives feedback that his/her language skills are more developed (that he/she can understand the difficult words), then you can choose words that match his/her level. Or, if the listener looks confused, then choose words that are easier for him/her to understand. Just like vocabulary choice is important, using words that are direct is better than words that are indirect. For example, if you say “The meeting might start at 10 in the morning,” that is not clear. You should say: “The meeting will start at 10 am in the morning.” Words such as “like,” “about,” “might,” and “maybe” are not always clear.

A speaker has a hard job. Here is another suggestion. When you are using words, make sure your body language is matching what you are saying. For example, if you are saying something exciting, your body should show excitement. If you are talking about something you are concerned or worried about, your body should show the same. The fact is that body language is 93% of all communication, so your body should communicate what you really want to say.

These days, there are so many ways to communicate. Can you think of a few? There is face-to-face communication, emails, texts, video calls and phone calls. When you are delivering news or want to communicate anything, the speaker needs to think about which tool or type of communication is best suited to the message.



For example, when you are delivering bad news, it might be best to use face-to-face communication. If you need to deliver a message about a meeting, perhaps it might be best to use email so many people can read the message. A text is best for informal things, like if you want to have lunch with your co-worker. If you have something you need to say that is urgent and cannot wait, a phone call is better than an email or text.

Lastly, the place where you talk to your listener matters a lot. Can you imagine having a serious conversation with someone where the cars are honking and people are yelling on the streets? Location matters! Generally, if you want your listener to understand you fully, choose a place with little distraction, like a quiet office or a corner in a public area. If the subject is something personal and sensitive, then choose a place where other people cannot hear you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 06

- ❖ Experiment: Talk to a family member or a friend. Say something happy but cross your arms in front of your chest and have a frown on your face (body language will not match your words). After speaking with him/her for a few minutes, ask your listener if she/he was confused by your body language and the words you used.
- ❖ Experiment: Have a conversation with someone and position your body so that you are not facing your listener directly. Turn your back slightly away from the listener for the entire conversation. After a few minutes, ask your listener how he/she felt when you turned your back to him/her.

SELF-TEST 06

11. Scenario: You are a supervisor and every time you talk to your employee, they never seem to do what you want them to do. What can you do to improve your communication?
 - a. Turn your cell phone off when you talk to your employee
 - b. Use simple language that they can understand
 - c. Talk in a quiet location
 - d. Be direct with your requests and avoid words like “maybe” and “might”
 - e. e. All of the above
12. Scenario: You are working for a technical company and you need a fast response to a question. Which way is best to get the correct answer?
 - a. Sending a long email with a lot of words
 - b. Sending an email with only the main idea
 - c. Calling the person
 - d. Talk to the person in a noisy environment with a lot of distractions

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 06

11. What is one barrier to having good communication?
12. What is one thing you would like to do to have better communication? (Choose from this list: use better language, make your message clear, match body language to your words, reduce the distractions, or choose the correct mode: text, phone call, email, etc.)

02-07: COMMUNICATING ETHICALLY

When you communicate, it is very important to restore the relationship as much as possible. This can be difficult when communication gets uncomfortable. One way to make sure you have a good relationship with people is to always communicate ethically. Ethics are the standard of accepted living practices. Ethics help us to know what is good or bad. Without ethics, the world would be a scary place and relationships would be terrible. Ethics used to be a big part of a society, but in some countries, ethics in business is hard to find. Let us share some suggestions on how to communicate ethically to make sure all your professional (and personal) relationships are healthy and strong.



When you communicate, you should always be truthful. There are some exceptions to this. For example, do not share any information that is private or confidential.



For example, if you are a hiring manager, you should not share any personal information about potential employees to people who do not need to hear that information. If others do not need the information for their professional jobs, then do not share that information. Also, do not talk openly about sensitive or personal topics. In those situations, it is best to avoid the conversations in those areas or move the conversation in a different direction. Even a small lie is OK if the topic is not about

business. For example, if the relationship with your mother is not well and your co-worker asks you about it, you can say: “It is fine” even if it is not. If you do not want to talk about personal things, you do not have to tell the full truth.

In other ways, people lie. And in certain situations, lying is not acceptable. For example, in business, you should never say half the truth. When you only communicate half of the truth, the other person is not receiving the full information and therefore, it is considered lying. Business decisions are not always easy and it is important to have all the information available to make those decisions. Also, do not make something sound better by adding things that are not true. This is called exaggeration. Exaggeration can make something seem better when it really is not. For example, if your team at work is working on a project and it is not going well, you should not tell your boss: “Our project is perfect.” Exaggeration makes people believe that certain information is not true and they have an incorrect perception of you.

Another part of being honest is to give all the information, such as the good and the bad. In business, everyone wants to look good and only talk about the good things. However, when you are working on a project or discussing your opinions on something or hiring a potential employee, all information is useful. Just as you should not give half of the information, you should also talk about the good and the bad, the benefits and the setbacks, and positive and the negative. This is called a “balanced approach.”



People say many things and it can be hard to know what things should be considered honest or truthful. When you are listening to someone, learn to make the difference between fact and opinion. Opinions are things that people say that can change based on the person. Opinions change but facts never change. Facts are information you can find in a reputable educational book, an encyclopedia, and trusted sources on the Internet or statistics. For example: “this is a very difficult work project” is an opinion and can change. Maybe one person thinks it is difficult but another person thinks it is easy. “There are 10 people working on this project” is a fact, because you can count and see how many people are working on the project. A fact never changes. Many times in business, people may hear things that they think are facts when they are really opinions. In order to know the full truth, you must only trust facts.

In general, you should never take, steal, or listen to information that is not intended for you. If you receive information that helps your job or is related to a work project, then it is OK to use the information for work purposes only. If the information you have is used in any other way, for personal use, then it is not ethical.



At work, it is easy to listen to a conversation that someone else is having or to read information on someone else's computer screen. It is also easy to talk about someone at work to a friend, maybe some personal information you know about them. However, be an ethical person and do not misuse the information in any way. Personal information should only be used for work purposes by the people who need the information.

Last but not the least, if you want to be ethical, be true to yourself. Be authentic. Do not agree with someone if you do not agree. Do not say something just to be accepted by someone or by a group. Do not agree to something unethical just to avoid an argument. Being ethical also means to be true to yourself. For example, if you have a different opinion, say it. Sometimes being honest and truthful means to have a different opinion.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 07

- ❖ Reflection: Do you think businesses always use ethics when making decisions? Why or why not? (Hint: Think about decisions businesses make in relation to money. Are the decisions always good for people?)
- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever confused facts as opinions? When was the last time you believed something your friend said as a fact (when it was really an opinion)?

SELF- TEST 07

13. Scenario: You are working at a telecommunication company and your friend asked you for the personal phone number of one of your clients. She says it is important and you have the information, but it breaks the company's policy. What should you do?
 - a. Give your friend the information she needs because you trust her
 - b. Tell your friend the truth and that it breaks company policy
 - c. Ask your co-workers if they think it is a good idea and if they say yes, then you do it
 - d. Share the information and tell your supervisor later

14. Scenario: You are salespersons and you are talking about your product. Choose the sentence that sounds the most ethical.
- a. “Even though the other company’s product does this, our product does a different thing.”
 - b. “I feel like this product is the best because it makes my family happy.”
 - c. “This is the best product you will ever use in your lifetime!”
 - d. “I don’t tell others this, but this product will change your life!”

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 07

13. What is the definition of ethics in the business world?
14. What is a fact? Give an example. What is an opinion? Give an example.

02-08: UNDERSTANDING CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES

We live in a global world and it is getting more common to work with people from different cultures and with different languages. Even though English is becoming more global as the language of business in many countries, it is easy for communication to go wrong. If you are talking face-to-face, through email or on the phone, you should practice some tips on how to master communication with someone from a different culture. These tips apply to both the speaker and the listener. Further, these tips can also be used in general when talking to anyone who might be from a different age, gender, or work industry than you.



First, keep your message simple. If you are listening to something and you have no clue what is being said, imagine how frustrating it would be if your speaker kept talking and talking. The shorter and simpler your message is, the better. Keep your sentences short. The best way to do this is to share only the main idea. Do not share extra information that is not required for the listener. Look at these two examples. Which one is clearer? Example A: “Please come to the meeting at around 10 am so that we can talk about the changes to the project. Ten people will be coming to the meeting and the meeting will end before lunch.” Example B: “Come to the meeting at 10 am.” Even though you both may speak English, for another person, English may be a second or a third language. So, example B is better because it is shorter and more direct.



Another suggestion for you when speaking with someone from a different language is to speak slowly. When speaking with someone who is from your same community, state, or country, it is usually normal to communicate without slowing down. However, in India, as in the USA and in other large countries, there are many varieties of the same language. India also has many different languages spoken altogether in the same country. When interacting with such people, it is important to slow down. A good suggestion for you is to separate each word. Make sure you pause between words. Imagine that you are talking to an older person who is hard of hearing. If you are talking to your grandmother who is 90 years old who cannot hear so well, you are going to slow down and speak louder. This can be applied to speaking with someone who has a different mother tongue than you.

In the communication process, it is important for both the speaker and the listener to do their part in making sure that the message is delivered. As we talked about, the speaker needs to use simple words and keep the message short and clear. However, he/she also needs to be aware of how the listener is receiving the message. If the listener is looking confused, the speaker needs to change his way of speaking. Confusion can be common when interacting with people from other cultures, languages, dialects, and countries. It is especially important to look at the eyes of your listener. If the eyes look lost or the eyes are looking away, it might mean he/she does not understand. Look at the body language too. If he/she is looking down at his/her feet or he/she is moving the body or playing with the hands, he/she might not understand you. Shifting the body might be a sign that he/she does not understand fully and is bored. If you see any of these signs, the speaker should slow down, be more direct, use different vocabulary words, or use your hands to help communicate his/her message.

When someone from a different language or culture is speaking to you, his/her speech might be slower. It is easy to be impatient and distracted and you might stop listening entirely. Do your best to listen actively to this person. Do not think about all the grammar mistakes and never correct the mistakes unless he/she asks you to. Do not interrupt someone until he/she has finished with the idea. It can be hard for a person of a different culture to communicate and the communication process gets worse when someone does not listen. There is a reason why you have two ears and only one mouth.

Lastly, do not use words or expressions that are familiar in your language but not in another person's language. In American English, there are many expressions that do not have literal meanings. For example: "Yesterday, I ran into my friend at the supermarket." This does not mean that you crashed into your friend. It means you saw your friend after a long time. Many cultures have these expressions that are hard for someone from a different culture to understand. Instead, use simple language.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 08

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever interacted with someone from a different culture? How was it? What were the difficulties? Was it frustrating for you? Why?
- ❖ Reflection: Can you think of some examples of how your cultural body language may be confusing to someone from a different culture?

SELF- TEST 08

15. Scenario: You are working for a global company and you have an interaction with your client from China. What is one thing to avoid?
- a. Only talking louder
 - b. Correct his/her grammar so he/she can speak clear English
 - c. Speak slowly
 - d. Use simple language that is easier to understand
16. Scenario: After communicating with a client from Russia, you are not sure if he understood your communication correctly. What is one thing you should do?
- a. Ask him if he has any questions
 - b. Call him and tell him every detail of your communication, again, just so he understands
 - c. Speak normally like you would with any person from your country
 - d. Smile and appear friendly and tell him it is okay if he needs you to repeat the information again

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 08

15. Why is it important to understand other cultures in global business?
16. What is one tip/suggestion to improve communication between two people of different cultures?

SUMMARY

In this section, we explored how to use your voice. You learned how to organize what you will say to have the most impact on your listener. You also learned how to use your body to match what you are saying. We also talked about the communication process and how to be successful and ethical. We also learned how to develop trust with another person and how to talk with someone from a different culture.

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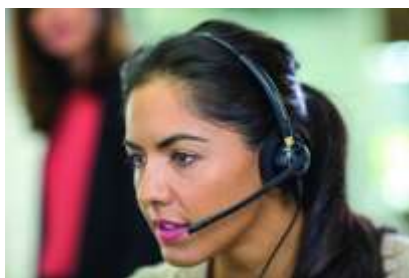
UNIT 01-03: WORKING WITH CUSTOMERS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Identify** the basics of excelling at customer service
- ❖ **Describe** the ways to develop empathy for better communication
- ❖ **Recall** the types of questions and Ask effective questions
- ❖ **Master** the art of saying “no”
- ❖ **Recall** and **Apply** the techniques for dealing with angry customers or people

INTRODUCTION



In business, you will have to work with customers or clients. Clients or customers are people who use your services. You might call your customers or talk to them in person. You must have great body language and verbal skills to work with customers properly. Without good customer service, business can be lost and relationships broken. When you are purchasing anything or receiving any service, it is the people you always remember. In this section, let us go through some basics of how to work properly with people, especially from a business perspective.

03-01: UNDERSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE BASICS

First of all, the first impression matters. People always remember the first image they have of you. If you are meeting someone for the first time, a proper handshake is acceptable. You should smile and look confident. The customs might change based on your country or region, so make sure to do what is accepted in your culture. Smiling is usually considered friendly all over the world and a nice smile will communicate that you are a nice person.

Do you remember the suggestion that you should listen more than speak? This is true because you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Customers and clients should be the most important people you work with because they give you business. Without them, your business has no future. Listening to angry customers becomes very

important, as upset people generally want to be heard. If you start arguing or yelling at an angry customer, the situation will only get worse. Listening is very important in stressful times. But what does it really mean to listen?

Listening should be active. Active means that you are focusing on the words, the body language and the main point of the listener. What are they really trying to say? Most people do not have active listening because they are only thinking of what they want to say in response or they interrupt the other person. Active listening is a skill that many people do not have.



When you listen actively to your customers, even the difficult customers who are not happy, you will learn so much about them that you can ask them questions. Asking questions shows that you were listening to them. They will feel respected if you ask them questions about something they had said. For example, you can ask: “When you said _____, what did you mean?” “Tell me more about _____.” If your customers or clients say something that you do not understand, it is important that you ask them what they mean. For example: “What do you mean?” “How would you like me to help?” After asking a question, you need to listen. Do your best not to interrupt.

Customers and clients have many options and might go to another company. So, it is important to do more than the customers expect you to do so that they will not leave you. When you have better service than a different company with the same products, your customers will stay loyal to you. This is called “exceeding expectations.” If you exceed expectations, your customers or clients will be happy. This means doing more than the customers ask, even when they do not ask for it. For example, if you work at a supermarket and your customers ask where the milk is located, you should tell them where to find the milk. However, in order to exceed expectations, you can ask them: “Do you need anything else?” Or, imagine that you work for a technology company. If your customers are not happy with your product, after listening to them, you could offer them a different product or even a full refund.

When you work with customers and clients, making money should not be the final goal. Building a relationship should be the final goal. When you put time and energy into a relationship, customers and clients will be so happy that they continue to support your business. If you listen, ask questions, and solve the problems of your customers, they will feel better. Relationships can be hard to build if your customers are not happy. In order to maintain the relationship, you should not transfer the customers to another person or ignore them. Sometimes we pretend to act busy or transfer the angry customer to another person. Customers and clients like to work directly with someone. They will appreciate it if you choose to listen to them and solve their problem without ignoring them or transferring their call. The best things to do are to listen, ask questions and solve the problems directly.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever talked to someone (maybe a friend or family member) and you stopped listening to him/her? Why did you stop listening? What is something better you could have done in that situation?
- ❖ Imagine that you work as a customer service representative for a company. An angry customer calls to complain. What is one bad thing you should avoid doing with that customer? What is one good thing you should do to help that customer?

SELF-TEST 01

1. Scenario: You are working at a company as a service customer representative. You are on the phone with an angry customer. He/she has called many times and you do not know what to do. What is the best way to work with them?
 - a. Say: "Please do not call again. I cannot help you."
 - b. Say: "Sorry I cannot help you and transfer them to your boss."
 - c. Say: "I will do my best to answer your problem or I will find someone who can help you."
 - d. Share your frustrations because you cannot help them
2. Scenario: You are working for a company as a salesperson. It is your job to sell as much as possible. A customer comes to your store and complains about the product. What is the first reaction you should have?
 - a. Because the customer is upset, you also get upset and frown
 - b. Smile and listen to the customer
 - c. Cross your arms in front of your chest
 - d. Tell them at this is a big problem

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. What is the difference between helping a customer and debating/arguing with him/her?

2. In your own words, what does good customer service mean? Give some examples of what good customer service looks like.

03-02: COMMUNICATING EMPATHETICALLY

Having a good relationship with your customers is very important. When you start to work with customers, you will need to make sure the relationship is maintained. You can do this through showing empathy. Empathy means to show that you understand another person's emotions and feelings. Many times, customers need to know that a company understands them, hears them, and wants to help them. If you can develop empathy with your client/customer, then you will have a better relationship and your communication will be better. However, being empathetic (or developing empathy) requires skills and is not easy for all people. Let us learn some ways to develop more empathy with anyone you talk to.



First of all, if you are working for a customer service business, it will be important to listen to your customers to understand what they need and how they are feeling. Are they complaining about a product? Do they need you to fix something? Do they have a problem with a person or the product? In order to understand how they feel, you first need to listen to them. You must be 100% committed to your listener.

After you understand your customers, you can begin to solve their problems. When you solve a customer's/client's problem, you should start the conversation in an empathetic way. You can do this by acknowledging (or stating) his/her feelings. For example, if your customer is not happy, the first thing you should say should be: "I am sorry you are not happy." You need to acknowledge his/her feelings first. Another example might be if a customer is angry because the product is not working properly. As a customer service agent, you can say: "I am sorry the product is not working properly and I can sense that you are upset." You should show concern for the customers' feelings. This is all part of empathetic communication.

When an angry customer comes into a store or calls a customer care number on a product, there are still more ways to be empathetic. Another way to be more empathetic is to show concern over a client's efforts. For example, if a customer has tried to find any solution to the problem, you should acknowledge that. Usually, a customer has

already tried to fix the problem before he/she called the customer care number. In any way you can, tell the customer he/she did a great job in trying to fix the problem. For example, let us say that a customer has called in to say that he/she tried to fix a problem but it did not work. As we learned before, you should first acknowledge his/her feelings. “I am sorry you are upset.” Second, you should acknowledge what he/she already did to solve the problem. You can say something like: “Good job in trying to fix the mistake.”

The last thing you should do to help a customer is to solve his/her problem. For example, if a customer calls in saying he/she is not happy with a broken product, after acknowledging his/her feelings and efforts, you should try to solve the problem. The next thing that you should say should be: “I want to help you solve this problem.” Do not be quick to transfer his/her call to someone else. Do everything you can do solve the problem first.

In summary, when working with angry customers, you should 1) acknowledge their feelings, 2) acknowledge their efforts at trying to solve the problem, and 3) help them to fix the problem. Even with all of this, there is something more you can do.

As we learned, the language you use is very important. First, use language that is focused on the listener. Sentences that start with the word “you” help a listener feel empowered. What that means is that the listener will want to do something to solve the problem. Instead of saying boring rules and policies, tell the listener what he/she can do to solve the problem. For example, if a customer calls in to say that a product is broken and he/she wants a refund, a bad way to handle the situation would be to say: “Refunds are available for customers only after three weeks with the online form.” This is just a fact and does not help the customer feel inspired and excited to fix the problem. A better way to handle the situation would be to start a sentence with “you” and include a positive action the customer can take. “You can receive a refund up to three weeks if you fill in the form.” In summary, the best way to help the customer is to use listener-focused language: “You can” + specific action the customer can take.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: When you talk to your friends or family members about a problem, do you think you use language that is focused on blaming a person or on finding a solution?
- ❖ Reflection: How often do you acknowledge a person’s feelings when talking to him/her? Do you show concern for his/her feelings?

SELF-TEST 02

3. Scenario: You are working for a telecommunications company. An angry customer is on the phone, complaining that her product did not work. What is the best way to respond to her?
 - a. First, listen patiently and then offer a solution
 - b. First listen patiently then respond to their emotional state by trying to see things from their point of view
 - c. First, listen then say “I am angry.”
 - d. First, listen then say “We will not fix the problem until you take some action steps.”
4. Scenario: You are working for a telecommunication company. Which statement is the best example of listener-centered language that you can use with your customer?
 - a. “We cannot solve your problem. Sorry.”
 - b. “I don’t think you handled the product correctly.”
 - c. “You can fix the problem by reading the manual included in the product.”
 - d. “There is some rule about how to properly use the product.”

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. What is the definition of empathy?
4. What is the difference between having a conversation focused on the speaker (the customer service representative) and a conversation focused on the listener (customer)?

03-03: ASKING QUESTIONS TO UNDERSTAND PROBLEMS

Part of being a good listener is to ask great questions. Asking questions helps us to understand people so that we can help them better. When you work with clients and customers, you need to become good at asking questions. In fact, to have any good conversation, you must ask questions in general. Imagine any conversation in which one of you is not asking questions. It would be very boring. Questions get information from people and also help keep the conversation moving forward. Also, when someone asks you questions, you build respect with someone because he/she learns that you are listening. Would you trust someone who asks you questions to understand a problem or would you prefer nobody asks you questions? Let us explore the types of questions you can ask. Let us talk about four types that are useful in working with customers as a customer service representative.

The first type of question is an open-ended question. This type of question does not require any response. This type of question does not need a “yes” or “no” response. These questions do not start with “who,” “what,” “when,” or “where.” Open-ended

means “open.” You are open to hearing anything. A great way to start an open-ended question is: “Tell me more about _____.” This opens up the conversation and gets the other person to speak. If you want to learn more about open-ended questions, you can look them up on the Internet: “Open-ended question examples.” This type of question is really useful when working with customers who do not know what the real problem is. If a customer is calling and he/she is not sure about the real problem, you can ask open-ended questions to get him/her to talk more to get more information. This is a great way to start a conversation with your customer. First, ask an open-ended question.

The second type of question is a closed question. A closed question is opposite to an open-ended question. Closed questions require direct answers about who, what, when, or where. Another way to ask a closed question is in a way that requires a “yes” or a “no” answer. Closed questions are useful to ask when you need specific information from someone. Let us say that your customer is not happy with a product. After letting your customer talk, you can ask a closed-question. An example of a closed question is: “Do you want a replacement product?”

The third type of question is a follow-up question. Follow-up questions, as the name implies, “follow” other questions. For example, if your customer is talking about something and you want to know more information, you can ask a follow-up question. An example of a follow-up question is: “When you said you weren’t happy with the product, what would you like me to do exactly?” Follow-up questions can be open-ended questions but just follow something you heard. If open-ended questions get a conversation started, then follow-up questions keep the conversation going longer.

The fourth type of question is a feedback question. This type of question is used when you need “feedback” or information about your services or about what the customer needs. For example, if you provided some service to a client and you want to know what he/she thought about your services, you can ask the customer a feedback question. A feedback question might be: “What did you think about the services?” “Were you satisfied with the services?” “Would you like me to send you a replacement product?” Feedback questions can be either open-ended or closed questions. Both are OK. The main point is that they gather information or feedback.

After any question, it is best to repeat what your customer said. You can follow this formula: “You are saying that _____?” If you asked your customer a closed question, for example, repeat his/her answer. For example, think that the question to the customer is: “Do you want a replacement product?” and the customer’s answer is:

“Yes.” The person talking to the customer should say: “You are saying that you want a replacement product?” By repeating what you hear, you are helping the customer to feel respected and valued.

Lastly, when asking questions to customers, you should help them to discover the answer to their problem. An example of how to do this might be: “Have you tried to do this? Have you tried to do that?” It is better to ask questions about possible solutions than to offer free advice to customers about how they should do something. Even though it is common in India to offer advice, international customers will feel more empowered if you ask them questions about solutions.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Experiment: This week, ask your friend some closed and open-ended questions. Later, ask that friend which question he/she preferred and why he/she prefers it
- ❖ In which situations is it best to ask open-ended questions? Give at least one example. In which situations is it best to ask closed questions? Give at least one example.

SELF-TEST 03

5. Scenario: You work for a customer care center. One customer is calling to complain about your product but you are not sure what the problem is. What type of question is best to start with to identify the problem?
 - a. Open-ended question: “Can you explain what the problem is, please?”
 - b. Closed: “Is the problem with the battery?”
 - c. Follow-up: “Can you tell me more about what you said about the product’s problem?”
 - d. Feedback: “What else would you like me to do for you today?”
6. Scenario: You are working for a company and you want to ask your co-workers about a detail of the project. Which type of question is best to ask?
 - a. Open-ended: “What is happening with the project?”
 - b. Closed: “Is the report at least 2 pages long?”
 - c. Follow-up: “Can you tell me what happened after you finished writing the report, please?”
 - d. Feedback: “Do I need to do anything more to help you?”

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. What is the definition of a closed question? Give an example.
6. What is the definition of an open-ended question? Give an example.

03-04: DENYING REQUESTS

To deny means to say “no.” As a customer service agent, you cannot say “yes” to every customer. “No” is a hard answer to receive when you really want something. Saying “no” might be necessary sometimes because you do not want to break the company’s policy or rules. For example, if there is a rule in your technology company that you cannot give refunds (money back) on any product, then you will have to follow the rules. If an angry customer calls and wants his/her money back, you will have to learn how to say “no.” Let us learn the art of saying “no.”

First thing you need to do when learning to say no is to repeat what the customer wants. Just like you repeat a customer’s answer to your questions, you also repeat your customer’s request. If the customer’s request is to receive a replacement product, then you should repeat the request. For example, you can say: “So, you are saying that you want a replacement product?” By repeating your customer’s request, you are helping him/her to feel better by making him/her feel validated before you have to say “no.”

After you have repeated the customer’s request, give the reason why you have to say “no.” Receiving a “no” when you want to hear a “yes” is difficult enough. Customers or clients will feel better if there is a reason for the denial. When you say “no” to your customers without giving any reason, customers might feel you do not want to help them. However, giving a reason WHY for your saying NO helps the customer.

After giving a reason, you should always tell the customer what positive things you or he/she can do to help solve the problem. If you want to keep your customer, always try to be positive. There is usually a different option to solve the problem. For example, if your customer wants a refund (full money back) and you cannot give a refund, maybe you can give a replacement product. Make sure you have explored all options. This helps the customer feel validated and respected.

Lastly, if you have to deny a request in person, make sure your words match your body language. If you want to sound polite and nice, make sure your body language is saying the same thing. This is important because if your words and your body language are saying different things, people might not believe you.

In summary, this is how you should deny a request: First, rephrase the request (say their words in a different way of what you heard). Next, repeat what your customers want in a different way. Ask them to repeat the request if you are confused. Then, give a reason for the denial. Say why you are saying “no.” After that, give them a different choice. End the conversation by giving any solution you see fit.

Mastering this technique is really hard to do but is very important. If you can treat your customers with respect, they will stay with your business for a long time.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever had to tell someone “no?” Was it hard? Why or why not?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time your friend asks you to do something, say “no.” Don’t give any explanation. Later, ask your friend how he/she felt. When a different friend asks you another favour, this time say “no” and give a valid reason why you said no. Later, ask that friend how he/she felt. Reflection: Did you find a difference in the first friend’s response and the second friend’s response?

SELF-TEST 04

7. Which is not something you should NOT do when denying customer’s requests?
 - a. Rephrase
 - b. Control
 - c. Explain
 - d. Refuse
8. What should be your goal when denying customer’s requests?
 - a. Avoid disappointing them
 - b. Say “no” as quickly as possible
 - c. Follow your company’s policies/rules
 - d. Make sure the customer understands

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. True/false: To deny a customer means to say “yes” all the time. Explain your answer.
8. When denying a request, what does it mean to change a “no” to a “yes?”

03-05: COPING WITH ANGRY CUSTOMERS

Nobody likes to talk to an angry person, but in business, sometimes customers get angry. Customers might get angry when they do not receive something they want, when communication is not good, or when the company makes a mistake. Nothing is perfect and it might happen that a customer gets angry. If you work with an angry customer, your first reaction might be to get angry as well or to yell in frustration. However, let us go through some tips on how to talk effectively to angry customers, as you are likely to have to do it for your job. You might talk to an angry customer on the phone or in person.

First, remember not to take anything personally. Suppose you work as a customer service representative for a company and an angry customer calls you. The customer

does not know you personally so his/her anger is not directed at you. You might be the first person to hear an angry customer's words but the problem is not your fault.



Knowing that the problem is not yours personally, you will be able to take control of the situation in an effective manner. If you take the customer's anger personally, you might act defensive. The first rule in working with angry customers is to always be professional. Not taking anything personally helps you to stay professional. You can solve a problem better if you do not believe you personally created the problem.

If you are talking to a customer or client face-to-face, you should talk to your angry customer in a private location. Angry customers love an audience because it helps them to attack a company. If other people get involved, the customer feels like the company might do something about the problem. Have you ever seen an angry child asking the mother or father to do something for them in public? Sometimes, the child gets what he/she wants because the parents do not want to cause a scene in public. So, if you want to solve a problem effectively, try to find a quiet place to resolve the problem. If you cannot find a quiet place, do not be intimidated to give the customer what he/she wants if you cannot give that to him/her. For example, if the customer wants a full refund on his/her broken product and it is against the company's policy to provide full refunds, then do not give the refund just to keep him/her quiet.

As you are talking to an angry customer on the phone or in person, the hardest thing to do (but also the most important) is to remain calm. There is an expression that you cannot put out a fire with another fire. If your client or customer is angry (he/she is "on fire"), you should not add fuel to the fire by getting angry as well. As humans, it is a natural reaction to get angry when someone is yelling at you. In psychological terms, we call this "fight or flight." This means that when humans are put in a stressful situation, their first reactions will either be to "fight" or to "flight" (run away). However, in order to effectively help that customer, you cannot run away. You need to stay with the customer and remain calm (not fight).



Staying calm can be the hardest thing to do. You can remain calm by breathing, keeping your voice steady (not yelling in a high pitch), and not attacking the customer. Many times in fights, people yell by saying things like: “you_____.” They might blame you for something. They might personally attack you. It might feel as if they are throwing arrows at you and the only way seems to fight back. However, resist the urge to fight and be calm. If you are talking to your customer face-to-face, try smiling to your customer. Use body language that is open. Do not cross your arms in front of your chest, show concern or empathy in your eyes, and smile. If you are talking to your customer on the phone, never blame your customer by starting sentences with “you.” You can only put out a fire by putting calming water on it.

In summary, anytime your customer is angry, has a problem, or asks you to solve a problem, you should listen, apologize, and help him/her solve the problem in a positive way. Do not forget to say “thank you” to your customer when you have finished.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever spoken to a friend or a family member who was angry? What was your first reaction when speaking with him/her? Did you remain calm? Why or why not?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time a friend or a family member comes to talk to you about a problem he/she is facing (when he/she is angry), say to him/her: “I am sorry you are going through this.” Watch your friend or family member. How did he/she react? Did he/she like that you apologized?

SELF-TEST 05

9. Scenario: You are a marketing manager of a company and you have accidentally wrote something that was not true about your company’s services. A customer called in to express his/her frustration. What is the best way to handle this situation?
 - a. Blame your co-worker who was supposed to check and verify the information
 - b. Say that you are very upset about the situation
 - c. Apologize to the customer
 - d. Put the customer on hold until you are more calm
10. Scenario: You are a customer service representative and you have helped an angry customer resolve the issue. What is the best way to end the conversation?
 - a. Minimize their problem (make the problem less important)
 - b. Explain how you can help
 - c. Ask open-ended questions
 - d. Talk about the weather

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9. When working with an upset customer, what do you think the customer feels after you listened to him/her?
10. When you are speaking face-to-face, why is it important to speak in a private location?

SUMMARY

The relationship between a customer/client and the business is very important. Customers are very important to any business and keeping them happy will help your business. In this section, we learned how to listen to and understand your customers so that they are happy. You can apply these skills to your friends or family members as well.

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Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course

UNIT 01-04: DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL TELEPHONE SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Acquire** and **develop** your telephone skills required in the business world
- ❖ **Use** your cell phone in a professional manner
- ❖ Make **use** of voice mail
- ❖ **Explain** the terms screening, holding, and transferring phone calls

INTRODUCTION



Using a telephone is something everyone does every day. Most people have cell phones and businesses have business company phones. How you talk to your friends and family on your cell phone is very different from how you should use the company phones. If you have a job in a company where you have to use a professional phone, there are certain things you will have to master to be a professional. Using a company phone is not as simple as using a cell phone. How you talk to your customers and clients on the phone is very important. Let us go through some specific stages of how to use the telephone.

04-01: PLACING TELEPHONE CALLS

First, let us say you need to call someone inside or outside the company. It could be a customer, a client or a co-worker/colleague.



How do you do that? First thing to do before you call is to know the purpose of the phone call. Why are you calling? If you do not know the reason why you are calling, it is a waste of time. In business, time is very important. On a piece of paper, you should

write down: the reason why you are calling (the main idea), some key details or specific information related to that main idea, and then any questions you have for the other person. For example, suppose you need to call a client for a meeting. On a piece of paper, you could write something like this:

- ❖ Main idea: Tell client about the meeting
- ❖ Details: Meeting is at 5 pm on Thursday. Come with documents
- ❖ Questions: Do you have two forms of identity?

After you know why you are calling and have a plan, the next step is to make sure you dial the correct number. Many times, people call a number but do not look at the numbers carefully. This means they might call another person and therefore waste more time.

It is a good idea to allow the phone to ring at least five to six times until you hang up. The reason why this is a good idea is because many times, people who receive the phone call need more time to answer the phone if they are driving or busy at the moment. When you call, wait some time.

- ❖ When the other person receives your call, do you know the first thing you should do? Introduce yourself. Do not start talking about the main idea/purpose of your call without giving your name, company, and position. This allows the other person to know who you are. If the receiving person does not know you, how is he/she supposed to understand the phone call? Here is an example of how to introduce yourself properly: “Hello. Good morning/afternoon/evening. This is __ (your name) ____, the __ (job title) __ for ____ (your company’s name) ____ company.” Here is the complete example: “Hello. Good afternoon. This is Michelle, the secretary from Happy Travels Travel Agency.”
- ❖ The second thing you should do after introducing yourself is to ask if the specific person you want is there. For example, you can ask: “Is this __ (person’s name) __?” Or: “May I speak with __ (person’s name) ____?” This makes sure that you are speaking to the correct person. Why waste your time talking to someone if he/she is not the correct person? What if the customer’s father answers the phone? Make sure you are speaking to the right person.
- ❖ The third thing you need to do is to ask if it is a good time to talk. Many times, people are busy. When you ask, this shows that you respect your customer. Here is an example of how to ask: “Is this a good time to talk?” or “Do you have some time to talk?”
- ❖ The fourth thing to do is to look at the notes you wrote down before the phone call. Say the main idea, the specific details/information that the customer or client needs to know, and ask any questions you have.

- ❖ Lastly, ask the customer or client if he/she has any questions. Say thank you for his/her time. It might look something like this: “Do you have any questions? Thank you for your time. Have a good day.”

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: When making a phone call to someone, how many times do you allow the phone to ring before you hang up?
- ❖ Experiment: Practice introducing yourself on the phone formally when you make a call to one of your friends. Use the professional language used in this section. Use any company and job title just for practice. For the reason why you are calling, you can think of any reason like you want to see if your friend is available for tea. For example: “Hi. This is Michelle from Happy Travels Travel Company. Is Jyoti available? I would like to invite her for tea. Can you tell her to call me back?”

SELF-TEST 01

1. What does placing a phone call mean?
 - a. To receive a call
 - b. To make a call
 - c. To call someone
 - d. Letting the phone ring many times
2. Why is it important to introduce yourself when you call someone?
 - a. So that the other person knows who you are
 - b. So that the other person feels more comfortable
 - c. So that the other person has a name if he/she needs to follow-up with something (a reference person)
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. Why is it important to keep your business phone call short? Give two reasons.
2. Why is giving your first name, job title, and company name important when making a business call?

04-02: RECEIVING TELEPHONE CALLS

Now, let us talk about how to receive a phone call in a professional way. Many people think this is an easy skill, but to do it in a professional way is a little more difficult.

First thing you should do when you answer the phone is to have a standard greeting. This could be: “*Good morning/afternoon/evening. This is __ (your name) __ the __ (job title) __ from __ (name of company) __ company. How can I help you?*” This greeting makes it easy for the caller to feel comfortable and to know who you are. And, because you are saying this greeting for every phone call, it becomes easy. Here is an example:

“Hi. This is Gaurav, the director of Simple Solutions.” As you can see, the greeting is very similar to the greeting you use when you place the phone call. These suggestions are for formal phone calls for work or business. If you receive or give phone calls on your cell phone, you can answer the same way.

When you receive a phone call, you are not the person who has the plan. You are simply receiving the call in a nice way. Make sure you listen to your caller and ask what he/she wants. Your caller is the person who has the agenda of what he/she wants to say. If the caller asks a question, you should answer. Many people make the mistake of not paying attention when they receive a phone call. They prefer to check their cell phones, look around, eat food, or even worse, not listen. When you receive a phone call, 100% of your energies should be on the caller. Your job is to listen and respond to what the caller wants. If your caller is calling at a bad time, tell the caller that this is a bad time. Give your caller a better time to call back.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: When someone calls you, do you have a standard greeting, like “Good morning/afternoon/evening!” or “Hello. This is ___(your name)_____.” Is a greeting important when receiving a phone call (in both formal and informal situations)?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time a friend calls you, practice with a standard greeting like your first name, an imaginary job title, and an imaginary company. You can say something like this: “Hello. This is (your name), the (your job title) from (your company). How can I help you?”

SELF-TEST 02

3. Scenario: You are a receptionist at an office and it is your job to answer the general phone line. One person calls and you are not sure what the caller wants. What do you do?
 - a. You tell the caller you cannot help him/her and end the conversation
 - b. You politely ask the caller what his/her business is
 - c. Ask them if you can put him/her on hold while you ask someone at the office who can help him/her
 - d. Transfer the call directly to the manager

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. Which types of greetings are important for formal calls? For informal calls? Give specific things you should say when you receive a formal call (from a boss, manager, elder, or teacher) and when you receive an informal call (from friends or other family members).
4. Why is it important to focus on your caller when you receive a phone call?

04-03: USING VOICE MAIL

Let us know about how to use voice mail. If you have your own phone when you are working at a company, chances are you will have your own phone. Most business phones have a voice mail system included on their phones. Voice mail is used when you cannot answer a phone call. The caller leaves a message on the voice mail. Voice mail is a system and it should be personal. For example, if someone is calling and there is no personal voice mail, then the caller has no way to know who that person is and he/she cannot give important information. Without voice mail, a caller has to call again and again until the person answers the phone. How many times have you called someone and they did not answer the phone and you had to try calling again and again? That wastes a lot of time. Having a voice mail allows a caller to call only one time if the person does not answer because he/she can leave a message. There are specific elements in a voice mail system that should be included when someone calls. Let us know about them right now.



The first thing that should be included is your first name, your job title, and the name of your company. This allows the caller to know he/she has called the correct person.

Make sure the voice mail greeting is short. Nobody wants to call and then listen to a long voice mail message...he/she may get bored. As mentioned earlier, you should have a simple greeting. Here is an example of a short and simple voice mail system.

“Hello. You have reached___(your first name)_____the___(your job title)_____at_____(your company)_____. I am not at my phone right now. Please leave a detailed message and a phone number and good time to return your call. Thank you. Have a nice day.”

It is better not to say your last name in your voice message because you cannot trust everyone who calls, especially if you answer phones for your job. Many receptionists who answer phones should never include their last name on their voice mail greetings or when they receive a call.

Lastly, check your voice mail at least once every day and return your phone calls within twenty four hours. This is the standard business protocol.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Experiment: If you have not already, set up a personal voice mail on your cell phone. If it is your personal cell phone, say something like: “Hello. You have reached __ (your name) _____’s phone. I am not here right now but please give your name, any important information, your phone number and a good time to return your call. Have a nice day!”

SELF-TEST 03

4. Scenario: You are in your work office working on an important project at work that is due tomorrow. However, you are having a hard time concentrating on the project because you have been interrupted by a number of phone calls. What should you do?
 - a. Make sure your phone has a voice message and listen to the voice messages tomorrow
 - b. Answer every phone call because you think each call might be important
 - c. Ask a friend to answer the phone for you
 - d. Look at the phone number and only answer the calls that look important
5. What is the purpose of having a voice mail?
 - a. So that you can receive important information when you are not answering your phone or are away from your office
 - b. So that the caller does not have to try calling again and again until you answer...they can simply leave 1 message and wait for your reply later
 - c. So that you can be prepared when you return the phone call with the information the caller requested
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. Why is it important to return any missed calls within 24 hours?
6. Is having a voice mail system important? Why or why not? Think about voice mail for both formal situations (for your work phone) and for your personal life (for your cell phone or home phone). Are both important?

04-04: LEAVING PROFESSIONAL MESSAGES

In many countries, when you make a phone call, you will have to leave a voice message if the receiver does not answer the phone. Or, you may leave a message with a different person if the person you want to talk to is not available. There is certain information that you must put in your message in order for it to be professional and give the person what he/she needs to keep business flowing.

If you have to leave a message on a voice mail system, you should first remember to speak slowly and clearly. If you speak fast and blur your words together, then the other person will not be able to understand your message. He/she will have to waste time

calling you again just to ask about the information you requested. Speak slowly enough so that the other person can write the information down on a piece of paper with little difficulty.



When you leave a message, you should say facts. We call this objective information, because you are just sharing facts. Do not share any personal feelings in a voice message. You can share those things in person. You should only share this information: your first and last name (there may be more than one person with your first name), the date and time, why you are calling, any information you need (the main points), your phone number, and a good time to return your call. Repeat the phone number at least twice so that the other person at least has the phone number, which is the most important. This allows the other person to know exactly who you are, what you need, how to return your call, and when to return your call. The whole message should be shorter; less than two minutes is good. If the message is long or includes information you can talk about in person, the receiving person might get bored listening to your message. For example, if you call because you need a document, you should say you need a document in the message. You do not need to go into a long monologue about why you need the document or anything else that you can talk about in person. A message is supposed to be clear, direct, and short. Here is an example message you can leave:

“Hi Pratik. This is Michelle Jacobson. It is Tuesday March 16th. I need some documents for you to sign. Please call me back at 8564751224 Monday-Friday between 5-9 pm. Thank you.”

Opposite of a good voice message is a bad message. A bad voice message does not have any information about what the caller needs, is unclear, is spoken too fast and is not specific. Here is an example of a bad voice mail message:

“Hi Pratik. I need that information. I am very upset that you have not provided the information sooner. Call me back anytime.”

In this example voice mail, the caller shared her feelings. Remember, a good voice mail only includes facts. Also, the caller said she needed “the information.” What information? It is not very clear. Also, the caller did not provide her name, give her phone number, or any specific time to call back. That is not a good message at all.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Experiment: Call a friend who has a voice mail system. Practice leaving a professional phone message on his/her cell phone. Include all the information required. Ask your friend to listen to the message and to write the information down on a piece of paper. Ask your friend if it was clear. If your friend does not have a voice mail system, record a message on your smart phone recorder and have your friend listen to that. Did your friend understand the message? Was your voice clear? Was the message short?

SELF-TEST 04

6. What is a voice mail?
 - a. A system that allows a person to record a message when someone doesn't answer their phone
 - b. An app for your smart phone
 - c. Mail for your voice
 - d. All of the above
7. Why is it important to speak slowly when leaving a voice message?
 - a. So that the other person knows exactly what you need
 - b. So that your message is clear
 - c. So that the other person doesn't have to waste time listening to your message again and again
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. What is one benefit (good thing) of having a voice mail?
8. What is the difference between a bad voice mail message and a good voice mail message? Give one example of a bad message and one example of a good message. What is the difference?

04-05: SCREENING, HOLDING, AND TRANSFERRING PHONE CALLS

If you answer a company phone for your job, the next skills are very important. You can also use these skills when you are on your personal cell phone. People who are receptionists need to know if they should answer the phone or not. Even if they answer a phone call, they need to know what to do if they cannot help the person.

First, screening is a skill that means the receiver needs to gather specific information before he/she answers the phone call. One way the receiving person can get information is to see who is calling. Most phones have a caller ID. This means the number or even the name of the person will be seen on the screen as the person calls. Screening is important because sometimes you will be able to better help a person if you know who

is calling. For example, if you are a receptionist for a company and you know the president or CEO is expecting a phone call from a specific person, you can identify the caller from the caller ID. When that specific person calls, you will tell the president/CEO to be ready.

Another way to screen a call is not to answer the call. Instead, wait for the person to leave a message and listen to the message. See what he/she needs. In this way, you will be ready with the information required by the caller when you call back. This type of screening is useful when you are not sure what the person needs and need more time to process the request.

Holding a call means to temporarily put the person in a waiting queue. There are a few reasons why you may do this. One reason is that another important phone call that cannot wait came through on the same line. Another reason why you may put someone on hold is because the caller needs some information you do not have and you need to get the information or ask someone for help. You can say something like: *“Please wait while I get the information you need. I need to put you on hold for a short period. Please hold.”* The last reason why you may put someone on hold is that you need to refer the caller to a different person. You temporarily put the caller on hold while you transfer him/her to a different person. For example, if you are a receptionist and someone calls and wants to speak to a specific person, you tell him/her you will put him/her on hold while you transfer him/her. You can say something like: *“Excuse me. I will temporarily put you on hold while I transfer you to Mr. Sridharan.”*

In summary, remember that when using the telephone, you need to be very polite to your caller. Nobody likes to be put on hold and so it is your job to be very considerate of the other person’s time and feelings. Be always professional.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- ❖ Experiment: The next time your friend calls, politely tell him/her that you need to put him/her on hold. Say something like: “Sorry. I need to take this other call. I will call you back shortly.” Later, ask your friend if he/she felt respected. Is there anything you can improve on?

SELF-TEST 05

8. 41) What does “screening” mean?
 - a. To put a caller on hold
 - b. To transfer a caller to another person
 - c. To decide what to do with the phone call before they answer it
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9. Imagine you are a receptionist of a large company. All the general phone calls come to you first. Why is it important to screen phone calls for the company?
10. What is a polite thing to say to a person before you transfer him/her or put him/her on hold? What are some specific words that are polite which you can use with your caller?

SUMMARY

Many people use a cell phone for personal use, but not many know how to use a phone in a professional manner. The skills presented in this section can be used for a company but also for professional conversations you have on your cell phone.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Screening**= the process of deciding if you transfer the call, take a message for someone else, or put them on hold
- ❖ **Transfer**= the process of giving the call to the appropriate person
- ❖ **Hold**= Making the caller wait until you are less busy
- ❖ **Place a call**= to call someone
- ❖ **Hang up**= end telephone conversation

REFERENCES

MOOCs

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YOUTUBE VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCBF659RMtg>

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WIKIPEDIA

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voicemail>

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BOOKS

“Effective Telephone Skills” by Thomas J. Farrell

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 01-05: IMPROVING INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Explain** the importance of improving informal communication skills and **State** the ways of communicating informally
- ❖ **Modify** the way you listen to become a better listener
- ❖ **Identify** your problems while listening to others and acquire the techniques for becoming a better listener
- ❖ **State** the need for persuading others and Employ the strategies to be a more effective speaker
- ❖ **Explain** the use of negotiation skills in formal and informal situations
- ❖ **Implement** the techniques for managing conflict in real life situations
- ❖ **Recall** and **Use** the techniques for participating in meetings successfully and introducing yourself and others effectively in your professional life

INTRODUCTION



Communication happens everywhere. Just focusing on improving your communication skills at the workplace is important, but it is also important to practice your skills outside the work. How you communicate in the canteen, with your friends, and with your family members only adds to your success at the workplace. They say work success is much more than the technical skills you have. The soft skills, or people skills, that you have are more important. These are also known as informal communication skills. Your ability to make friends with different people, your ability to persuade someone to do something and to manage conflict among your friends helps you to be successful in your career as well as in your personal life. This section will focus on how to improve your informal communication.

05-01: COMMUNICATING INFORMALLY

When you are working, there are going to be both formal and informal situations. You might go to the company canteen. You might get tea or food with your colleagues/co-

workers. Those are examples of informal communication. All informal communication falls into one of the three categories.

The first category is to inform. Informing means to talk about yourself. Maybe you are talking to your co-workers about something, like about your work projects or about what is going on with your family. We are constantly promoting ourselves by telling others who we are. Are you a family person? Do you like dogs? Do you like to play cricket? We are constantly informing others about ourselves. In the business world, letting others know about your work projects makes it easier for your manager to know what you are doing. It also informs others in the company if they want to join you. Sometimes, promoting ourselves in informal situations helps us to get better opportunities.



The second category of informal communication is to persuade someone. Maybe you need more people to work on your project so you persuade or encourage someone to join you. Persuading simply means to kindly encourage or inspire someone to do something. How many times have you used your skills to persuade your friends to go to the movies with you? You can use the same skills to persuade your co-workers to join your project. These persuasion skills are also useful when you need to persuade a future customer to adopt your product. Imagine that you are working for a cell phone company and you need to sell your product. How can you do that? Use your persuasion skills!



The last reason to communicate with someone is to promote friendships and peace among others. Communication allows us to make friends, communicate ideas, and be friendly with others. Think about all your friendships you have. How did you deepen your friendships? You probably spent a lot of time talking, texting, and just hanging out. All the informal communication you had with them helped to strengthen your friendships. Anytime you have the opportunity to get to know someone at your workplace, you should take those opportunities to make more friendships. Some

examples of how to promote friendships are: talking to colleagues at the canteen, visiting co-workers for five minutes at their desk, or talking to others during lunch time, during tea breaks, during dinners, or work events. Having better friendships helps you to have more fun at work and also learn about more opportunities at work.



When you talk in informal situations, it is very important to remember three things. First thing you need to remember is to be professional. When you are professional, other people will want to work with you. Professional people are confident, positive, on time, and are trustworthy. Remember, any conversation in the canteen or tea shop can help you get another work opportunity. Being professional everywhere helps you to have the best image. Even in informal situations, people are always making opinions about you, so it is important to always be on your best behavior and show the best version of yourself.



Another thing to remember is to always be positive. Being positive is important because you will have good energy and others will want to spend time with you and therefore give you better opportunities.

The last thing to remember is to always try and have the best communication possible. Every time you talk to someone is an opportunity to improve your communication, make friends, learn something new, solve a problem, learn about an opportunity, or persuade someone to do something with you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Think about your workplace. Where do you have most of your informal conversations?
- ❖ Reflection: Which purpose of informal communication are you most comfortable with? Informing, persuading, or promoting goodwill and friendships?

SELF-TEST 01

1. Scenario: You have been working for a company for two years and you want the promotion being offered. What is the best way to increase your chances of being selected?
 - a. Ask all your co-workers to tell you who they think deserves the promotion the most
 - b. Make sure you tell your co-workers all the projects you are working on and send a weekly email to your boss, updating him on the projects you have been working on
 - c. Make sure you go to office functions and eat lunch with them to discuss work matters
 - d. Talk to your competitors and tell them why you think you deserve the promotion the most
2. Scenario: You are upset that you did not get the promotion at your office. What is the best way to handle the situation informally?
 - a. Tell all your friends at the office who got the promotion
 - b. Briefly tell your co-workers how you feel upset but focus on the positive
 - c. Continue updating your manager on all the good work you are doing
 - d. Ask your manager to identify weaknesses and work on improving yourself

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. What is the difference between a formal and an informal situation?
2. Why is it important to be professional in informal situations?

05-02: LISTENING ACTIVELY

Why should we listen? We have two ears and one mouth, which really means we should listen more than we speak. However, many people are poor listeners. They do not listen or do not know how to listen. Listening is hard to do because many people prefer to hear the sound of their own voice.

Do you know that you only remember 25-50% of what you hear in any situation? You either forget, misunderstand, or ignore the remaining 50-75% of things. How terrible is that! Listening is very important if you want to learn how to respect others, if you want to hear about opportunities, be well-liked by your colleagues, or avoid problems and conflicts. The best type of listening is called active listening. What does it mean to be an active listener?



First of all, active listening is very active. This means that all your attention should be on your listener. You can do this by looking at him/her in his/her eyes and not doing anything else. You should not be checking your phone, looking on Facebook, or constantly looking at the people on the street. You should not be focusing on your own ideas, how you will respond, or your weekend plans. So many times when we listen, we hear someone saying something and we only focus on how we will respond to something he/she said. Instead of listening to the rest of the monologue, we are thinking of a response to something said at the beginning of the conversation and interrupt the other person with our thoughts. That is not active listening.

Thinking: This guy is boring! This weekend, I am going to go shopping, see that movie, etc.



“This project is really interesting”

The second piece of active listening is to use your body. You can show through your body movements that you are listening. As I mentioned above, you can lean your body into the other person to show you want to hear them. Your eyes communicate a lot by showing that you are genuinely interested. Your eyes should be wide and open, showing that you are excited about what they are saying. Your eyes should be focused on the other person. Looking away a little bit is OK, but most of your time you should be looking at the other person. You can nod your head to show you are following and smile or laugh when the speaker shares something funny.



Another way to show the other person that you are listening is to give the speaker feedback. Feedback simply means that you are sending information to the other person that you understood him/her. One way you can give feedback is to paraphrase or summarize what the other person said. When you summarize and paraphrase, you are not repeating the same words someone used. Rather, you are using your own words to say what you understood. For example, if your friend says to you: “My science project is taking a lot of time and it is really hard.” You can say: “*So, you were talking about your project and it is causing you stress.*” Summarizing from time to time helps the other person know that you were listening to him/her. Summarizing does not mean to repeat exactly what the other person was saying; you should use different words to explain how you understood what they said. Another way to give feedback is to say: “*So, I understand what you were saying...*” Simply repeating the words someone said does not show them that you were listening. It just means you are good at repeating words, not really understanding the meaning behind them.

Another way to give feedback is to ask questions about what someone said. Any time a listener asks questions, you know he/she was listening to you. Even if you understand everything, you should ask any question, big or small, about what he/she said. You can also say: “*Thanks for sharing. I learned that....*”

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Experiment: The next time your friend talks to you, see if you can remember everything he/she said. Give your friend a full summary of what he/she said. In your own words, give a summary of what was said.
- ❖ Experiment: The next time you talk to someone, make sure you give verbal and non-verbal feedback. Nod your head, lean in, move your eyes, ask questions, and summarize what he/she is saying.

SELF-TEST 02

3. What is the best way to respond to this situation? Your colleague wants to talk to you about not getting the promotion. She is complaining a lot. You don't agree with her.
 - a. You do not like all this negativity so you interrupt her and tell her some things she can improve to get promoted the next time
 - b. Politely tell her that you are working on a tight deadline but you have a little time to talk
 - c. You continue doing your work while she is talking to you because you are very busy
 - d. Instead of offering advice, when she has finished, ask your colleague why she feels like she did not get the promotion

4. Situation: Your mother consistently complains that you do not really hear her. What is one thing you can do to become a better listener?
- Put your cell phone away when talking to her
 - Summarize what she said when she finishes
 - Smile, look at her eyes, nod your head
 - Ask good questions about what she said
 - All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- Explain the body language of a person who is listening.
- Explain the body language of a person who is not listening.

05-03: SPEAKING PERSUASIVELY

Do you remember one of the functions of informal communication? We can also communicate to persuade. Persuasion means to cause people to do or believe something. In the business world, you may need to convince customers to buy your product. Or, you may have to convince/persuade your coworkers to work with you on your project. You persuade others when you are in an argument as well. Arguments are statements that support your beliefs. For example, if you want to argue that cell phones should be made with type A plastic but another group wants to make the cell phone with type B plastic, you will have to persuade the other group. In business, you persuade others to believe in you, your ideas, and your product. When you persuade people, you are not lying or manipulating others to believe you. Rather, you are inspiring and encouraging others to join you. That is the real persuasion. Most people try to persuade you by forcing you to do something that you do not want to do, but effective persuasion is much more difficult to do. Let us share some tips or suggestions on how to persuade in an effective way.

The first thing to remember is to know when you should persuade others. Think about the person or the people you want to persuade. Is it your friends, your family members, your boss/manager, your clients/customers, or your colleagues/coworkers? A bad time to persuade is when these people are too emotional. If they are upset, angry, overwhelmed, stressed, or busy, that is a bad time to persuade them.



Persuasion is hard to do if people have negative feelings. So, a great way to help the conversation be more positive is to say something positive. If you are persuading your clients or customers, that thing might be an offer, discount, or a gift. If you are persuading your coworkers, colleagues or manager, a good way to persuade is to tell them how they can benefit. What good things can come from them joining you? For example, if you are trying to get your co-workers to join you in a project, tell them all the benefits of working with you on this project.



A positive attitude helps everyone. When persuading others, talk about the benefits and what people can get from the experience. If people know they have the skills to help you and they feel encouraged to help, they likely will. If you tell people how hard it is or how bad something is, they will not help you. If people can gain something, they will also be very likely to help you. You can tell your colleagues that they can benefit by learning something new, gaining new skills, or new experiences. Those are some general things to say to people who may be unsure if they want to join you.

When you have a new idea or product, not everyone will want to join you. There is so much diversity in viewpoints and opinions, and this is a good thing. Expect questions and opposition. If you plan for this, you will be prepared to answer those questions.



Different viewpoints
and ideas



Lastly, remember to never lie when persuading others. If you are a salesperson selling a product, never lie. This does not build good customer relations. You might have asked a shop keeper a question and he/she may have lied to you just to sell the product. In ethical business, this is never acceptable and you will lose customers this way. Same is true in persuasion. Honesty is very important to keep everyone happy.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Reflection: How often do you persuade your friends to do something they do not want to do? How do you ethically persuade them to do what you want?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time a friend does not want to do something, try persuading him/her with the techniques you acquired. Choose a good timing, offer him/her something positive, tell him/her how he/she can benefit, and do not lie to him/her. Did it work? Why?

SELF-TEST 03

5. Scenario: You are a shop owner and you want to sell your product. You want your customers to use your product and not the competitor's product (the other product of another company). What is the best way to do that?
 - a. Tell them why the other product is bad
 - b. Tell them the benefits of your product in front, tell them they can ask you any question they want, and offer them a discount if they buy today
 - c. Be very generous and exaggerate the truth a little bit just to win your customer
 - d. Ask three of your best businessmen to come up to them right away as they enter your store
6. Scenario: You are the president of your batch at your school and you want to enforce a new policy about school uniforms. Which is the best statement to use to persuade most people to adopt your policy?
 - a. "I know that these uniforms may look traditional, but they also make you look smart."
 - b. "These uniforms will be the best thing to happen at this school!"
 - c. "I will allow you to come up with some designs for uniforms and we will vote as a class next week."
 - d. "If you do not adopt the new policy, you must leave the school."

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. What is the definition of persuasion?
6. In which situations is it OK to persuade others?

05-04: NEGOTIATING EFFECTIVELY

When you negotiate, you are having a conversation with someone in which you may have different viewpoints, opinions, needs or goals. Those two different people try to solve a problem together. Negotiation can be difficult because two different people are trying to find a common solution to a problem. In this way, negotiation involves working with someone you may disagree with but it is necessary to work together to find a solution. Think of all the world leaders in the government that need to learn to work together to solve problems. Think of the president of any company who needs to make decisions. Think of the father of a family who needs to learn how to make everyone happy in the family. Also, think of an employee of a company who needs to work with a customer who is not happy. People negotiate all the time and the negotiation skills are very useful in both formal and informal situations. Let us focus on how to negotiate in the business world.

In business, hardly anything is fixed. Learn to accept that everything is negotiable. When you make business decisions, you can negotiate with both people involved. Business decisions usually involve at least two people or two different groups of people. Maybe it is a decision between a manager and his/her employees or employees and their clients or between two different employees. At any point of making a decision, you need to learn how to ask for what you need. If you are not happy, then you need to negotiate. Negotiation does not have to be a bad thing. Negotiation can be a really positive thing because it brings people together to solve a problem. Make sure you negotiate with people who want to work with you.



Win: Group A gets
what they want

Win: Person B
gets what he
wants

When you have your negotiation partner, you can start negotiating. When you start the process, you should think win-win. This means that you will only look for negotiations that benefit both people. For example, if you want option A and your business partner wants option B, then you should look for another option. Maybe you both want option C.

In order to settle on a solution that benefits both parties involved, you need to know your partner's wants and needs. A good thing to do is to spend some time each talking about your wants and needs. Then, you only find solutions that benefit both your wants and needs.



Make a written list of your needs, wants, goals, and non-negotiables. Write it down so that you do not forget. In order to know about these things, you need to listen to the other person. A need is something you need to be successful. A want is something you

would like to have but it is not as important as something you need. A goal is something you want to accomplish. Goals are like your needs and wants together. A non-negotiable is something that you cannot accept and will not tolerate if it is changed. Think of a non-negotiable as something that you want fixed. You can make a list like this:

Needs	Wants	Goals	Non-negotiables

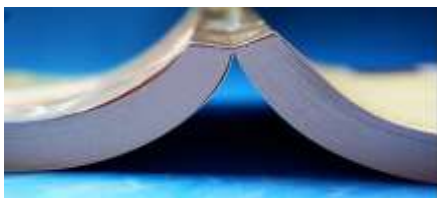
Look at the things that are the same on your list and your partner's list. That is how you start your negotiation.

After looking at both the lists, you should identify other choices that might be good for both of you. What are the other choices that you have not thought of? Are there things you will be willing to sacrifice or give up in order to think of another choice? For example, maybe you really want option A but your partner wants B. Both of you can give up or sacrifice your choices to choose option C. Sometimes negotiation involves giving up both your preferences and first needs.



Exchange (switching/changing) also works. Is there something that you can exchange? For example, suppose you are having a negotiation with your co-worker. Person A likes to answer phones and make calls but your partner (person B) prefers to speak to customers directly but they are not doing the jobs they want. If you do not like your job, you might be able to switch or exchange jobs. This will only happen if you negotiate.

Lastly, make sure you negotiate when you do your homework. Make sure to make the list of your needs and wants. Also, know more about the issue that you are negotiating. If you are having a negotiation about which materials to use for your cell phones, you should do homework on cell phone material before you start. Knowing more about the issue allows you to be a better negotiator.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Reflection: Do you ever negotiate? Have you ever disagreed with anyone? Why? Did one person win (to get what they want) or did both of you win (both get what you want)?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time you have an argument or disagreement with someone, think about how both of you can win. Instead of thinking that only one person can win, think about how you both can win.

SELF-TEST 04

7. Scenario: You and a client are trying to negotiate because you both have different ideas on how to start the project. What is the best way to handle the situation?
 - a. Since you usually win, allow your co-worker to do anything he wants with the project. It's easier and it saves time if you do not fight
 - b. Tell him you acknowledge his ideas. Also tell him yours. Find a way to make both happen in the project
 - c. Know what you are willing and not willing to lose in a negotiation
 - d. Come up with a new idea that you can both agree on
8. Scenario: You have been working in a company for several years and you believe you deserve a better salary. What is the best way to talk with your manager?
 - a. Tell him the salary you think you deserve based on your experience and ask him to tell you what he thinks
 - b. If he cannot give you more money now, ask him what things you can do to become a better employee
 - c. At the beginning of the conversation, tell him that you do not agree with his views
 - d. Tell him you will leave the company if you do not get your promotion

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. What is the definition of negotiation?
8. What are two things to remember when you negotiate with anyone?

05-05: MANAGING CONFLICT

Everyone fights. This is normal in life. Not everyone can agree with you on everything. Think of all the friends or family members you have. Do you always agree with them? Probably not. Since conflict is likely to happen, it is more important to focus on how to handle the conflict. How will you work with the conflict? Responding to the conflict is very important because the problem will always be a problem until you can learn to find

the solution. Think of a conflict as a cycle that can only be broken by finding the solution.



The problem will always be a problem until you can learn to find the solution. Think of a conflict as a cycle that can only be broken by finding the solution. The first thing to remember is to think about the conflict in front of you. Ask yourself these questions: who or what is actually causing the conflict? Why is the conflict happening? Is there something inside or outside that is causing the conflict to be worse? Think about the large picture, not just about the small picture. Here is a visual to help you:

The outside conflict: Things/People that are making the conflict worse

Examples: the feelings of others, work

The (inside) conflict:

your feelings, your thoughts, your mistakes

After you have looked at the conflict, you need to start the communication process with that person. Many people in conflict do not talk to the person they are angry at. They prefer to avoid the conflict. They do not talk about what bothers them. This is something you must avoid. Remember what happens to the conflict that does not get resolved? It gets bigger. Resolution makes things better. Make sure to choose a location and time that works.

When you communicate, certain aspects are very important. Make sure to be positive and show that you care about the person. Try to not show anger or yell at the person. Do not manipulate the other person into doing something he/she is not comfortable with. For example, if you force the other person to apologize or to accept your views, then it is not a real solution. Both people have to feel comfortable and do things out of their own free will.

Another suggestion to resolve conflict is to use objective language, not subjective language. Objective language is language that focuses on the problem, on the facts, not the person. Subjective language is language that focuses on the individual person. An example of subjective language is a sentence that starts with: “you.” For example, “You are always late!” is a sentence that is subjective language and it focuses on the person, not on the problem. A better sentence is more objective. It focuses on the facts: “The

start time for work is at 8 am. Please be on time.” Never once did the person use the word “you.”

Subjective Language	Objective Language
Focuses on the other person	Focuses on facts
Opinions, emotions, “you” Change based on the person	Objective means information does not change. True for everyone

Next, let us go through some practical techniques to have good communication. The first technique is called: “divide and conquer.” In this technique, you take a big problem and then think of the smaller problems inside the bigger problem. You can solve a smaller problem easier than a bigger problem. Think of a puzzle: There are many smaller pieces of the whole puzzle:



The second technique is called: “brainstorming.” In this technique, you and the person in the conflict think of all possible solutions. Just think of any idea (big or small) and write them all on a piece of paper. This is a good tool to think of many ideas. Later, you can discuss which ideas are better than the others.



Another technique is called “trial and error.” In this technique, you will look at the list from your brainstorming. Try solutions that you think will work. That is the “trail.” Then, if there are problems with that idea, write down which problems happened and try another one.

The last technique is called: “analogy.” In this technique, you talk to many people who have had similar problems. How did they solve the problem? An analogy is something that is similar to something else. Learning from others helps us to solve conflicts and problems. They can offer experience and suggestions.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- ❖ Reflection: When was the last time you had a conflict with a friend or family member? How did you solve the conflict?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time you have a conflict with someone or a problem at work, try one of the techniques: divide and conquer, brainstorming, trial and error or analogy. Which one worked?

SELF-TEST 05

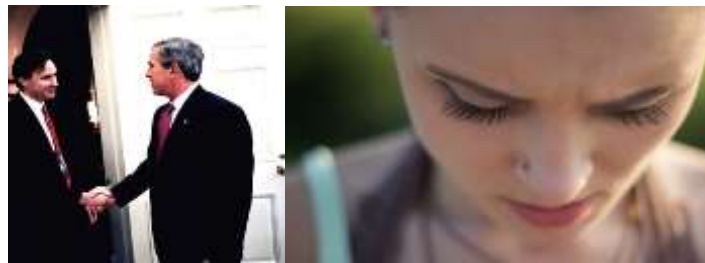
9. Scenario: You had a fight with a co-worker at your workplace. You are still angry. What is the best way to handle the situation?
 - a. You feel that it is best to handle the situation now even if you are angry. You raise your voice at the other person, but at least he/she now understands that you are angry!
 - b. After taking a break, you ask your co-worker what the real problem is and you listen to it
 - c. You ask your co-worker if he/she would like to come up with some solutions with you about how to best resolve the problem
 - d. Tell your co-worker all the reasons that created the problem
10. Scenario: You have a conflict with a co-worker. What is the best statement to use to sound the most objective?
 - a. "You did not finish your deadline in time so now our project is late!"
 - b. "The next time, please finish your deadline in time so that our project will be on time."
 - c. "It is upsetting when deadlines aren't met. Please find a way to finish earlier."
 - d. "What are some reasons why you are not finishing your work on time? How can I help you?"

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9. In the business world, what is conflict?
10. What is one benefit of conflict?

05-06: DEALING WITH OFFICE POLITICS

Office politics are politics at your office. What are politics? Politics are the interactions between people. So, office politics are the interactions between people in the office. Office politics are a part of the regular life in any office. Relations between office members can either be good or bad. When office politics are good, relations among people are great and business is good. You can freely talk to others and you can learn about what other people are doing for projects and how you can help them. You may also hear of other opportunities at the office where you can help out or where there are opportunities. When office politics are bad, relationships are bad as well as business decisions. People are very isolated and will not be able to make better partnerships. Let us know how to learn about office politics so that you are prepared to use the relationships in a good way.



First thing you need to do to master office politics is to learn about your company. Ask yourself these questions: do people interact? How do people interact? Where do people have informal discussions? Do they talk in the coffee shop, the canteen, etc.

The next thing is to learn about which opportunities are available at your company. Which opportunities will allow you to share your skills? Which projects are available that match your skills? Consistently look for opportunities where you can grow and learn. You learn and grow when you share your skills.

In office politics, make friends with many people from all departments. If you only hang out with the same people from the same department, then you will only hear of opportunities from a limited viewpoint. If you talk to many people, then you will hear of many opportunities. The more opportunities you hear about, the more likely you will be able to share your skills.



While you are interacting with all these people, you should remember to be professional at all times. Being professional means acting your best. Your actions should be as if your boss is with you at all times. How would you act if your boss was there? Those actions should be what you should do if you are acting professionally. Remember to act professionally in the canteen, in the tea shop, inside work and outside work. Do not spread negative energy to others and do not destroy relationships with anyone. Do not spread gossip or talk about others behind their back. Those are examples of not acting professionally. Office politics can only be good and positive when we act professionally. Remember to give respect. When we give respect, we receive respect. Part of respect is not talking about negative things about people and not gossiping.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 06

- ❖ Reflection: Do you have many friends? How do you hear about opportunities at school? At work? Do you look for opportunities or do you wait until people tell you about them?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time you start to gossip about someone (talking bad things about them), change the conversation and change the conversation to something positive or politely walk away.

SELF-TEST 06

11. Scenario: You are new to a company and you are excited to get involved. What is the best way to do that?
 - a. Look for projects that match your skill level
 - b. Make friends with all departments of the company
 - c. Only do the projects that your friends do
 - d. Write an email to your co-workers and tell them why you are hesitant to get involved
12. Scenario: You are new to a company and you want to have a good image. What are some good questions to ask with your colleagues?
 - a. What projects are you involved in?
 - b. I am really good at using Microsoft Word programs. Which projects are available that uses those skills?
 - c. What are some networking opportunities where I can meet more co-workers?
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 06

11. What is the definition of office politics?
12. Give one example of using office politics in a good way. Give one example of using office politics in a bad way.

05-07: PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS

Everyone who works will have to attend meetings. You cannot avoid meetings. Meetings are times when more than one person gets together to discuss something important. You discuss important business related to your company and also learn about opportunities in the company. How you participate in meetings shows your boss/manager how you will participate in the company. Decisions for offers, promotions, and other opportunities might be made by how you participate in meetings. Think of meetings as a place for you to show your team leader and manager how great you are. If you are sleeping in a meeting, it shows you do not care about the company. If you are fully present in a meeting, then others will see you as a valuable person. How meetings look like in India may be different than how meetings look like in other countries. Let us know about how to participate in meetings from an international viewpoint.



First thing to know is about time. Being on time in international standards is five minutes early. You need those five minutes to settle in, get your things organized, and to talk to others at the meeting. Talking to your co-workers before the meeting allows you to learn more about the opportunities in the company and to make friends. You also have a chance to make more friendships the more you talk to others. Being five minutes early is much better than feeling rushed and arriving late. It is better to feel relaxed and calm before the meeting starts.



The second thing to remember is to come prepared. Before the meeting starts, you need to know the meeting agenda, or the plan of the meeting. If you have the meeting agenda, you will be able to mentally prepare for what is ahead. What is the topic of the meeting? What is the purpose of the meeting? What people are coming to the meeting? These things are important to know so that you can prepare some thoughts, take notes,

or write questions about the topic. When the meeting starts, you should listen to others, but you also need to share. Sharing your opinions and ideas shows that you are an active participant in the company. Meetings are a great place to show others in the company who you are and what a great contribution you can make.



Respect is something you need to remember throughout the whole meeting. Respect means listening to someone while he/she is talking. Show with your body language that you are listening to what the other person is saying and use some of the tips on active listening. Respect also means not talking for too long. If you talk for too long, others might get bored. Show respect by allowing others to talk.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 07

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever attended a meeting? Do you listen more than speak? What is one thing you can do to be more prepared for the meeting?
- ❖ Experiment: If you are a student, start by arriving to your classes five minutes before they start. Come prepared to the class with the assignments completed and with questions and thoughts ready for the teacher. Do you see that you are learning more when you participate in all your classes?

SELF-TEST 07

13. Scenario: You are a project leader and you want to have a meeting with your colleagues. What is the best way to have a great meeting?
- a. At the last minute, tell your team that you want a meeting now
 - b. Tell your team a week in advance (before) the meeting and give them the agenda (meeting plan) at that time
 - c. Talk as much as you want during the meeting because you are the organizer and you have a lot of things to say
 - d. If nobody participates during the meeting, ask small groups to talk about questions that you prepared in advance and discuss the answers as a whole group
14. What actions are to be avoided during any type of meeting at your job?
- a. Looking at your cell phone a lot
 - b. Only listening and not contributing anything
 - c. Use informal language to sound more relaxed
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 07

13. What is the purpose of a meeting?

14. What is one thing you should not do during meetings?

05-08: MAKING PROPER INTRODUCTIONS

In your life, have you ever had to introduce someone? For example, have you ever introduced a new friend to your current friends? You can make new friends if you get introduced or if you introduce yourself to someone.



Making formal introductions at work is an important skill that shows you have good people skills. For example, if you are hosting an event, you should learn how to introduce all your guests. When you do it the right way, more people will meet each other. When you meet new people, you usually feel more connected to a group and you have a better time. That is why the person making the introductions needs to know the proper way so that all people at the party will feel respected and appreciated that you took the time to introduce them. Let us go through some formal social rules or norms that should be followed to make sure people get introduced in the right way.



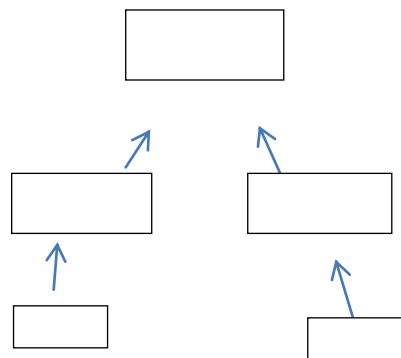
First of all, introduce others as important people. For example, you are hosting a party and are introducing new people at the function to other people that you know. It is important to make the person being introduced feel important. You can say something like: “This is my very respected colleague__(person’s name)___” or “This is my very respected friend__(person’s name)___” or “This is my guest of honor_(person’s name)___.”



Here are some of the social rules of how to introduce. Men are usually introduced to women. Women should not introduce themselves to men in formal social settings. Also, younger people are introduced to older people. If you have one guest and are introducing them to a larger group (maybe more than five people), you should introduce them to each individual person. First say the name of your guest and then go around the circle and say the names of the people in the group. These rules apply to both formal and informal situations.



In the business world, you need to remember the rank or the order of business relationships. How you introduce others will be decided by their placement in the company and not by their age or by gender (man or woman) as it was in the previous paragraph. The person with less authority should be introduced to the person with more authority.



For example, if you are hosting a work event and your manager is there as well as your colleague who is an IT specialist (not a manager), who has more authority? The manager. Because the manager has more responsibilities, the IT specialist should be introduced to the manager. You should physically bring your colleague to where the manager is and introduce him/her to the manager. You can say something like this: “Hello Mr. Deshmukh. This is my friend Avinash who is in the IT department.”



If you have any function where there are clients (people who work with your business), there are certain rules to follow with them as well. For example, if I receive financial

advice from a financial company, I am a client of that company. Sometimes, businesses have functions to thank their clients for their business. Clients should be introduced to the president of any company. Clients should be introduced as the most important persons because they give good business to the company. One thing you can say is: “This is our client __ (client’s name) _____. She has been a valuable customer for __ (put a number) ____ months/years.” The customer or client should feel special and be introduced to all the important people at any client/customer appreciation function.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 08

- ❖ Reflection: Has anyone introduced you at a party? Who did they introduce you to? An older person? A younger person? A man? A woman? A group?
- ❖ Experiment: Next time you are new at a party, introduce yourself to someone. If you are a woman, introduce yourself to another woman. If you are a man, introduce yourself to another man or a woman. You can say something like: “Hi. My name is _____. I’m new here. What’s your name?”

SELF-TEST 08

15. Scenario: As a woman, you were invited by your colleague to attend a business dinner and you arrived alone. What is the proper behavior?
- a. Before you talk to everyone, wait for the person who introduced you to introduce you to the group
 - b. Talk to everyone informally because the dinner is not during office hours so it is OK to be more relaxed
 - c. You see your co-worker from a lower position and you introduce her to your manager
 - d. Introduce your female co-worker to a male co-worker

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 08

15. Who should introduce men at a work function?
16. Who should introduce younger people at a work function?

SUMMARY

This section was focused on how to improve your informal communication. You learned how to become a better listener and how to speak in a way that gets people’s attention. This helps you to have better office politics. You learned valuable lessons in how to work with people who may disagree with you, how to participate in a work meeting, and how to introduce others at a function.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Nod**= to move your head up and down to show you are listening

- ❖ **Lean in**= to tilt your body towards the other person to show you are interested in what they have to say
- ❖ **Negotiation**=The form of communication in which **two or more people** with **different views, needs, and wants** meet to discuss the **solutions** that **everyone** agrees to
- ❖ **Party/Parties**=The other person/people involved in a decision
- ❖ **Salary**=The money earned at your job

REFERENCES

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<https://www.coursera.org/learn/conflict-resolution-skills>

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWe_ogA5YCU

(stop at 1:40)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WER63AY8zB8>

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WIKIPEDIA

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_listening

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_politics

BOOKS

“Negotiating for Dummies” by David Frohnmayer

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 02-01: UNDERSTANDING READING AND WRITING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Describe** some basic tools for reading
- ❖ **Explain** two different types of texts
- ❖ **Compare** and Use different styles of writing

INTRODUCTION



Reading and writing are basic tools for communication. But do you know the different ways to read? Do you know the different ways to write? Do you know the ways in which reading is used with writing or speaking? This section will talk about the basics of reading and writing.

01-01: READING AND UNDERSTANDING

There are many ways to read something. Do you know how many? Most times when we are reading a good book, we are simply reading it without thinking about how we are reading. How we read a book for enjoyment and a book for school is different. There are some different tools for reading that help us understand a text better. When you understand something, you comprehend it. Let us first talk about something called close reading.



Close reading is a tool you can use if you want to look closely at any reading. For example, if you need to learn new words, understand the meaning behind the words (a deeper look), or study a sentence structure, then a close reading is the perfect way to read something. You read details about your text and choose to focus on something specific in the text. In summary, you are like a detective looking closely into the text to find something.

The next two tools are summarizing and paraphrasing. These are the tools you use in school and at work after you read something. Your teacher, boss, colleague, or team leader might ask you to summarize or paraphrase what you read. You can give a summary and paraphrase by saying it or by writing it down. For example, if you read a good book, you want to tell your friend about it. You will tell him/her a summary of the book. Or, in school, you read something on the Internet for your research paper and you have to summarize what you read. Those are examples of summary.

Let us know more about a summary and a paraphrase. A summary is saying something with fewer words. When you summarize something, you can say the same main ideas in different words so you do not copy all the same words. The important thing in a summary is to keep the summary shorter than the original. Similar but different to a summary is a paraphrase. A paraphrase is something you need to give after reading something. A paraphrase is not shorter than the original. A paraphrase uses different words from the original. Here is a chart to help you remember the difference.

A Summary	A Paraphrase
-is shorter than the original text.	-is usually the same length or longer than the original text.
-takes only the MAIN IDEAS of a text and says them a different way.	-takes ALL the ideas of the text and says them a different way.
-can include some of the author's words from the original text.	-only includes your own words.

For example, read this original text:

Michael Jackson was a little boy who grew up in the state of Indiana, USA with his brothers and sisters. He grew up in a lower to middle class family. His father encouraged the kids to perform music. Michael and his siblings formed a band called "The Jackson 5". They became very famous. Later when Michael was older, he started to compose music by himself. He sold many albums and became the "king of pop music." He had many fans. His music is famous for touching many people's lives and spreading peace and goodwill. When Michael was on tour in 2009, he died of drugs. Many people will miss him and the music he made.

If I want to make a summary of this paragraph, it might look like this:

Michael Jackson was a singer since he was a little boy. When he was older, he became famous and sold a lot of music. He died when he was an adult of drugs. His fans will miss him.

All the ideas are taken from the text and written in a different way.

Now let us write a paraphrase, which will say the same things in the original text with different words:

Growing up in the state of Indiana, Michael Jackson lived with his brothers and sisters. They were not rich or poor; they were middle class. His father helped the kids to make music. His siblings made a band called "The Jackson 5" which was very popular. Michael grew up to be a very famous singer. He wrote songs that many people loved. He is known as the "king of pop." While he was away preparing for his tour, Michael died. His music will live on but many people will miss him.

All the ideas are taken from the text and written in a different way.

Now let us talk about analysis and interpretation. These are two different tools you can use for reading. When you read something, you want to comprehend it or understand it. When you are trying to understand something, you are analyzing it. What do you see? What do you understand? What patterns do you see? Do you see anything important? What are the main ideas? Interpretation means to understand "why". When you interpret, you are trying to explain the reasons for something. Why are they the main ideas? Why are the patterns there? The "why" is just as important as the "what." Analysis and interpretation go together. When you look at something you are reading, you are trying to understand it.

Next, let us talk about two different types of texts you might read in school or at work. They are called literary and knowledge texts. Let us talk about each one separately. Literary texts are readings that are used for entertainment. Maybe it is a poem or a story, but it is not real. When something is not real, we say it is fictional. Examples of literary texts are poems, fiction, or comics. These types of text tell a fun story to entertain us. Most people enjoy reading literary texts because they do not have to work too hard to analyze them. They are telling a fun story that makes us happy. Opposite of a literary text is a knowledge text. Knowledge texts are there to inform us of something. These texts usually have facts and other information that is true. If something is true, we say it is non-fiction. Some examples of knowledge texts are encyclopedias, Internet websites that have facts, or school textbooks. Most people do not enjoy knowledge texts because they might be boring and they are not entertaining. They do not tell a story. Which type of text do you prefer? Do you like literary texts, knowledge texts or both?

Lastly, let us talk a little about interpretation and translation. These are tools that help you understand something you read or hear that is, in a different language. Translation is reading a text in a language and translating the meaning into a different language. For example, suppose Marathi is your first language and English is your second

language. You want to translate a text/document from English into Marathi. This means to take the Marathi sentences and translate them into English. Translation is a written document that you make and it requires that you read and understand the document in one language before you translate it into the second language.

Interpretation is spoken. Interpretation is taking someone's words (in any language) and interpreting them into a second language. Interpretation usually involves at least three people. For example, person A speaks only English. Person C speaks only Marathi. Person A and C cannot communicate and need an interpreter. Person B (the interpreter) speaks both English and Marathi. Person C will speak in Marathi. Person B will listen, understand, and interpret the message in English to person A.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Which type of texts do you prefer: literary texts or knowledge texts? Why?
- ❖ The next time you read your favourite book, look at one paragraph of at least five sentences and do a close reading. Understand each word in the paragraph. Understand the main idea of the paragraph. Is the paragraph describing something? Telling you about something? What is the purpose of the paragraph?

SELF-TEST 01

1. Scenario: You are taking a new English class and your teacher asked you to look at the reading for new vocabulary or words. What type of reading is this?
 - a. Literary text
 - b. Knowledge text
 - c. Close reading
 - d. All of the above
2. Scenario: You speak only Marathi and you want to understand a document written in English. What can you do?
 - a. Do a close reading with a dictionary
 - b. Translate the document into your second language
 - c. Interpret the document for someone else
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. What is the definition of a close reading?
2. What is the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing?

01-02: WRITING SKILLS

Writing is something we usually learn in school. Do you know the different purposes of writing or the different styles? Each style of writing has a different purpose or reason. This section will cover the basic ways to write.

The first style of writing is documenting. Have you heard of the word “documentary?” A documentary is a film about something. The documentary informs you about something. When you document something, you create a record of it.



Have you ever taken a picture? In that way, you are documenting what you saw. Imagine that you travel to a new country. You might document what you see in the meeting. If you are in a meeting, you can document the meeting by writing about the main points from the meeting. Documenting is a process in which you write about something you see or read. Documenting can be both written and expressed through picture. It is used in formal and informal situations. As mentioned, you can document informally by taking pictures during your vacation or by writing what you saw in your journal. You can document formally by writing about something at work. Writing a report is one example of a document that we will talk about next.

Another style of writing is report writing. As the name says, you are writing a report, usually for someone else. What is a report? A report is an official document that gives information about something that you give to your manager or colleagues. Later, we will see more about how to write a report. A report is writing about something you have seen, heard, done or researched. Let us see an example of each. First, you can write a report of something you saw. If you attended a presentation at work, you can document what you saw. Also, you are listening to the presentation and heard it, so you can write a report about what you heard. What were the main points? You can write a report about something you did, like a work project. How did the project go? Lastly, you can report on something you researched. Did you read something on the Internet for your research

project? Did you find some information in a book? Those are examples of things you researched and later write a report on.



Reports can be on things you have:	Seen	Heard	Done	Researched
Examples → →	A presentation, a lecture	A presentation, a lecture	Project	Information in books, Internet

The next purpose of writing can be for writing notes. Notes are more informal than reports. That means notes are used only for you or your friends, but not for your manager, boss, or teacher. Most of the time, notes are usually for yourself. Notes are the things you want to write down after you have seen, heard, done, or researched something. So, notes are used in the same exact situations as reports but they are informal, not formal. That means you do not share your notes with your manager, boss, or teacher. In real life, you have probably heard your teacher give a presentation for school and you took notes. You use the notes to study for the test. Another example might be when you read some important information on the Internet and you take notes in your notebook.



Lastly, let us talk about letter writing. A letter is a formal document that has an introduction, body, and conclusion. You usually send a letter when you need to make a formal announcement to a company. A manager can write a letter when he/she hires a new employee and when the person accepts, he/she can write a formal letter of acceptance. Another example of a letter is when there are new rules that are being established. A manager can write a letter. A letter is usually more formal than an email.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: Do you ever take notes in school? When? How do you use the notes?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time your teacher gives a lecture, take notes. Write down only the most important information. Do not write in full sentences, only important words.

SELF-TEST 02

3. Scenario: Your Company is going to hire a new employee. You need to write a document to officially welcome the new employee. Which form of communication is the best to be given to the new employee?
 - a. Note
 - b. Letter
 - c. Email
 - d. Document of your company's projects
4. Scenario: In your company, you need to take notes during the presentation and give a formal documentation to your manager about what happened at the meeting. Which form of communication is best to be given to your manager?
 - a. Notes
 - b. Letter
 - c. Report
 - d. Email

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. What is one example of formal documentation? Or informal documentation?
4. What is the difference between notes and a report?

SUMMARY

In summary, we learned about some different ways to read and some different ways to write. In school, you will have to learn close reading, summarizing and paraphrasing. You will also have to take notes during lectures. When you interact with different languages, you will need to translate and interpret spoken words or documents. At work, you might need to write a formal letter. Knowing the different uses of reading and writing will help you to be successful in school and at work.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ Comprehension= understanding

REFERENCES

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxP1poQflkM>

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Close_reading

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OER

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BOOKS

“Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Retelling: Skills for Better Reading, Writing, and Test Taking” by Emily Kissner

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit [Here](#) for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 02-02: UNCOVERING THE SECRETS OF CLEAR WRITING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Recall** and **Identify** the steps of writing effectively
- ❖ **Discover** the secrets of constructing meaningful sentences
- ❖ **Write** paragraphs effectively for academic and professional purposes
- ❖ **Define** and **Explain** the important role of punctuation marks in writing

INTRODUCTION



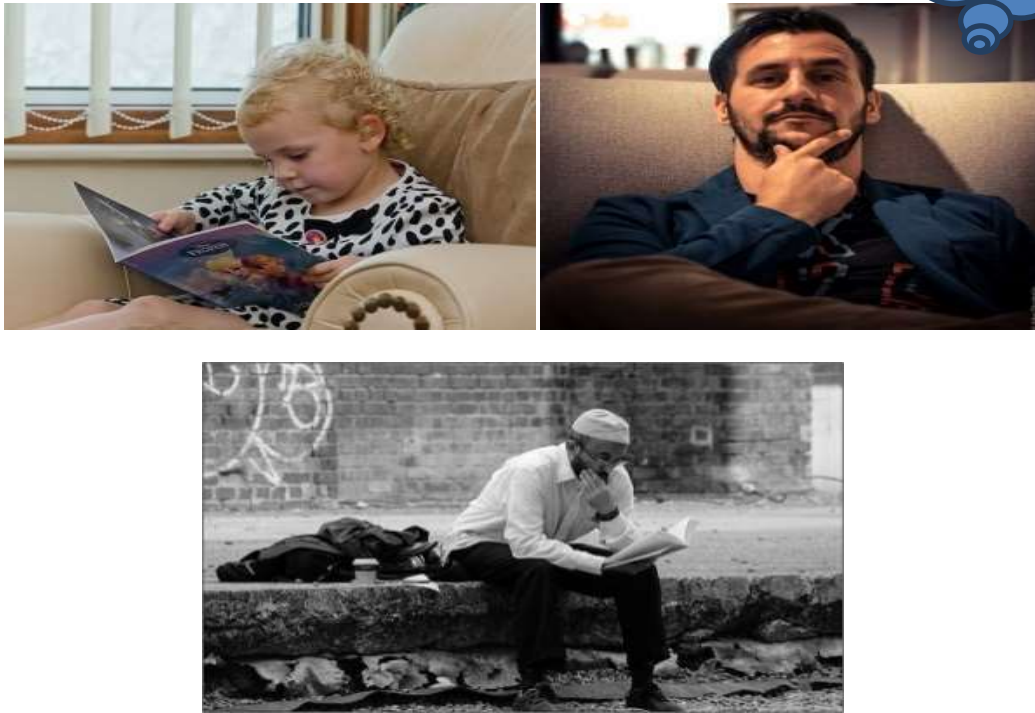
In the world of technology, many of us know how to send a text message. However, the problem with cell phones and text messages is that many people do not know how to make proper sentences with correct grammar, spellings, and punctuations. Many people use abbreviations like CU = see you or I luv u= I love you or gm= good morning. As texting gets to be more common, people forget how to form full sentences that are spelled correctly. This will become a problem if you want to write and stay competitive for international standards. As business is getting globalized, it is important that you know how to write properly in English.

02-01: CLARIFYING WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Writing is much more than putting words on a page. When you write, you need to be aware of how your reader will understand your writing. It is your duty as a writer to write in a way that makes sense. Have you communicated your ideas in a way that are clear and direct? Will your reader be confused after reading what you wrote? If the reader is confused, the writer has not done a good job of writing. Writing is not as simple as putting words on a page; you need to think, write, change, revise, and write again. Let us talk about the tenets or characteristics of a good writer.

The first thing a writer does is to know who he/she is writing to. Who is your reader? Who is going to read your words? Knowing who is reading your words will change how you write. For example, how I write for a seven year old child will be very different from how I write for a seventeen year old student.

Hmmmm



You will have to know many things about your reader. One important thing you will need to know before writing is the age of your reader. As mentioned earlier, how you write for a young child will be different from how you write for an adult. You also need to know what your reader is doing in her/his life. Is he/she a student, a businessman, a lawyer, etc.? Knowing what your reader does also shows you what he/she might be interested in. For example, if your reader is a seventh standard student, you will want to write about things that seventh standard children are interested in, like movies and fashions. If your reader is a thirty- year- old IT specialist, he/she might be interested in technical things.

A good tip for writing is to start writing about things your reader knows and is interested in. From there, you can introduce new concepts.

Start with these questions before you write:

- ❖ What does your reader know?
- ❖ What is your reader interested in?
- ❖ What is the age of your reader?
- ❖ What is the gender of your reader?
- ❖ What does your reader do?

The first two questions are important when you have to write about something that your reader does not know about. What do you do when your reader has no concept or idea of what you will be writing about? You need to start by writing about things your reader knows and also what he/she is interested in. For example, imagine that your seventh standard teacher asks you to write an essay on international birds around the world. Your readers are other seventh standard students. However, most students do not know much about international birds around the world. You can start by writing about something the readers know and like. For example, maybe you know that your readers all love animals. You can start to talk about animals found in India.

You will also need to know why you are writing. What is the purpose? Is the writing to inform someone, to entertain them, or to persuade them? Persuade means to change their minds about something. For example, if your purpose is to inform someone, you need to make sure that every sentence is about informing him/her about the topic. If your purpose is to persuade someone, then your sentences should be about persuading him/her. Check all the sentences to make sure that they all serve that purpose.



Your sentences should be easy to understand and fun to read. Do not write sentences that are too difficult or long. Your writing should be fun. If your reader is falling asleep, is bored, or confused, then you have not done your job correctly. Keep the sentences shorter. Use vocabulary or words that the reader understands. Also, see how you format your reading. Is the reading attractive? Is there enough space between paragraphs? Do you need to add pictures, graphs, or charts?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written anything? What did you write? For whom? For what purpose?
- ❖ Experiment: Try writing a letter to your friend about a topic he/she does not have any knowledge of. How will you get your reader interested in the topic? How will you transition them from what they know (something familiar) to something they do not know?

SELF-TEST 01

1. In this list, which is not a typical purpose (reason) of professional writing?
 - a. To summarize decisions
 - b. To persuade customers

- c. To list rules/procedures
 - d. To talk informally
2. What is the first thing you should do before you write?
- a. Find a picture to illustrate your words
 - b. Check for mistakes in grammar
 - c. Know who your reader is
 - d. Change the format of your document to look nice

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. Why do you need to know your reader before you start writing?
2. Why is it important to keep your sentences simple and short?

02-02: WRITING SOLID SENTENCES

Sentences are the basic building blocks to writing essays and books. If you master writing a good sentence, you can master other harder tasks. Do you know how to make a sentence?

A sentence is made out of two parts: a subject and a predicate. A subject is WHO or WHAT the sentence is about. A sentence's subject can be about a person, a place, or a thing. A person might be your friend. A place might be your city. A thing might be your textbook. A subject is easy to identify because it is usually at the beginning of the sentence and it is who/what the sentence is about. If a sentence is a movie, the subject is the leading actor/actress. A predicate is harder to understand. Think of the predicate as the remaining parts of the sentence. In the movie example, the predicate is what the actor does or what happens to the actor. The predicate contains something you may know: a verb. A verb can be a state of being, an action that subject does or an action that happens to the subject. Let us have a look at the subjects and some possible predicates mentioned below. In the predicate, the verb has been **highlighted**.

Subject	My friend Marion	The beautiful city of Nashik	The textbook
Predicate	went shopping (action that the subject does)	is a holy city (a state of being)	was thrown away (an action that happened to the subject)

Do you have a better understanding of how to write sentences? If you are still feeling uncertain about how to make correct sentences, refer to the references at the end of the unit.

After you are certain you can make a complete sentence, there are some other things to understand when writing. One thing to remember is to put the subject next to the verb. As I mentioned, a predicate includes the verb. The predicate is a group of words but the verb (the action or the state of being) should be next to the subject so the reader is not confused. Here are a few examples:

Example A: “The **dog**, including his best friends and other street animals, **ate** the bones.”

Example B: “The **dog ate** the bone along with his best friends and other street animals.”

In example A, the subject (dog) is far from the verb (ate). That should be avoided. In example B, the subject (dog) is near the verb (ate) and is a better sentence.

Another thing to remember when writing is to keep your sentences short and simple. The reason why this is important is because you want your reader to understand completely what you are saying. If your reader is confused after reading, you have not written clearly enough.

Consider these examples mentioned below. One sentence is too long and goes on for a long time. The reader might be confused where the sentence stops or the main idea of each sentence. The main idea is not clear because the sentences talk about different things. The other sentence is clear and direct.

Example A: *The dog and his friends along with the other animals in the street ate the bones on the street they had so much fun eating the food on the street and started playing so loudly the people on the street were scared of the dogs and the people were going shopping to prepare for the holiday season which was coming soon Diwali was on the way.*

Example B: *The dog ate the bones with his other friends. They had so much fun eating the food. The animals were very loud. The people on the street were scared of the animals.*

The sentences in example A did not have any full stops. It was confusing where one sentence stopped and another started. Also, the sentences talked about animals and people. Which theme (animals or people) was the paragraph talking about?

The sentences in example B were shorter. All the sentences were about the dogs and the animals. The dogs/animals were the main idea of all the sentences.

The sentences should focus on being positive. Nobody likes to read negative sentences. The more positive your sentences are, the more your reader will want to read. Look at

these two examples. One is more positive and one is more negative, even though they are about the same topic.

Example A: *The boy did not like his vegetable so he asked his mother for a different vegetable. He liked the second vegetable better.*

Example B: *The boy hated his vegetable and did not eat any of it. He yelled at his mom to bring a different vegetable. He hated the first vegetable more than the second.*

Lastly, try to add a little variety to your sentences. For example, not all of your sentences have to have a subject, verb, and object. You can add adjectives to describe the subject. You can also put two subjects in your sentences. Some sentences can be statements, which mean they end in periods/full stops. Some can be questions, which means they end in question marks (?). Some sentences can express excitement, which means they end in an exclamation mark (!). You do not want your reader to be bored.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Experiment: Try writing a sentence. What is the main idea? Now, write about the same topic but use different words. Can you write the sentence in a different way?
- ❖ Reflection: Do you use many adjectives in your sentences? Adjectives are descriptive words that describe subjects and nouns.

SELF-TEST 02

3. How do make this sentence more direct and simple?

“Yesterday after lunch the students were complaining to the teacher about the short break.”

- a. Yesterday the students complained.
 - b. The students wanted a short break.
 - c. The students complained to the teacher.
 - d. All of the above
4. This sentence is too negative and long. How do you change this sentence from a manager to his employees to sound more positive and shorter?

“Don’t take breaks that are too long because they cause you to miss important work and this causes the company to be less productive and lose money and it makes the company look bad.”

- a. “Taking breaks that are too long are bad for you.”
- b. “Missing work is bad for the company.”
- c. “Please take shorter breaks so that you can help the company.”
- d. “Take shorter breaks next time.”

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. What is a predicate?
4. What are the three functions of a verb?

02-03: DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PARAGRAPHS



After you have mastered sentences, you are now ready to turn the sentences into a paragraph. What is a paragraph? A paragraph is a group of sentences that share a main idea. Typically, a paragraph has four to five sentences. You have written paragraphs if you have ever had to write an essay for school. For work, you will have to learn how to write paragraphs if you need to send a long email or write a report. Let us talk about how to effectively write a paragraph.

A paragraph starts with the main idea. The main idea is also known as the topic sentence. The topic sentence has the main idea. If you do not have a main idea or a topic sentence, your reader may be confused when reading your paragraph. Think of the topic sentence as one sentence summary of what the full paragraph is about. If your paragraph is about dogs, then the word “dogs” needs to appear in your paragraph. The topic sentence is usually indented by five spaces. If your paragraph has two main ideas in it, you should make two paragraphs. Each new main idea needs a new paragraph. If your paragraph talks about dog and Indian festivals, those are two different topics which require two different paragraphs. After you have talked about the topic/main idea, you should end your paragraph with the main idea again, using different words. Here is a chart to help you remember how to write a paragraph:

Paragraph structure:

- ❖ First sentence: Start with an indentation (tab key). Say the topic sentence. The topic sentence is what your paragraph is about.
- ❖ Second to fourth sentences (the middle sentences): These sentences give more information about the topic. These are the details.
- ❖ Fifth sentence (or last sentence): Repeats the topic sentence again in different words

*Typically, a short paragraph has four to five sentences. However, you can include more sentences in your paragraph. Generally, a simple paragraph has four to five sentences but it can have more.

Think of a paragraph as a table. The top of the table is the main idea or the topic sentence. The four legs of the table are the main ideas that support the topic sentence.



Each paragraph has a separate main idea. If you have sentences that are not about your topic, it is a bad paragraph and the bad sentences need to be taken out. Look at the following sentences. Which sentence does not belong?

India has a rich and interesting culture. Let us talk about the Indian festivals, food, and dances. India has many traditions in which festivals are celebrated. The most popular festival is Diwali, the festival of lights. Everything is expensive during Diwali time. All the things in the market rise in price. For this reason, it is best to shop during the monsoon season when prices are low. India also has a variety of food, which is a part of the culture. In traditional days, people would eat with their right hands. They use their hands to eat the food and do not use forks or spoons, even with rice. The food is really healthy and grows in farms. The district of Nashik is famous for onions and grapes. The dances of India are also very interesting. The dancers train for many years to preserve the dances and work hard to practice the art. The dances are performed at the festivals. In summary, India's culture is very rich and beautiful.

Which sentences do not belong in this paragraph? Well, the main idea is in the first sentences. The main idea is about India's culture: festivals, food, and dances. Which sentences are not about the festivals, food, and dances? The **highlighted** sentences do not belong in this paragraph.

*India has a rich and interesting culture. I will talk about the festivals, the food, and the dances. India has many traditions that are celebrated. The most popular festival is Diwali, the festival of lights. **Everything is expensive during Diwali time. All the things in the market rise in price. For this reason, it is best to shop during the monsoon season when prices are low.** India also has a variety of food, which is a part of the culture. In traditional days, people would eat with their right hands. They use their hands to eat the food and don't use forks or spoons, even with rice. The food is really healthy and grows in farms. The district of Nashik is famous for onions and*

grapes. The dances of India are also very interesting. The dancers train for many years to preserve the dances and work hard to practice the art. The dances are performed at the festivals. In summary, India's culture is very rich and beautiful.

Let us talk about the format of a paragraph. There are two ways to separate paragraphs:

- ❖ One option is to indent the first line of a paragraph **without extra space between paragraphs.** (Option A)
- ❖ Another option is to insert an extra space between paragraphs **without indentation of the first line.** You can indent the paragraphs by pressing the “tab” key on your keyboard. Indentation means a space at the beginning of a new paragraph. (Option B)

Option A:

This is a paragraph with an indentation at the beginning of the paragraph. Indentation means space at the beginning of a new paragraph.

This is a paragraph with an indentation at the beginning of the paragraph. As you can see, there is no extra space between this paragraph and the previous paragraph.

Option B:

This is a paragraph without an indentation at the beginning of the paragraph. This means there is no space at the beginning of the paragraph.

This second paragraph does not have an indentation at the beginning of the paragraph but you can see an extra space after the first paragraph.

This book has no indentation at the beginning of paragraphs. This book uses option B.

Paragraphs should not be boring. Do not repeat the same word all the time. For example, you can use pronouns instead of the noun. Nouns are people, places, and things. For example, nouns can be: “Marion” or “India” or “My Dog.” These are nouns. In your paragraph, instead of repeating the same words, you can use pronouns. Marion becomes “she/her” and India becomes “it.” My dog turns into “it.” You can also call the noun something different. You can say “my pet” instead of “my dog.” Pet and dog are synonyms because they are two different words for the same thing. Or, you can add an adjective like “my friendly dog.” Look at the types of pronouns in the reference section at the end of this unit.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Experiment: Think of a topic, like “Indian Culture.” Write something about your topic. That is your topic sentence. For example: “India’s culture is beautiful.” Next, write three to four details about that topic.
- ❖ Experiment: Look at your paragraph. Have you repeated any words? Can you replace those words with their synonyms? Can you replace any of the nouns with pronouns?

SELF-TEST 03

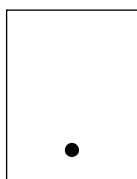
5. What is the definition of a paragraph?
 - a. A group of words that make a complete thought
 - b. The process of finding mistakes in writing
 - c. A group of sentences that are about a single topic
 - d. Writing that has been copied from someone else
6. Why is it important to have a main idea in each paragraph?
 - a. So that your reader understands what the paragraph is about
 - b. So that your reader can understand the supports, details, and examples
 - c. So that your reader isn’t confused about your message
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

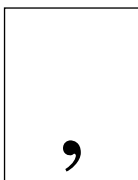
5. What is the definition of a topic sentence?
6. In a paragraph, why is it important that all of the sentences are about the same topic?

02-04: MASTERING PUNCTUATION

Imagine a person without a spine. Imagine a turtle without a shell. Humans cannot function without a spine just like turtles cannot function without a shell. Punctuation marks are small things that make a big difference. Let us talk about how punctuation can show form or structure to a sentence. We will also talk about the different purposes of punctuation. Let us understand the use of the full stop/period (.), the semicolon (;), the comma (,), the exclamation mark (!), the colon (:), the ellipses (...), the dash (--), and the parenthesis ().



Punctuation can show form. Punctuation gives shape to a sentence. Let us know how full stops/periods and commas add form to a sentence. For example, periods are full stops that help a reader know you have finished talking about something. If you did not have any full stops after your sentences, the reader would not know when one idea stopped and another idea began.

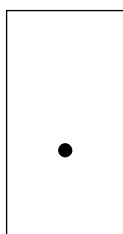


See these shapes below. The circle is always going in a circle. If you go into the circle, you never know when to end. When you do not want an idea to end, you can add commas, just like in this circle. Your voice will pause when you read a sentence with a comma. When you add a period, you are stopping, like the second shape. If you are reading a sentence with a period, you will stop longer than for a comma. A square has four corners or four stops. Periods stop a sentence. When one full sentence is finished, you stop it with a period.

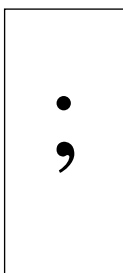
Comma

Periods/Full stops

When you add punctuation, you also add function or purpose. Now, let us talk about all the main punctuation marks and their purposes or functions.



Full stops/periods are easy because we use them a lot. Periods separate full sentences. A full sentence has a subject and a predicate. Your teacher may have taught you that a full sentence contains a subject, a verb, and sometimes an object. The verb and the object are a part of the predicate. When you have a new subject, you should put a period and start a new subject. Look at this long sentence. It has two subjects so there should be some punctuation. *The dog was hungry the cat was hungry too.* The two subjects/nouns are “the dog” and “the cat.” You should put a period (.) between the two ideas or the two sentences. *The dog was hungry. The cat was hungry too.*

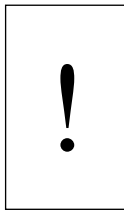


If the two sentences are about the same thing or if the sentences are connected in any way, you can add a semicolon to separate the two full sentences. A semicolon (;) is put in between two full sentences that are connected in some way. In my example, the dog and the cat both share something- they are both hungry. So, if the sentences have some sort of relationship. You can add a semicolon. *The dog was hungry; the cat was hungry too.*



Commas have other purposes. Another purpose of a comma is to separate parts of the sentence that are not a part of the full sentence. Look at this example: *The dog, who was hungry, ate a bone.* The full sentence is: “The dog ate a bone.” The part in red is extra information and it is not required for the full sentence. So, you can separate that part with commas.

If you misuse commas, you might change the meaning of the sentence. Look at these two sentences. One sentence has a comma. The other sentence does not have a comma:



Example A: *Let's eat, **grandma!***

Example B: *Let's eat grandma!*

In example A, the comma (,) is separating the full sentence “Let’s eat” from the rest of the sentence “grandma.” “Grandma” is only extra information. The word “grandma” is not required to make a full sentence. In this sentence, the person is calling grandma to invite her for food.

In example B, grandma is required for the full sentence. The subject is “Us,” (“let’s” is short for “let us”) the verb is “eat” and the object is “grandma.”

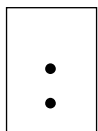
The function of the exclamation mark is at the end of a sentence to show excitement or passion.

Look at these two examples:

Example A: *The child laughed.*

Example B: *The child laughed!*

In example A, the sentence is a statement. The child laughed. It is a boring statement. In example B, the writer wants the reader to know that there is excitement to this sentence. So, the exclamation point (!) shows that the function of that sentence is to show excitement.



The function of a colon is to show your reader that you will add a list, an example, or a quotation. A quotation is words from someone. Look at these examples:

Example A: *The father went to the grocery store. He bought: eggs, cheese, milk, and biscuits.*

Example B: *The dog ate many things: a bone, a piece of meat, and some his favorite fruit.*

Example C: *My mother told me: “Don’t be late for school!”*

In all three examples, the colon is needed: for lists, examples, and quotations. In example A, the writer is giving a list of things the man bought at the store. In example B, the writer is give examples of what the dog ate. In example C, the writer is saying what the mother said. The writer is sharing a quotation.



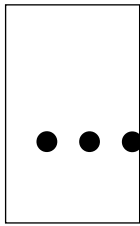
The function of a question mark is to ask a question. A question is a sentence

that usually starts with a question word: *who, what, when, where, why, or how* or a form of the verb *BE*. Look at these examples:

Example A: *My name is Michelle.*

Example B: *Is your name Michelle?*

In example A, the sentence is a statement. The person's name is Michelle. No questions. In example B, the person is asking if the person's name is Michelle. A question mark shows that the sentence is a question as well as the question word. In the example, the question starts with a form of the BE verb. The forms of the BE verbs are: is, am, are, was, were, etc.)



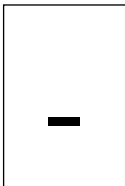
The function of the ellipsis is more difficult. You do not see an ellipsis too often. The ellipses are not used a lot. The ellipses are used with a quotation. When you do not use the same words from the quotation, you can put an ellipsis to replace those words. Look at this quotation:

My mother said: "I am going to the market to buy many things: grapes, milk, biscuits, rice, chili powder, cups, plates, soda, and vegetables."

If you want to use this quotation but you do not want to use all the words, you can use an ellipsis.

My mother said: "I am going to the market to buy many things: grapes, milk, biscuits...and vegetables."

The ellipses allow you to make the original quotation shorter.



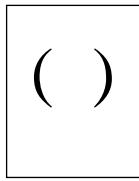
The dash is a little more complicated. The function of the dash is similar to a comma. When you want to separate parts of a sentence, you can use a dash. You can use a pair of dashes in the middle of the sentence to separate that part. You can also use a dash to separate a piece of a sentence you do not wish to use. Here are some examples:

Example A: *The teacher was very strict; she gave the students a lot of homework- including writing five essays.*

Example B: *The teacher-who was tired- gave the students a lot of homework, including writing five essays.*

In example A, the single dash separates the last part of the sentence: "including writing five essays." That part of the sentence is not a part of the full sentence before it.

In example B, the writer wants to show importance that the teacher was tired. That part is emphasized.



The function of the parenthesis is to add information that is not important to the sentence. This could be extra information. You also use parenthesis to include references where you found information. Look at these examples:

Example A: *The mother was very tired (she only slept 4 hours the night before).*

Example B: *The forest has eight species of birds (Wikipedia 2013).*

In example A, the writer is adding a thought (or extra information) that is not really important to understand the sentence. In example B, the writer is showing where he found the information. He is giving reference.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Reflection: Which punctuation mark do you know the least about? Which punctuation mark do you use the most?
- ❖ Experiment: The next time you need to write a paragraph, do not use a lot of periods/full stops. Look for two sentences that are next to each other and that share a common idea. Use a semicolon in between those two sentences.

SELF-TEST 04

7. Why is it important to have correct punctuation in your documents?
 - a. To add variety to your sentences
 - b. To increase the amount of white space (blank space) on the page
 - c. To help readers understand the relationships between words and sentences
 - d. All of the above
8. This sentence has bad punctuation. The comma (,) is not correct. What is the correct punctuation mark to have in this sentence?

“The employees were happy to be at work, they had a great team leader.”

 - a. Ellipses (...)
 - b. Semicolon (;)
 - c. Period (.)
 - d. Dash (--)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. What is the difference between a semicolon and a period/full stop?
8. What are two different functions of a comma?

SUMMARY

This section looked closer into how to write and some of the basic mechanics for making sentences, paragraphs, and proper grammar. These tips should be applied in any

formal situation. For example, use the grammar in school and at work. When you write better, people give you more respect. Learning to write correctly is a skill that is deeply needed for the 21st century, even with all the technology available.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ Topic sentence= the first sentence of each paragraph. It has the main idea. The topic sentence says something about your topic
- ❖ Synonyms= different words that have the same meaning
- ❖ Pronouns= replace nouns
- ❖ Nouns= people, places, and things
- ❖ Tenet= principle
- ❖ Indentation= a space at the beginning of a new paragraph
- ❖ Period= full stop

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 02-03: COMMUNICATING WITH E-MAIL AND MEMOS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Write / Compose** a professional e-mail
- ❖ **Outline** the steps of a professional memo
- ❖ **Recall** and **Explain** the way of writing e-mail request messages in a professional way
- ❖ **Summarize** and **Outline** the basic steps of writing a response message

INTRODUCTION



If you live in the 21st century, you know what a computer is. You have probably used the computer to do many things: look up Internet sites, use YouTube, Facebook, etc. The computer has granted us a lot of wonderful things. At work, you are likely use a computer in some way or the other. This section will cover how to write a professional e-mail, a professional memo, and how to request and respond to things by an e-mail.

03-01: UNDERSTANDING AND COMPOSING E-MAIL MESSAGES

The invention of an e-mail made sending messages to people a lot easier and faster. Imagine the days when the computer was not even thought of. People sent messages through messengers and later on by post. Finally, e-mail was invented so ensure the messages get sent quickly. However, e-mails have created problems for people because nothing is lost in e-mails and everything is recorded. People must be careful about the words they use to write an e-mail.

In the business world, e-mails are used to inform employees, remind employees of things, make announcements, request for information, respond to decisions, and to verify or clarify policies. E-mails do a lot of things!

E-mail is a great tool that does many things. It could be to inform employees of any change in the company, schedule meetings, update people on your project or request information. Think of an e-mail as an electronic letter or a written verbal message. If

you cannot tell someone in person what your message is, you can say what you need to say by e-mail.

An e-mail is an easy tool to send a message to many people at the same time. If you are a president of a company with five hundred people, you do not have time to tell everyone about policies and rules. So, e-mail is an effective way to send a message to many people at the same time. Just be careful that your e-mail is spelled correctly and only contains the information you want to send. Can you imagine sending one hundred people your personal photographs by accident? Make sure you check the content of your e-mail before you send it.

Another benefit of writing an e-mail is that every e-mail is recorded electronically. If you forget what your boss said one year ago, you can check the e-mail archive. Also, every e-mail has a time and a date stamp, so you know exactly when things happened, which is important in business.

Before you start to write an e-mail, there are many things you need to think about:

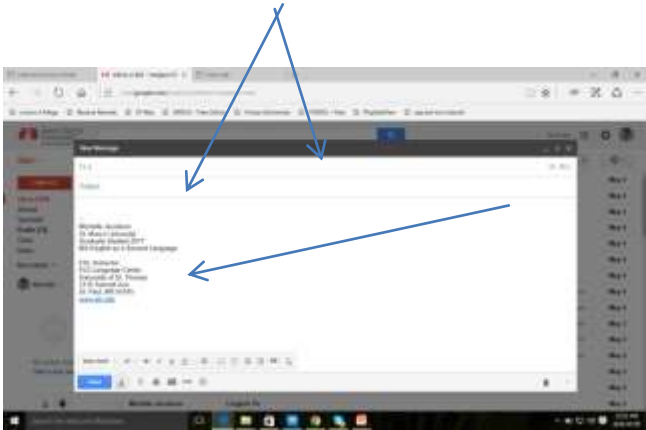
- ❖ What is the purpose of the e-mail? The purpose can be included in the title section of your e-mail. What do you want your reader to know? For example, are you inviting someone to something? Are you requesting information? For example, suppose you need some documents. The purpose is to receive documents. The subject line could include those important words: Need Documents.
- ❖ Who is going to read your e-mail? Knowing who will read your e-mail determines what kind of language you will use. For example, if you are going to write an e-mail to your friend, you can use more informal language. However, if you are going to write an e-mail to your manager or boss, your e-mail should include formal language. Suppose you want to ask your colleague for lunch. You can use informal language: “Wanna go to lunch at 2pm?” If you are talking to your manager/boss, your language should be more formal. Imagine that you are informing your boss about your project. You can say: “Good morning sir. I want to update you on a project my team is working on.” Notice the different language. For more examples of formal vs. informal language, look at the links after this section.

Think of all the people you need to read your e-mail. Put those e-mails in the “to” section. Do not include people who do not need to read the e-mail. You do not want to waste their time. Think of the people who need to read the e-mail only.

It is important to keep your boss, manager and team leader informed even if they are not involved in your business projects. If you want to keep people informed of e-mail messages, you can send them copies called carbon copies. A carbon copy is seen as Cc. On the right side of the “to” box, you will see “Cc” and “Bcc.” The Cc field is good to

keep people informed only. These people are not directly involved in your e-mail messages but need to keep them informed. You should always inform your boss, manager, or team leader of your messages if the e-mail is about work. You do not need to inform your boss that you are having lunch with a co-worker but you need to inform your boss if you are having a team meeting.

After you understand why you are writing an e-mail, you are ready to start writing! An e-mail is composed of four sections: the subject line, the opening sentence, the supporting details, and the conclusion. Let us look at each section in more detail.



The subject line is very important because it is the first thing people will see. What is the basic message you want to send to your reader? Do you need documents? Put these words in the subject line: “Need Documents.” If you need to schedule a meeting, put these words in the subject line: “Schedule Meeting.” Put the important words in the subject line. The subject line does not include a full sentence; it only has the most important words. The words you use in the subject line should be very direct and specific. Look at this chart. The top line has titles that are not specific. The bottom line has titles that are more specific.

Bad Subject Lines	“Important”	“Problems”	“Meetings”
Good subject lines	“New Rules: Important”	“Problem with the project”	“Meeting Monday at 8 am”

After you have decided an appropriate title, you are ready for the first sentence of your e-mail. This is called the opening sentence. The first sentence needs to include your main idea. What is a main idea? A main idea is exactly what you are trying to say. The first sentence is a full sentence that says the same thing as the subject line. If your subject line is “Meeting Monday at 8 am” then your opening sentence could be: “All employees must report to the meeting room Monday at 8 am.” Also remember to add a

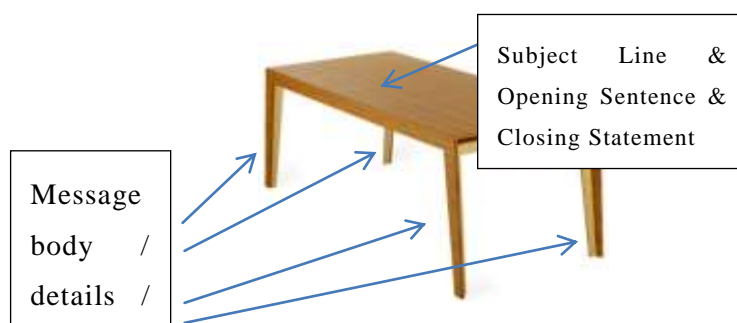
warm-up sentence like: “I hope this e-mail finds you in the best of health and spirits” or “Thank you very much for sending...”

Remember that before you write your first sentence, you need to choose a greeting. This is called a salutation. A good formal salutation is: “Dear Mr./Ms.__(last name)_____.” Mr. is for men and Ms. is for women. If your message is to a group of people, you can say: “Dear Marketing Department,” (or the name of the department). Another general greeting is “Greetings.”

After your first sentence, you are ready to give support. This is called “The Message Body.” Remember the table and the chairs? The top of the table is your subject line/opening sentence. The legs of the table are the reasons, the details, and the support.

In your message body, you need to remember some things:

- ❖ Keep your sentences short. The sentences should not be too long, or your reader might get confused. In business, the shorter, the better.
- ❖ Separate your ideas in different paragraphs. Do you remember that we talked about how to separate ideas into different paragraphs? Separate your ideas. If your e-mail needs two things, write them in separate paragraphs. If you need to schedule a meeting and get some documents, put the information about the meeting in one paragraph and the documents in another paragraph. If your reader has to read your e-mail more than two times to understand it, then you have not done a good job of saying what you want to say. Remember, shorter is better.



The last section of an e-mail is called the closing statement. This is the last thing your reader will remember. The closing statement should include your main idea again using different words. One good technique to use for your closing statement is to include a request. If you need some documents, you can say: “Please give the documents by September 20th” as your closing statement. If your last sentence does not make a request, it is not an effective closing statement.

You can end your e-mail with: “With respect, __ (your name)_____” or “Sincerely, ____ (your name)_____” or “cheers, ____ (your name)_____.”

Include your first and last name, your phone number, your school or company name and your e-mail so the person knows how to get in contact with you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written an e-mail? To whom? What did you need? What was your subject line? Locate the e-mail and see if you have a good subject line, a good first sentence, a good body, and a nice closing statement.
- ❖ Experiment: Try writing an e-mail to your friend or family member. Use the techniques to have a good subject line, opening sentence, body, and closing statement.

SELF-TEST 01

1. When you write an e-mail, what is the first thing you should do?
 - a. Know the purpose (why you are writing the email)
 - b. Send a test (practice) message to your colleague before you send the official email
 - c. Wait until you have strong feelings/emotions and then send the email
 - d. All of the above
2. In this list, which one is the best subject for an email message?
 - a. Questions
 - b. Re:
 - c. This is a private message
 - d. Meeting Friday at 10 am

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

9. Why is it important to have a good subject line?
10. Why is it important to say your main idea in the opening sentence and again in the closing statement?

03-02: CONSTRUCTING PROFESSIONAL MEMOS

A memo is a written document that delivers important information inside a company. Memos are not as common as e-mails, but it is important to know what they are. Memos are good if you need written proof or evidence of something. Think of a memo as a professional e-mail that has been printed. It has all the same information as an e-mail but it is in the form of a letter. Also, memos are only intended for people inside a company, not outside.



Usually, memos are typed on special paper. This is called letter head. The letterhead is special paper from your company with the company logo. You should write the word “Memo” or “Memorandum” at the top so that people know it is a memo.



The first information a memo has on the paper is called a header. A header is special information about the document. It is usually of four lines and includes this information: the date in long form, who the memo is for, who the memo is from and the subject of the memo. The subject can be written in the form of “Re” which means you are responding to something. The date should be spelled out in a long form which means you spell out the month but can include the number digits for the date and the year. The “to” field should include the full name of the person you are addressing. If you are addressing a full group of people, you can write “The IT department” or “The Human Resources Department” or “All Employees.” At the end of the salutation, instead of signing at the bottom, all you need to do is put your initials next to the “From” section.

Here is an example of a header:

To: Pratik Deshmukh

From: Michelle Jacobson (MJ in signature)

Date: September 6, 2016

Re: About your job interview



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written a letter to someone? What is the same about the letter and a professional memo? What is different?

SELF-TEST 02

3. In this list, which one is not part of a formal memo?
 - a. Header (top part)
 - b. Salutation (greeting)
 - c. Subject line
 - d. Names of people who will receive the memo
4. Memos are different from e-mails. You should send memos only to:
 - a. Customers
 - b. People who do not like to receive e-mails
 - c. Clients
 - d. Other people who work in your company

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

11. What is the difference between a professional e-mail and a professional memo? What is the same?
12. Why is it important to keep your memo short?

03-03: WRITING REQUEST MESSAGES

At the workplace, you need to ask people for things. One way to do that is to write an e-mail requesting information. You might need to ask someone about a meeting, a project, or to send you something. You need to learn how to request something in a professional way.

The first thing to remember is to be polite and direct. That means to ask your question right away after your greeting. You should ask your request in the first two sentences. For example, if you need documents, you can say: "Hi Mr. Ugale. Please send the documents by Monday. Thank you."

The second thing to remember is this word: "why." Knowing why you are writing the request is important. What are you asking? What is your purpose? If you want people to

respond, you need to make your request. The easiest way to make multiple (many) requests is to include a bulleted list. You can use this example:

- ❖ Request #1
- ❖ Request #2
- ❖ Request #3

You should always include a deadline in your request so the person knows when your request is needed. If people do not have a deadline, they might take a lot of time to give you what you need. A deadline is very important if you want your request to be granted. Try to be realistic. Do not request something within twenty four hours if the person would really need a week. Try to think about how long it will take to fulfill the request and give the person an appropriate amount of time to fulfill the request.

Lastly, it is important to be polite. When you request something, it is easy to be viewed as rude or aggressive. When making a request, be direct but use words like “please” and “thank you.” You can use expressions like “I would appreciate it if you could....”

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever asked a friend or family member for something? How did you convince them to fulfill your request? Did they give you what you needed? Were you polite when you made the request?
- ❖ Experiment: Try asking a stranger for something, like the time or for a pen to write something down. Was it hard to talk to a stranger? What language did you use?

SELF-TEST 03

5. What is the function of a request message?
 - a. To answer a question
 - b. To ask for information
 - c. To avoid personal contact
 - d. To say “no” to a request
6. What is the best way to start a request message?
 - a. Make the request in the first sentence
 - b. Apologize
 - c. Start with a greeting
 - d. Ask the reader to take action

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

13. Why is it important to be polite when making a request?
14. When making a request, should you be direct or indirect? Why?

03-04: WRITING RESPONSE MESSAGES

A response message is a response to a request. When someone in your company requests something and has a deadline, you should respond to the message. Most request and response messages happen in e-mail. Here are some tips for making a response message in a professional way.

When you respond to someone through an e-mail, you should click on the “respond” button. The subject line in the e-mail will put a “re” before the subject. “Re” means “reply.” You are replying to the original message.

In business, time is money. What it means is that you should not waste time. When you write a response, you should not waste time by repeating the original request. Start your e-mail response by responding to the request. Do not repeat the question.

When responding, be positive. The other person should know that you are happy fulfilling the request. Use expressions such as: “I am happy to do this,” “I am happy to fulfill your request” or “As you requested, I am happy to help you.”

Make sure you respond to every request in the original message. It is important to answer all questions so that nothing is lost. You can refer to the original e-mail if you forgot what the person requested. Here is an example request and response message. Pay attention to the **highlighted** parts.

Here is a sample e-mail request:

Subject: *Vacation Package Options*

To Happy Traveling Travel Agency:

*I would like to request some **vacation package** ideas for my family. We would like to spend only **34,000 Rupees** for the package and are available **May 15-May 30**. **Thank you** for finding available packages in our budget.*

-Gaurav

Here is the response to that request:

Subject: *Re: Vacation Package Options*

Gaurav:

Thank for you for request for the vacation packages. Here are some package options available for you to purchase with our agency within your budget and timeline:

- *Latin America cruise tour-30,000 rs*

- *Alaska wilderness camping- 32,000 rs*
- *European bus tour-34,000 rs*

If you require any further help, please let us know.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Experiment: Look in your e-mail. Is there any e-mail that requires a response? If yes, respond to it in a professional way.

SELF-TEST 04

- What is a good thing to do when writing response messages in e-mail?
 - Always use the “Reply to All” button
 - Put your initials next to your name
 - Put your manager’s e-mail in the Cc line
 - Include the original subject in the reply
- Scenario: You are working for a company and you receive an e-mail that you do not have the information the person is requesting. What should you do?
 - Wait for one week until you can properly respond with correct information
 - Respond within twenty four hours saying you will be delayed in your response until you can get more information
 - Respond within twenty four hours with only half the information the person requested
 - Respond within twenty four hours saying that the person in the Cc field can properly answer his/her request

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

- When writing a response message, is it important to be direct or not? Why?
- When responding, why is it important to respond to every part of the original message?

SUMMARY

E-mails are an important part of any business life as well as in your personal life. This section covered the basics of how to write a professional e-mail, how to request something at work in a professional way, and how to respond. Learning the skills in using e-mails in a professional way will make work easier for you.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ Verify= to prove, show, find out, or state if something is correct or not
- ❖ Clarify= to make something easier to understand

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 02-04: DEVELOPING REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Explain** the main uses of reports and proposals
- ❖ **Compare** and **Contrast** a report with a proposal
- ❖ **Recall** the basic parts of a report or a proposal in the order or sequence

INTRODUCTION



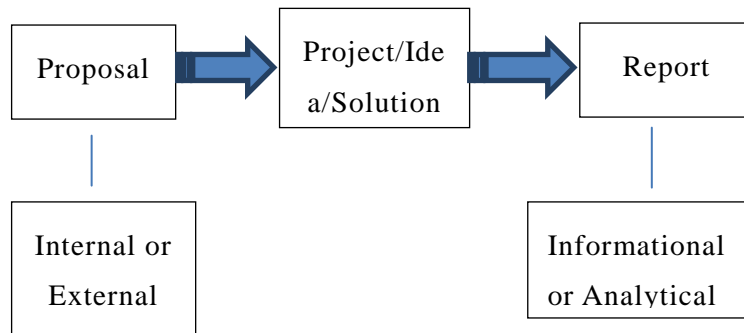
Now it is time to learn how to put your writing skills into good use! Have you ever heard the terms “report” and “proposal”? Has your teacher ever asked you to write a report for your school? You must have written a project report or a report of some activity conducted by you in the school. In the business world, reports and proposals are very common. It is very important for you to learn the basics of reports and proposals. After you have mastered writing sentences and paragraphs, you are ready for reports and proposals. In summary, reports and proposals tell information about a specific topic and address/answer questions people might have about a project or business idea.

04-01: UNDERSTANDING REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

Proposals are written at the beginning of a project. For example, if your engineering department is making a new design for a cell phone, it will need to write a proposal for the manager/boss. Think of a proposal as a written request form to get permission. It is a long document that includes a lot of information that answers potential questions from business partners. The purpose of a proposal is to convince the business partners or manager to accept your idea or project. You are going to include any information they might need, including answers to their potential questions.



Unlike proposals, reports are written at the end of a project and include information about what the successes were and also the things that did not work so well with the project or the idea. Reports help business partners make future decisions to do similar projects or to not do similar projects in the future. A company might study the previous reports to know more. The report will include the plan and the cost. It will also include any recommendations for how to change the project in the future.



In the previous section, we talked about how to plan for writing. Just as you plan before you write, you need to plan before you write a proposal or a report. Here are some questions that you must ask yourself:

- 1) What is the purpose of the report? Why do you want to convince others to support your idea or project?

Is it important to know the purpose, so you should know which style of writing to use. Are you updating people about a project? Are you analyzing the solution to a problem? Are you persuading others to support your project? Knowing the purpose helps you shape what you will write.

- 2) Who is going to read your proposal? Someone inside the company or outside the company?

This question is important to answer because it will change what information you include in the proposal. If the proposal is for someone inside the company, the report will focus on how to change a process or procedure. It might include special information about how to change a product. If the proposal is for someone outside the company, the proposal will try to sell products or services to a customer who requests for that information.

- 3) Do you need to write a report or a proposal?

This question is also important because the reports and proposals do different things.

- ❖ Proposals = written before the project starts to persuade or convince others to support your project, idea, or solution to something

- ❖ Internal proposal = a request from someone inside the company to change a procedure or product
 - ❖ External proposal = selling products to customers who request for more information on a project
 - ❖ Reports = written after a project or idea is implemented. The report give a summary of the good things and the bad things that happened, the cost, recommendations, and the conclusion
- 4) What information will be included in the report? Will you write objective information or will you analyze the information?

This information is important because there are two different types of reports. Reports can be informational or analytical.

Informational reports = reports that share facts or objective information. Objective means there is no emotion in the report. There are no opinions or recommendations in this section. Informational reports include objective summaries of what happened in the project and provide answers to the questions: who, what, when, where, why, how.

Analytical reports = reports that have data/numbers, your analysis (the good and bad effects from the project), and a conclusion (your final thoughts/recommendations). Analyze means to talk in detail about something in order to understand it.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written a report for school? What kind of information did it include? Did you include only data/facts or did you include your opinions?
- ❖ Experiment: Imagine that you are working for a travel agency. You want to send an external proposal to customers who ask questions about India. Convince the customer why they should travel to India. Include your reasons for coming and the total cost for a fourteen day trip. You do not have to write it down. Just give your reasons to your friend.

SELF-TEST 01

1. What kind of document shows information in an objective and clear way?
 - a. Electronic notes (notes taken from your computer)
 - b. Analytical Report
 - c. Informational Report
 - d. Interview
2. Which document gives different opinions, benefits, disadvantages (negative results), and recommendations?
 - a. Analytical Report
 - b. Informational Report

- c. Informational Proposal
- d. Citation

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. What is the difference between an informational report and an analytical report?
2. What is the difference between an internal proposal and an external proposal?

04-02: PLANNING A REPORT OR PROPOSAL

Now that you have a basic understanding of reports and proposals, are you ready to learn more? For example, do you know how to structure the report or proposal? This section will talk about the organization of the proposal and report.

The first thing to think about is how you want to organize the report or proposal. Would you like to organize the ideas together by time? Time is the order of when something happened, usually from beginning to end. You can also organize the ideas together by importance. This means you can put the more important information at the beginning and the less important information at the end. Another way to organize the report is by categories, or groups of similar information. For example, maybe one category is products and another category is data. Start asking yourself how you will organize the information. You can do this easily by making an outline.

Here are a few examples of how to organize a report or proposal:

Purpose: to give information about tours by Happy Travels Travel Company I: Introduction A: Background II: Facts/Data A: Travel costs B: Travel activities III: National Tours	Purpose: to give information about the new products to internal employees of Technology XYZ 1: Introduction A: Overview B: Background 2: Cell phone products A: Material B: Cost 3: Conclusion
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As you can see from the outlines, you need to know your purpose. What are you trying to accomplish with the proposal or report? If you do not know your purpose, it will be

very difficult to write the report or proposal. Remember, the purpose could be to inform, update, analyze, or persuade. Most proposals and reports are written to inform the company of a solution to a problem.

Each heading has some information that is useful for the report or proposal. You can see that we have included facts, data, and other useful information. Some other things you should include in your report/proposal are: introduction, background, current situation, facts, possible solutions, summary of main points, conclusion of opinions, recommendations, the benefits and drawbacks (+/-), reference list, and appendices (references for more information).

After you have made your outline, you are ready to write the report and proposal. Usually, the headings will become your paragraphs. For example, in the examples above, you can see that the headings on the left outline are: introduction, facts/data, national tours and international tours. So, the paragraphs will be the introduction paragraph, the paragraphs about the facts and date, the paragraph about the national tours, and the paragraph about the international tours.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Experiment: You are a team leader of a technology company. Try writing an outline for a proposal for a new technology product that your team wants to design. What information will you include in your outline?
- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written a report/proposal outline for a school essay? Did the outline help you to write the paper?

SELF-TEST 02

3. From your outline, what do headings turn into?
 - a. Main ideas
 - b. Topic Sentences
 - c. The start of the new paragraph
 - d. All of the above
4. Which of the following is not a section of a report/proposal outline?
 - a. Background
 - b. Possible Solutions
 - c. Recommendations
 - d. Information about the company

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. Why is it important to talk about both the pros (the positive things) and the cons (the negative things) in a proposal or report?

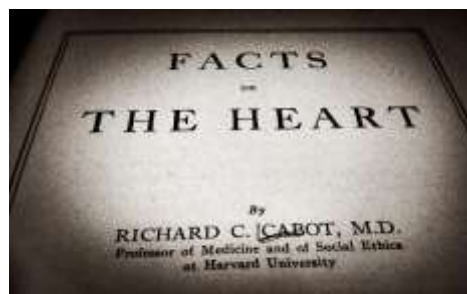
4. Why is it important to make a plan before you start writing a proposal or report?

04-03: WRITING REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

Reports and proposals are made from paragraphs. Typically, the report or proposal has three sections: the beginning, the middle, and the end. Let us talk about each section.

The **first section** or paragraph is the beginning. The sections that need to be included in the beginning are: the title page, the table of contents, the summary, and the background/introduction.

The title page is the first page of any report/proposal. The title should include the main idea. Choose a font that looks very appealing and/or attractive. You should include your name and your company as well as the date.



After seeing the title page, the table of contents is the list of where to find all the sections. From your outline, you can use the headings to make the table of contents. For example: if your outline headings are the introduction, facts/data, national tours and international tours, those are included in the table of contents. You need to put the page number that that content starts on. The table of contents should be the last thing you write because in the editing process, the page numbers change all the time. After the report/proposal is written, you can write the table of contents.

Table of Contents	
Introduction.....pg. 3
Facts/Data.....pg. 4

Do you remember what we learned about how to make summaries? Summaries are short and sweet and include only the most important information from the full report. The

summary is one paragraph that shares the main points of the report/proposal. It may also include the most important observations, problems, and conclusions in a short version. If a person is busy, he/she may only read the summary. A summary is like the first impression that a person has of the report. It is the first official paragraph he/she reads and it may be the only paragraph he/she reads if the person is busy.

The first section also includes the introduction or the background. This is a paragraph that helps the reader understand why you are writing the report/proposal. The introduction can also talk about the current situation that your company is facing, the current problem, and the proposed solution to the problem. The introduction helps the reader understand the problem so he/she is ready to read the middle section of the report/proposal. For example, suppose your travel company is losing money and you want to write a proposal to increase the number of tours your agency provides. You might include in the introduction the money your company is losing, the problem of failing business, and give the solution to offer more tours. The introduction does not have to give too many details; the middle section will include the specific details.

After the title, the summary (shorter), and the introduction (shorter), the author is ready to write the **middle section** of the report and proposal. The body of the proposal includes most of the information and there is usually more than one paragraph in the middle section. Think of the summary and introduction as the appetizers or snacks. The body is the main meal. This is where you give the examples, details, alternatives, and recommendations with full force. You can add charts and graphs in this section as well. You are going to give details of each section of your table of contents. You should have more than one body paragraph. Each body paragraph should explain different concepts. In the example above, one paragraph is the facts/data, another paragraph is national tours, and the last body paragraph is the international tours. When you write your body, you should make reference to the information. In other words, you should include the reference or the source of the information. It will make reference to your sources that will be in the last section of your proposal or report. The last section to be included in the body is the conclusion. In your conclusion, you summarize all your main points again and include your recommendations of what to do next. Your reader is also likely to remember the concluding paragraph, so make sure all the main points are included in the conclusion.

The **last section** of your project or proposal is like the dessert or the curd. This section includes the full reference list and the appendix. The appendix is extra information about something connected to your report. The information might be too much for the body of your report. So, instead of explaining it, you are going to put a link in your

appendix. This could be a book title or a website link. If the readers want to learn more, they can go to the appendix.

Here is an example of an example reference list:

<p style="text-align: center;">Reference List</p> <p>Deshmukh, Gaurav (14 March, 2013). How to Sell in a Risky Market. <i>Business Market World</i>, 20-22.</p> <p>Pawar, J. (2001). How to Get Clients. Retrieved</p>
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LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Experiment: Practice writing a summary of anything you like. Think of a good movie you saw. Can you write a 4-5 sentence summary of the most important parts of that movie? This practice will help you write summaries for reports.
- ❖ Experiment: Think of any statement (like: Indians love festivals). Can you support your statement with evidence? Making use of the evidence helps you to write better reports.

SELF-TEST 03

5. What is the purpose/function of a proposal?
 - a. Give details of what a company wants
 - b. Avoid taking someone else's ideas
 - c. Make friends with a future customer
 - d. Encourage/persuade people to try your product, service, or idea
6. What kind of information should you include in the introduction of a report?
 - a. References
 - b. A summary of the report
 - c. The purpose/function of the report
 - d. The author

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. Why is a summary important in the report/proposal?
6. Why is it important to share your recommendations for solving a problem in a proposal or a report?

SUMMARY

This section covered the basics of report and proposal writing, which are basic skills needed for the workplace. Understanding the purpose of writing helps you write better reports and proposals. Any skill you learn in writing at school will help you become a better writer at work as well.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ Analyze= to study something closely
- ❖ To inform= to tell someone about something in an objective way
- ❖ Objective= facts/data. No opinions
- ❖ Persuade= to convince someone/ to change their opinions to support you
- ❖ Analyze= to look at something closely
- ❖ Recommend= to give an opinion/suggestion
- ❖ Informational report= a report that presents information in an objective way, free from personal opinion. Facts only.
- ❖ Analytical report= a report in which the data is studied and analyzed. Author includes a conclusion, discusses pros (good things) and cons (bad things) from the decision, gives alternative options, and gives recommendations
- ❖ Pros= the good things about something; the positive benefits
- ❖ Cons= the bad things about something; the negative consequences
- ❖ pros and cons = the favourable and the unfavourable factors or reasons; advantages and disadvantages.
- ❖ Internal Proposals= proposals only for people inside a company that discuss how to solve problems and gives recommendations
- ❖ External Proposals= proposals only for people outside a company. External proposals are advertisements in detail about a product meant to persuade potential customers who request information
- ❖ Reference List= a list of information about where you found information
- ❖ Appendix= a section of extra information added at the end of a book

REFERENCES

MOOCs

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/writing-for-business>

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7tU3tKfjsE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTBwOMfh-Q>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbDASy8IUrA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFGNKJruxdg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbt6DlRboY8>

WIKIPEDIA

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proposal_\(business\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proposal_(business))

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Report>

OER

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/05/>

BOOKS

“How to Write Reports and Proposals: Creating Success” by Patrick Forsyth

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 02-05: WRITING FOR EMPLOYMENT

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Outline** the major parts of a cover letter
- ❖ **Outline** the main parts of a resume
- ❖ **List** and **define** the different types of resumes
- ❖ **Explain** the need and use of reference letters
- ❖ **Compare** the different forms of sending follow-up messages for the future use
- ❖ **Use** the techniques for formally accepting or rejecting job offers in your life

INTRODUCTION



Many of you will be looking for a job at least once in your life, maybe more than once. There are specific things that require writing skills related to the job search. These are cover letters, resumes, reference letters, and follow-up messages. All of these have two things in common: employment and writing skills.

05-01: WRITING EFFECTIVE COVER LETTERS

Have you heard of a cover letter? A cover letter is also called as “covering letter” in British English. A cover letter is a letter of interest sent to a company by a person who is interested in applying for a job. Usually, you send your cover letter along with your resume when you apply to the company for a job. A cover letter is more personal than a resume. The purpose of a cover letter is to tell the hiring manager which position you are interested in, talk about your skills, and request an interview.

So, how do you write a cover letter? A cover letter has multiple paragraphs. Like a memo, you will need a header. A header has all the important information at the top. It will have the date you are writing the letter, the complete name of the person who is reading the letter, the job title of the person reading the letter, and the address of the company you are applying for.

After the header, you need to start your letter with a greeting. Many people make the mistake of not knowing who is reading the letter, so they choose a standard greeting like “Dear Sir/Madam.” These are general greetings that should be avoided. Always know who you are writing to. You can put Mr. for a man and Ms. for a woman + the last name of the person. After their name, put a comma (,) or a colon (:).

Here are some examples:

Dear Mr. Deshmukh:

Dear Ms. Pawar,

Look at the colon or the comma.

The first paragraph of your cover letter should identify which position you are applying for. This is important because a company might have multiple jobs that they are filling, so identifying the specific position is important. You should also write how you found the job. Did you find it in the newspaper, a specific website, or from a friend?

The second paragraph of your cover letter should talk about all your skills that match the job. You should limit your skills to 3-5 only. Any more than 5 will be too much to talk about. What are you good at or what have you done that relates to the job? All the skills you mention in your cover letter should also be in your resume. You want the hiring manager to choose you, so choose only those skills that are good examples of what the job requires. For example, if you know the job requires bilingual skills as well as computer skills, you should talk about examples of how you use those skills. A cover letter talks about these skills in more detail than your resume. A resume may list your skills but a cover letter describes them.

The last paragraph of your cover letter is about the next steps, or the future. You are going to tell the hiring manager what you want to happen next. If you would like the hiring manager to follow-up with you in a week or if you would like to have a job interview, you need to say what you want. You also thank the hiring manager for taking the time to read your cover letter.

Here is an example cover letter:

4 May, 2015

Global Business Partners

Delhi, India

Dear Mr. Pathak:

*At the suggestion of Pratik from your office in Delhi, I am writing to see if your company can use the services of an **administration assistant**. I have 2.5 years of **experience** in the business industry and have the **education and experience** required for your company. I am also sending you my resume. **Please contact me for a meeting by next week**. Looking forward to hearing from you.*

Sincerely, Jai Shekdar

If you do not receive a response in two weeks, send your cover letter again. The hiring manager will be happy that you took the time to send it again and it shows you are interested. Make sure your e-mail or phone number is included in your cover letter so that the hiring manager can contact you. If you send your resume with the cover letter, the resume has all your important contact information.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- ❖ Reflection: Have you had to talk about yourself to another person? For example, have you had to promote yourself? Have you ever talked about your skills to a teacher or anyone else?

SELF-TEST 01

1. What should you send with your cover letter?
 - a. Another letter
 - b. Resume
 - c. List of references
 - d. A formal acceptance
2. 28) Which of the following is a good way to end a cover letter?
 - a. Suggest a time to have a phone call
 - b. Request an interview/meeting
 - c. Put your university date of graduation
 - d. Describe your skills (what you are good at)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

1. What is the definition of a cover letter?
2. Is it important to use professional language when writing a cover letter? Why or why not?

05-02: WRITING RESUMES

A resume is the first thing a hiring manager will see, even before your cover letter. A resume is usually 1-2 pages long which include your education, job history, skills and accomplishments. You will have to write and rewrite your resume many times because

this document needs to have the correct words and have good grammar and spelling. Resumes can have different formats. Let us know about the different sections you must have in your resume.

The first part of your resume is the heading. The heading is what is at the top of the resume. Just like a memo or a cover letter, a heading has the most important information at the top. For a resume, the heading has your full name, address, e-mail and phone number. The purpose of a heading is to help the employers to contact you if they need anything or if they want to offer you the job. The heading can have different formats. Some people put it centered in the middle of the page. Some people put it on the left side. Look at a few examples on Google images and choose a format that is good for you. Here is an example heading:

Ganesh Pawar

4456 Gangapur Road

Nashik, Maharashtra, India

938-584-4884

ganeshpawar@gmail.com

After the heading, the hiring manager will read the objective. The objective is a summary of your most useful skills and how they apply to the job. As there are many people applying for this job, the objective will help the hiring manager see what special skills you have that apply to the job position. The objective is usually one sentence or a list with bullet points of your most important skills. Here is an example objective:

***Apply** my communication, teamwork, language, and computer skills for a career in the hotel management industry.*

- ❖ *Bilingual in Marathi and English*
- ❖ *Excellent teamwork skills in working with hotel employees for 5 years*
- ❖ *Proficient in Microsoft Word*

After the heading, you should write your job history. The employment history will use most of the space in your resume. When you write a resume, you do not need to include every job you have had. Only list the jobs that are the most important to the job you are applying for. In other words, only list the jobs that are related to or help you in the job you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for a business job, do not list the jobs you had at the supermarket or the jewelry shop if the skills you learned there do not apply to the job you are applying for. However, if the job responsibilities or the

skills learned apply to the future job, put it on your resume. Also, list the most recent job first and go in chronological order in reverse. The job section should include the job title, the company name, the dates you worked at that job, and the major job responsibilities you had at that job. When you write the job responsibilities, it is important to use action verbs to start the sentence. The action verbs are **highlighted** in this section. The employment section can have different formats, so find the format that works for you. Here is one example of what to include in this section:

Employment History:

Happy Travel Travel Industry

Nashik, Maharashtra, India

Administrative Assistant

2003-2005

- ***Answered*** phones
- ***Managed*** email account
- ***Organized*** meetings

You should also list your education. If you have finished your PhD or masters degree, you should also list your bachelor's degree. However, if you do not have your bachelor's degree yet, you can list your secondary school or junior college. If you only have your bachelor's degree, just list that and not your secondary school. Here is a chart to help you remember:

If you have...	A high school diploma	A bachelor's degree	A masters degree	A PhD
Then list on your resume...	Your secondary education & junior college	Your bachelor's degree	Your masters & bachelor's (in that order)	Your PhD, masters, & bachelor's (in that order)

Just like the employment history, you should include your most recent education first. The education should include the school name, the city, state, and country of the school, and the year you graduated. If you are currently still a student, you can write "current." Here is an example of an education you can list:

Education:

B.SC in Computer Science

2000-2002

Last but not least, you should write other skills you have that relate to the job that you did not write in the objective section. Some examples of skills you use for everyday jobs are: computer skills and language skills. You may have won some awards from your previous jobs or at your school that you can include here. This shows you are valuable in other areas.

Skills/awards:

- ❖ *Trilingual in Marathi, Hindi, English*
- ❖ *“Best Employee of the Month” award November 2003*

There are two types of resumes that you need to know about. The two types of resumes are: chronological and functional.

Chronological resumes are chronological. This means that they focus on the date. Everything in a chronological resume starts with the most recent date and ends with the least recent date. For example, if you have three jobs listed in your chronological resume, can you list them in chronological order? One job was from 2003-2005, the other job from 2005-2009, and the last job 2014-2016. Look at the ending date, not the beginning date, and put them in chronological order. The chronological order of these dates would be: 2014-2016, 2005-2009, and 2003-2005. Remember, the most recent dates are first.

Functional resumes are a little different from chronological resumes. Functional resumes focus on your skills instead of your work history. This type of resume is good for anyone who does not have a lot of work history but has a lot of skills. In this type of resume, the work history is still listed, but at the bottom of the resume. The resume will list specific skills that you have acquired in school, at volunteer projects, hobbies, or jobs.

Think of three to five skills you have. These could be language skills, customer relation skills, organization skills, management skills, etc. After that, list every experience you can think of where you did something related to that skill. Remember, you have experience from your school, your volunteer projects, and your past jobs.

In general, there are some important things to remember when writing any resume:

- ❖ Spelling and grammar are important. Check these before you give it to an employer
- ❖ There are different formats to use with any resume. Choose a format that you like

- ❖ Look at examples of resumes online to see the variety
- ❖ Start each sentence in the job history section and in the skills section with an action verb. A list of action verbs has been provided at the end of this section.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- ❖ Reflection: If you are a student, think of some valuable projects you have worked on. What are some skills you learned that you could include in a functional resume?
- ❖ Experiment: Go to Google and search for functional and chronological resumes to see the different formats. Think about which format you like the best.

SELF-TEST 02

3. What is the definition of a resume?
 - a. A long document (at least 3-5 pages) with no structure or format that includes your talents and goals
 - b. A formatted summary of your education, employment history, skills and accomplishments
 - c. A specific list of all your education
 - d. A formal report for your boss/manager

4. Scenario: You have completed your master's program at the age of 24. You do not have a lot of work experience but you have a lot of educational and volunteer experience. Which type of resume is best for you?
 - a. Chronological
 - b. Functional

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3. How is a functional resume different from a chronological resume?
4. In a chronological resume, what are the sections required?

05-03: REFERENCE LETTERS

When you apply for a job, you give you resume and cover letter to the hiring manager during your interview. The other thing you need to bring is a list of three references. References are people and who know you in your academic or professional life who can talk about your character. References cannot be family members. References are usually professors, teachers, supervisors, team leaders, or colleagues/co-workers.

When you apply for a job, you need to think about people in your life who can talk about how you are a good fit for that job specifically. A reference is a person who promotes you. So, choose your references carefully.

When you go for your job interview, have a piece of paper ready with this information:

Reference #1: Full name
Job position and company name
Relation to you
How long you have known that person

Example:

Renu Joshi

Happy Travels Travel Agency

Co-worker- 5 years

References might be required at one of two times: either during your job interview or on the job application. Have the information of three references with you at all times so you are prepared.

Make sure to ask your references ahead of time that you would like to use them.

The hiring manager might ask for your reference information. The hiring manager will either call or e-mail the reference. Sometimes, the references need to provide a formal reference letter. Sometimes, a reference only needs to have a phone call with a hiring manager.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- ❖ Reflection: Do you know three people in your professional or academic life who can speak positively about you?

SELF-TEST 03

5. Who should you not ask for a letter of reference?
 - a. A person who used to live in your neighborhood/city
 - b. Someone you used to work for
 - c. University professor
 - d. Supervisor
6. 32) What should you tell your references?
 - a. Which job you are applying for and the company
 - b. A thank you letter or e-mail after they have finished providing the reference
 - c. The status of your job-if you receive or don't receive the job
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

5. Who is a reference person?
6. Why is it a good idea to have three references?

05-04: SENDING FOLLOW-UP MESSAGES

Many times after you fill up a job application or have a job interview, you do not hear from a company. Did the company forget about you? In these cases, it is OK to follow up. Follow up means to inquire or ask again. Let us talk about what you should do when you do not hear anything from a company after you send in an application, after you have a job interview, and even after you receive a rejection.

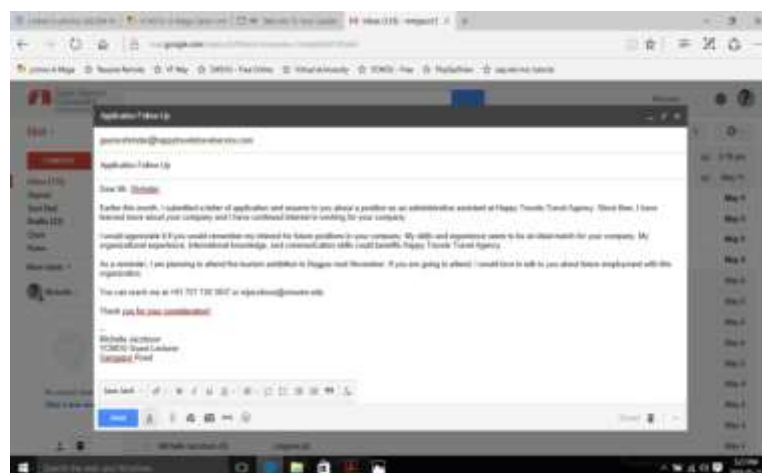
Many times, people apply for jobs online and never hear back from the company. Those people do not always send follow-up messages. Sending follow-up messages can be a great thing if you do it in a professional way.



First, wait for two weeks after you send in a job application to follow up. Many times, companies are busy receiving many applications that they do not respond right away. That is why it is important to wait for two weeks until you write the company again. When you send a follow-up message, you can either call or e-mail the company. The purpose of this follow-up message is:

- ❖ To show you are still interested in the company
- ❖ To repeat your skills and experience that apply to the job
- ❖ Ask politely for a job interview

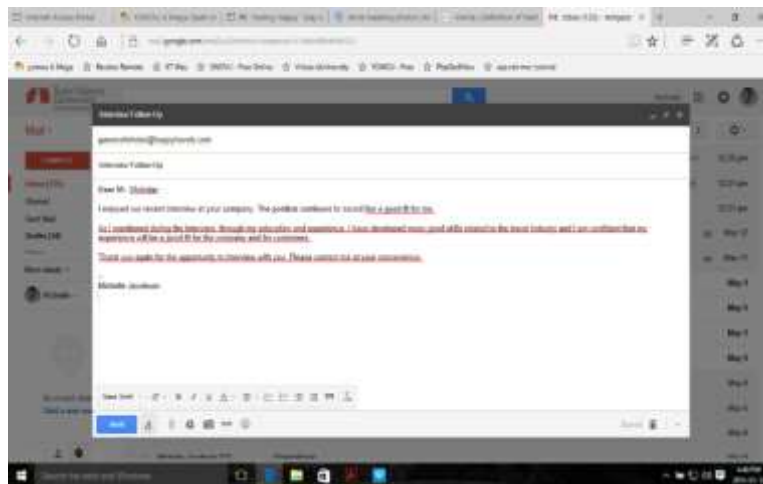
Try to remain positive in this follow-up message. Many times, people are so negative and feeling sad that the company did not respond right away. Always be positive and professional. Here is an example of a response message to a job application:



You can also follow-up after having a job interview. If you have made it to the interview stage, then congratulations! It will be very important to do some things after a job interview. One thing you need to do is to send a thank you. You can send a thank you through an e-mail or through a note that you send in the mail. Send the note within twenty four hours of having the job interview. The purpose of the follow-up note is to:

- ❖ Show you are happy for the interview, even if it did not go well
- ❖ Write a summary of the main ideas you discussed in the job interview
- ❖ Briefly say why you are the best choice

Here is an example of a thank you follow-up after a job interview:



It is important to be always professional even if your interview did not go well. Even after a bad interview, send a note to follow-up to show that you are a professional person.

The last way to follow-up is after you get a rejection. Sometimes, when you apply for a job and have a job interview, you will receive a letter that either says you received the job or did not receive the job. If the company has enough time, they will send you a rejection letter. If you receive one of those, do not think it is the end. Sometimes, there are chances for other opportunities.

So, what should you do when you receive a rejection letter? Do not panic. Many times, people think the door is closed and that there are no other opportunities. They get depressed and give up hope. There still might be other opportunities if the first choice candidate does not accept the job. If that is the situation, the company still might hire you for the position.

One nice and important thing to do after you get a rejection letter is to send a nice letter or e-mail to the company telling them you are still interested in other opportunities that

the company has to offer. This shows the company that you are still dedicated to and interested in the company.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever been rejected for anything? (Even not related to school or work). How did you feel? How can you help turn the negative feelings into positive feelings?
- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever written a thank you note? When? To whom?

SELF-TEST 04

7. What should you not do (to the company) after you send a job application?
 - a. Show how angry you are that the company took a long time to respond to you
 - b. Say that you are still interested in the position
 - c. Request an interview
 - d. Describe your skills
8. Which of the following types of communication should you not use after a job interview?
 - a. A personalized letter
 - b. A formal e-mail message
 - c. A text message from a cell phone

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

7. Why should you follow up with a company you are interested in, even if you have a bad job interview or receive a rejection letter?
8. What should you do after a job interview?

05-05: ACCEPTING OR REJECTING JOB OFFERS

Imagine you are just offered a job. Your first instinct is to accept the offer because you are very excited. However, you need to learn to think carefully about the job. Before you accept or reject the offer, it will be important to think logically instead of emotionally. Here are some suggestions on what to do after you receive a job offer.

Think about the job in a logical way. Think about these questions:

- ❖ How does the job fit your lifestyle? How many hours is the job each week?
- ❖ What is the salary?
- ❖ What is the work environment like? How late do people work? What time do people start work? What is the expectation at work? What do people wear (what is the dress code)?

- ❖ Is there opportunity for you to grow? Will there be positions at the company that allow you to take once you get experience?
- ❖ Who will your manager/boss be? Do you like that person?
- ❖ Will you work individually or in teams most of the time?



After thinking about these questions, and you still think this job is the best opportunity for you, you are ready to accept the job. The first thing you should do is to send a letter of acceptance. When you write a letter, it shows the company that you understand all the terms and conditions of the job.

In a formal job acceptance, the first sentences are a formal acceptance of the job offer. Show you are excited for the job and list the job title. Next, you will summarize what you learned about the salary and the rules and conditions.

Here is an example:

Dear Mr. Ugale:

Thanks so much for offering me the position of a secretary at Happy Travels Travel Company. I am very excited to begin working.

I understand that the yearly salary is 40,000 and that I will read the employee handbook for the rules. I also understand that I will be provided medical and dental insurance. If I have any questions, I will be sure to ask. Thanks again!

-Michelle Jacobson



If you are not sure if you should accept or reject the job offer, you can ask the company if they are flexible on anything. For example, suppose you like the job position but you do not like the weekend hours. Ask the company if they are flexible. You can include this on a letter that you write to the company.

If you are 100% sure that you do not want to accept the job, you need to send a rejection letter. You usually reject an offer if the job is not matching what you want for your professional life or if the rules are not flexible. It is important to remain professional because the company might consider you for other better offers that fit your needs and wants. Always be positive. Here is an example of a rejection letter you might send to a company.

Dear Mr. Ugale:

Thanks again for your offer to be a secretary at Happy Travels Travel Company. After thinking about it, I am going to formally reject the offer. I am hopeful that I will find something the suits my needs at this moment.

Thank you again for the offer. Good luck.

-Michelle Jacobson

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- ❖ Reflection: Have you ever had to reject an offer? For example, has anyone asked you to do something and you had to reject them? How did it feel? Did you wait some time before you rejected their offer?
- ❖ Reflection: Do you usually make decisions using your brain or using your heart? The brain represents logic and the heart represents your emotions.

SELF-TEST 05

9. What is the goal of any job search?
 - a. Getting a job interview
 - b. Making contact with a hiring manager
 - c. Rejecting (say “no”) the job offers
 - d. Being offered a job
10. When you write a formal acceptance letter, who should you write it to?
 - a. The manager of the department
 - b. The person who gave you the job
 - c. The president/CEO of the company
 - d. The recruiter who found the job for you

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9. Why is it important to think about the job environment, salary, rules and conditions before making a decision?
10. What should you do if you do not agree with the terms and conditions of a job offer?

SUMMARY

This section covered the tips on writing for employment. You will have to learn how to write cover letters, resumes, reports, proposals, rejection and acceptance letters and follow-up messages.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Hear back**= to receive a response
- ❖ **Former**= in the past
- ❖ **Reference**=the person who knows about your skills/education/job history
- ❖ **Reference list**= a typed list of three people (name/job company/how you know them/how long you have known them) to give to the hiring manager during your interview
- ❖ **Reference Letter Request**= a formal letter you write to your references to ask them to write a reference letter
- ❖ **Reference Letter**= a formal letter your references write about how they know you and the skills you have that they have seen in the past
- ❖ **Follow-up** (verb)= to give information or show interest in something again

REFERENCES

MOOCs

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/how-to-write-a-resume>

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/resume-writing>

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hmUC9X8Ho4>

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WIKIPEDIA

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cover_letter

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OER

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/coverletters/>

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/resumewriting/>

<http://career.opcd.wfu.edu/files/2011/05/Action-Verbs-for-Resumes.pdf>

BOOKS

“Writing Cover Letters and Resumes for Dummies” by Kate Southam and Amanda McCarthy

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 03-01: IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING PROBLEMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Identify** the steps needed to solve problems at work
- ❖ **Analyze** the ways of solving problems in an effective way
- ❖ **Find** out the root cause of a problem
- ❖ **Analyze** complex problems
- ❖ **Analyze, Identify, and Manage** risks related to work
- ❖ **Use** the tips to help you solve problems in an effective way

INTRODUCTION



How do you handle life's problems? How you solve problems in your personal life is a good indication of how you might solve problems in your work life. Problems are an inevitable part of life. Your goal should not be not experiencing problems. Your goal should be experiencing and dealing with the problems in an effective way and not avoiding the problems. Problems do not have to be bad. Instead, problems can be an opportunity to grow as a person.

01-01: UNDERSTANDING PROBLEM SOLVING

Solving problems is a skill that can be learned. Problem solving involves identifying what the problem is and then learning how to solve it.

Having problems is something everyone will experience and all people from all jobs will experience problems as well: an entry level employee as well as a professional employee. It is important to learn how to solve these problems. Many people know how to react to problems but do not know how to effectively solve problems.

The first thing you should learn when solving problems is how to identify a problem. A problem is anything that is getting in the way of your goal.

You ----- Problem ----- Your Goal

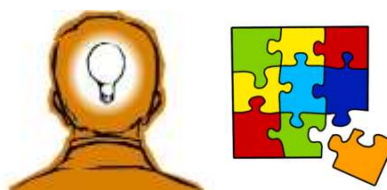
A problem is something that you have not solved or a question you have not answered. If your company's goal is to sell 200 cell phones and the company only sells fifty a month, then that is a problem.

Once you have identified what a problem is, it is time to solve the problem. There are a few different approaches to solving the problem.

The first approach is to use your intuition. Your intuition is your inner dialogue, your inner voice, your instinct/gut feeling. It is the "feelings" you have when something is not correct. You know what your intuition is when you have a reaction to something. Your reaction is your intuition. When there is a problem, you can solve it intuitively. What is your first reaction telling you? Intuition does not involve anyone else telling you what to do; you listen to yourself. An intuitive approach is good for smaller problems where you do not feel overwhelmed.



The other way to solve a problem is a systematic approach. What it means is that there is a procedure to follow. The procedure involves steps and actions to take that are logical (do not follow feelings). Systematic approaches are good for problems that are larger and complicated. Sometimes a problem is too big for one person to think about. If you use your feelings to solve those problems, you might feel overwhelmed. Using a systematic approach helps you to solve the complicated problem.



An example of a systematic procedure is to think of a similar problem you had in the past. How did you solve that problem? Using the solutions from the previous problem might help you solve the current problem.

After you choose your approach, intuitive or systematic, you are ready to make a decision. Here are the steps to take when you have a problem, from start to finish:

- 1) What is the problem? Identify the problem

- 2) Get information about the problem: the who, what, when, where, why, how related to the problem
- 3) Analyze the information and understand it: use intuitive or analytical approaches
- 4) Think about possible solutions: use intuitive or analytical approaches



- 5) Choose the best solution



- 6) Track the solution for some time to see if the problem is solved

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- 1) Reflection: Have you ever had a problem in your personal life? School life? What did you do to solve the problem?
- 2) Reflection: When solving problems, are you more logical (use your brain) or emotional (use your heart)?

SELF-TEST 01

- 1) What is the definition of a problem for a company?
 - a. A difficult choice you have with many options for solutions
 - b. The difference between a professional and non-professional
 - c. List of goals for a company
 - d. Not achieving something you want
- 2) In this list, what should you **not** do when you solve a problem?
 - a. Know what the real problem is
 - b. Accept the **first** solution
 - c. Get information about the problem
 - d. Make a decision

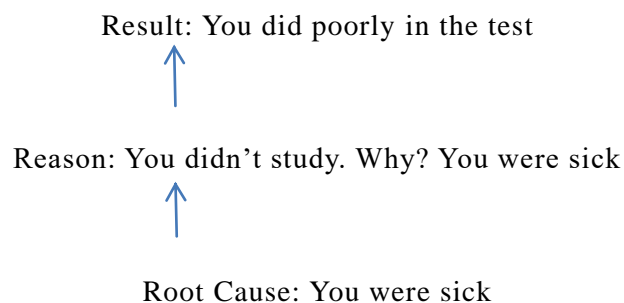
SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 1) In business, what is the definition of a problem?
- 2) When solving problems, is it important to have many solutions? Why or why not?

01-02: ANALYZING PROBLEMS



What does it mean to analyze a problem? Analyzing problems means to think deeply about them. Step #3 from the previous section involves analyzing problems (#3: Analyze a problem). Analyzing problems means to know the root cause of a problem. A root cause is the source, the real reason for something. For example, if you did poorly in your test, what is the real reason for that? Maybe the root cause is that you were sick but your teacher thinks the reason is you did not study. But you did not study because you were sick. Look at this diagram:



Understanding the real problem (root cause) is 50% of the work. The other 50% is solving the problem. So, how do you really understand a problem?

The first step in understanding a problem is looking for your roadblocks or speed bumps. Roadblocks or speed bumps are things that slow you down or get in your way. You need to know what your speed bumps are. Is your team overworked? Stressed? Do you not have enough information? Look for road blocks.

Next, gather information. This is from #2 in the previous section (#2 Gather information). You should talk to many people related to the problem. What do people know about the problem? Has anyone solved a similar problem in the past? You can get information from websites, CDs, databases, books, newspapers, observations, interviews, questionnaires, files, conversations with colleagues, and informal surveys.



Observations are very powerful. Observations are what you see. You can learn a lot about a problem by looking at people trying to solve the problem or by looking at the problem yourself.

When you talk to people in interviews and informal surveys, it is important to ask objective questions and not personal questions. Objective questions are questions that are asked about things, not about people. When you ask people directly about them, they feel defensive. For example, a personal question might start with this: *Why did you...?*



How did you...? Try to avoid questions that start with “you.” If you ask if someone is directly involved in the problem or if they did anything wrong, they will automatically feel defensive.

Lastly, when understanding a problem, look at all the pieces of information. Does anything seem “off?” Does anything not seem right? If your intuition tells you something might be missing, trust your intuition.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- 3) Reflection: When you have a problem, do you ask people who might know some information? Do you think asking other people questions are useful?
- 4) Reflection: When you have a big problem, do you look at the smaller pieces inside the larger problem?

SELF-TEST 02

- 3) What is the first step in problem solving?
 - a. Make a decision
 - b. Look at your situation and think about what might be causing the problem
 - c. Communicate your progress to your manager/boss

d. All the above

4) **Scenario:** You are a manager of a company and you see you have many employees who are not getting their work completed. You will ask questions to get to the source of the problem. What might be the source of the problem? (Assume they want to be at work)

a. Family problems

b. Weather-too hot

c. They don't care about work (lazy)

d. You were sick the last two days

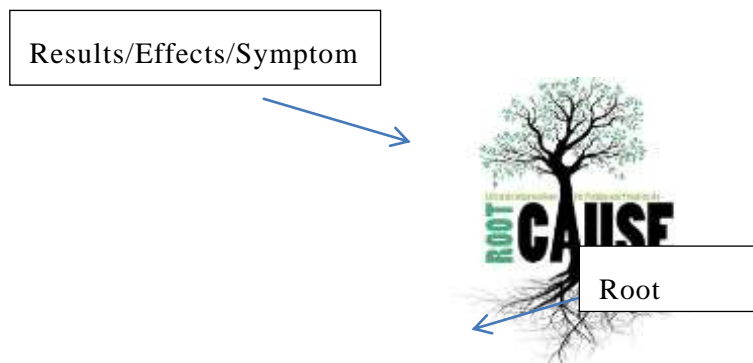
SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

3) Is it important to know about a problem before we can find a solution?

4) What does it mean to analyze a problem?

01-03: DETERMINING CAUSES

It is mentioned before that understanding the problem is 50% of the work. When you try to understand a problem, you need to understand the root cause. The root cause is the original cause of the problem. There may be many causes but there is only one root cause. The roots of this tree represent the root cause. The leaves and branches represent the results that arise from the causes.



When you understand a root cause, you need to learn about symptoms and causes. A cause is something that causes something else to happen. A symptom is something that you see, like the results or the effects of something. For example, think of this situation: You are at work and your sales are down. The business is not good. This is something you can see, so it is a symptom. Now, think why...When you ask yourself: *Why is this happening?* Then you are getting close to learning about the root cause of something.

Symptom: Sales
are down



WHY? WHY ARE SALES DOWN? THE ANSWER IS THE CAUSE

Cause:?????

Many people focus on symptoms, because you can see symptoms. You cannot see causes. Causes are more difficult to determine. When you have any problem, it is easy to see the symptoms (the results of the problem) but causes might be hidden. Here are some tips for finding the cause.

Make a map. This is also known as a concept map or a cause-and-effect diagram. The technical term is a root cause analysis. A concept map is when you write down what you see (the symptoms). The symptoms could be the problems. What problems do you see: the big and the small problems? Which problems are connected? Is there a relationship between the problems? Connect those problems with lines. Next, think about what could be causing those symptoms/problems. Ask yourself “why.” Why is this a problem? Write your possible answers down in the diagram. Here is an example of how to ask “why.”

Problem/Symptom: Sales are down

Why? Employees are not selling product to the correct customers.

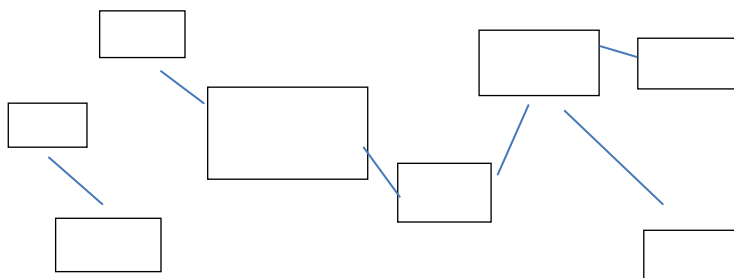
Why? Employees are only selling to people in their city.

Why? Their company does not have an office in a different city.

Why? It is too expensive to have a second office.

Why? There is no money

Why? The only company they have does not have enough sales to make money



There is a chance that there is more than one cause for something. When problems are complex, it is very much possible that there is more than one cause because complex problems are big. Some causes are related and have a relationship. Look at your concept map. What is connected? Do you see more than one cause?

After you have determined the causes, think about which root cause is the most possible to handle right now. Which root cause can your company work on first? For example, maybe your company determines that the root cause is lack of technology. Your company does not have the necessary technology to stay competitive in the business. Technology costs a lot. Maybe this is too expensive for your company. Think about how much money and time it will take to handle the root cause.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- 5) Reflection: Think about a problem you had. What was the cause of that problem? Was there more than one cause?

SELF-TEST 03

- 5) Why does it help to make a visual picture of causes and effects?
- a. Helps you see what might be causing a problem
 - b. Helps you to identify many solutions
 - c. Helps you see connections between causes and symptoms
 - d. All of the above
- 6) Why is it important to identify the **real** cause of a problem?
- a. It is because the problem will not fully be solved until you can see what is really causing it
 - b. It is because it is easier to solve smaller problems that are not the root cause
 - c. It is because it helps you to see how one problem is causing other problems
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

- 5) How is a symptom different from a cause?
- 6) Why is it important to make a cause-effect chart/diagram/visual?

01-04: SIMPLIFYING COMPLEX PROBLEMS

What are complex problems? Complex problems are problems that involve a lot of people, are new problems (no similar problems in the past), and do not have one solution.

Applying what you learned about cause and effect from the last section is important when learning about complex problems. This section is about how to look at and simplify complex problems.



When you simplify something, you are going to break it apart. This means to look at the smaller pieces of the larger problem. If the complex problem is like a puzzle, then when we simplify the problem, you look at the individual pieces.



The steps involved in solving any complex problem follow some of the same advice from the previous section.

First, look at the causes and effects. Draw a diagram like the last section. Ask the question: “Why” multiple times. If you do not ask multiple times, you may not really understand the root cause.

After you have looked at all your causes and effects, you are ready to start looking at connections. What problems seem to be connected? Is there more than one root cause?

Not all problems have equal weight. Some problems are more important than others. You will have to think about many factors when solving problems. Here are some of the things you will have to consider:

- Price: how much will it cost to fix the problem?
- People: how does this problem affect others in the organization? The customers? The clients?
- Frequency: how often is this a problem?

- Weight: is the problem heavy (big) or light (small)?
- Connections: which problems are connected to each other? Which smaller problems are inside the larger problems?

Next, decide how you will solve the problems. In complex problems, there is usually more than one problem. In complex problems, you will need more than one person to help you solve it. Which people can solve each smaller problem? Give responsibilities to each team member. Think about a person's skill set. Which special talents or skills do people have that can help solve the problem?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

- 6) Reflection: Think of a larger problem in your personal life, family life, school life, etc. What are at least two smaller problems inside that larger problem?
- 7) Reflection: When you have a problem, do you ask people to help you solve it? Why or why not? Are some problems easier to solve by yourself or by getting help?

SELF-TEST 04

- 7) How do you solve a complex problem?
 - a. Look at the smaller problems related to the bigger problem
 - b. Have confidence and solve all problems yourself
 - c. Talk to other people to get different opinions on the solution
 - d. All of the above
- 8) After you find the smaller problems connected to the larger problem, what should you do?
 - a. Think about which sub-problem (smaller problem) is more important
 - b. Ask "why" it is a problem
 - c. Think of many solutions
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

- 7) When solving problems, what does "analyzing" mean?
- 8) When solving problems, why is it important to know the root cause/root problem?

01-05: IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING RISKS

Risks are things that have a chance to cause something bad or unpleasant to happen. Have you ever fallen in love? That is a risk. Have you ever applied for a competitive university? That is a risk. Risks are things that could potentially cause us to lose something. In the business world, all decisions involve risks. Why? When you make a decision, you are affecting people. You might affect people in a good or bad way. When businesses involve money, you have the risk to win or lose money. Businesses also involve people. You have the risk to win or lose customers/clients. Business also involves investing time. You have the risk of making your time count or losing your time. Business projects involve a lot of effort. You have the risk of making your effort count or of losing your efforts in failures. This section will talk about how to identify a risk and also how to manage it. Manage means to have control over something. In business, the goal is to lower the risks in every decision you make. This section will talk about the ways to lower our risks.

First of all, in the business world, you need to be aware of any possible risk. You need to think to yourself: what could cause me, the employees, or the business harm? Suppose your business has a problem and there are three solutions to that problem. When you look at each solution, think about the risks involved in choosing that solution. What are the chances that the solution will fail? Is it OK if the solution fails? What are the chances that the solution will succeed? What will happen if the solution is a success? Asking and answering these questions are important.



When you think about risks, you also need to think about rewards. Rewards are benefits that result from taking the risk. What good things will happen after taking the risk? You must think about the potential rewards when making risky decisions. It is said that you do not benefit in life or in business if you do not take any risk. There is a continuum of risks. Some risks are more dangerous than other risks. Taking healthy risks should be the goal in any business endeavour.



One way to know if a risk is healthy or not is to test the decision. This means, you choose a solution or you make a decision. Then, watch and see what happens. Are more good things than bad things happening? Then it was a good risk. If more bad things happen than good things, then it was a bad risk. When you test your decision, you should only test small things, not large things. For example, imagine that your company needs more money. Your company has three solutions or ideas. One of the ideas is to invest \$1,000 USD into your company for making new products. Before you choose that solution, you want to make a test. Will the decision have good results? Instead of investing \$1,000 worth of new product, you can invest \$50 of product to see if the investment is good. If it is good, if the test is a success, then you can invest more.

	↑ Risk	↑ Reward
↓ Reward	Not a good idea	
↓ Risk		Best idea

You can also talk to people who have done similar things. Have they made a similar decision? Was their decision a success? Why? Was it a failure? Why?



Always have more than one option or more than one solution. If one solution fails, then you will have another option. Nothing is permanent in life or in business, and everything fails at some point. So, it is important to have other options.

Lastly, when you manage a risk, you need a team of people to help you. When you work with a team, you can each have responsibility so that one person does not have to do everything. Also, more people means more support. Risks can be scary and in business, risky decisions require a lot of different viewpoints. When working with a team, make

sure everyone communicates so that everyone knows everything. You can have group meetings and write group e-mails so that everyone knows everything.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

8) **Reflection:** Have you ever done anything risky? Did you talk to someone before you did it? What was the result?

SELF-TEST 05

- 9) What is a risk?
- a. A success
 - b. A possibility/chance to lose something
 - c. A reaction to a problem
 - d. A solution to a problem
- 10) What is the **best** type of solution?
- a. Low risk & high reward
 - b. Low risk & low reward
 - c. High risk & high reward
 - d. High risk & low reward

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

9) In the context of seeing a problem, what is the definition of “root cause?” In the context of seeing a problem, what is the definition of “symptoms?”

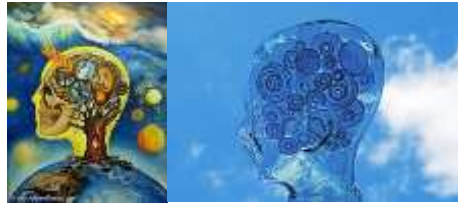
10) Imagine that you are working for a company and your sales are going down. What might be an example of a “root cause” to this? (The symptom is that your company is losing money, but what is CAUSING your company to lose money?)

01-06: TIPS FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

As we discussed, problems are a normal part of any business or in life. Problems happen. What is most important is to avoid the large problems that can cause you a lot

of hard and damage. Let us go through some traps to avoid when solving problems. Solving problems is not easy but it can be managed.

The first suggestion is to use both creative and logical thinking. Creative thinking is thinking that is original and different. Logical thinking uses a different part of your brain. Logical thinking uses less emotion than creative thinking. Logical thinkers are able to see facts and objective information about something. Both logical and creative thinking are important. When making decisions, talk to people who have creative and logical thinking.



You also need to be flexible. If something is not working, be ready to change your goal or mission. The goal of any decision should be to find a solution that works over a long period of time. If the solution is only working for a short period of time, then you need to change the solution so that it has longer results.

- a) Problem-----→ Short-term solution-----→ Same problem again
- b) Problem-----→ Long-term solution

Another thing to avoid when making decisions is to avoid being too positive or overconfident. Being positive and confident is not bad...However, when you do not think about the negative things or possible bad things, then it is bad to be only confident. A good decision-maker is a person who thinks of both the good and the bad things. Your thinking needs to be balanced. It is more important to be realistic than overconfident. So many people have failed because they did not think of the bad effects of a decision.

+/-



Something else to avoid when making decisions is to only think about your own ideas. Successful people need to be open to other ideas. In a team, it is important to listen to everyone's ideas, viewpoints, and solutions. There may be a solution you have not thought about from someone else.



The next thing to avoid when making decisions is to make a decision too quickly. Do you remember the diagram at the beginning of the section? If you make a decision too quickly, the same problem might come back again. Many times, people are too quick to make a decision because they do not like waiting and being patient for a better decision. When they have a big decision, people might feel anxious and try to solve the problem too quickly. In other words, they might choose a solution that only has temporary benefits and does not really fix the original problem. They might choose a solution that has short-term result rather than a long-term result. A long-term result is a result that helps solve the problem for a long time. A short-term result only helps for a short time until the same problem keeps coming back. Your goal in any decision should be to create long-term decisions. In other words, look at the root cause and treat the root cause, not the symptoms.



Another thing to avoid when making decisions is Groupthink. Groupthink is only thinking the same as the other members of your group. If you are suffering from Groupthink, you are afraid to say different opinions and viewpoints. Diversity is a good thing, especially when making difficult decisions. Try to be different and think different. Do not be afraid to speak your real mind.



The last suggestion for solving problems is to avoid bias. Many people choose decisions that are easy for them to make but they do not think about other people. This is called a bias. A bias is a tendency to see something how you want to see it. You know you have a bias when you have strong opinions about something and do not think about other people's opinions. When you make any decision, you should ask yourself if the decision benefits other people, not just yourself.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 06

9) **Reflection:** When you make decisions, what is one area you need to improve? Do you have a bias? Do you only think in a positive way (and not a balanced mindset)? Do you only make decisions with a short-term result? Do you forget to include both creative and logical thinking? What is one area that you want to work on?

SELF-TEST 06

11) In this list, which one is **not** an example of over-confidence (too much confidence)?

- a. Not thinking of how much time it will take to complete a task
- b. Asking a co-worker for their opinion
- c. Not asking for help from others
- d. Avoiding looking at **all** possible solutions to problems

12) **Scenario:** You are working in a team with four other co-workers. You are trying to solve the problem of low sales (not selling enough). What is an example of something you **should** do to help solve the problem?

- a. Be practical and real about how much time you need to solve the problem
- b. Ignore your co-worker because she has silly ideas for the solution
- c. Think of only one solution as a team that is the easiest to try
- d. You think you know the solution so you convince/persuade others to believe in your solution because it is the best

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 06

- 11) What is the difference between a good risk and a bad risk?
- 12) Why is it a good idea to avoid problems before they begin?

SUMMARY

This section focused on the ways to solve problems. The section covered the points like how to analyze problems, how to find the root cause of something, how to solve big

problems, how to manage risks, and make better decisions. This information will help you in both your personal life and in your professional life.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Bias**= a tendency to believe that some ideas are better than other ideas that is not fair/true to other ideas
- ❖ **Clear**= easily understood, no doubt
- ❖ **Logical**= sensible, using reasoning, agreeing with the rules
- ❖ **Rational**= based in facts, having the ability to think about things clearly
- ❖ **Realistic**= very close to real
- ❖ **Creative**= the ability to think of new ideas
- ❖ **Short-term results** = results that only last for a short period and fail to solve the root problem
- ❖ **Long-term results** = results that last for a long time and fix the root problem
- ❖ **Root problem** = the original problem
- ❖ **Symptoms** = what you can see (e.g.: problems)
- ❖ **Analyze** = to look at something closely

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit [Here](#) for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 03-02: SOLVING THE PROBLEM

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Analyze** the process of choosing data to solve problems
- ❖ **Identify** the types of data to collect
- ❖ **Evaluate** your choices for making decisions
- ❖ **Acquire** the techniques for finding solutions
- ❖ **Discover** the ways to manage solutions at work
- ❖ **Develop** techniques to manage a problem/solution
- ❖ **Make** ethical decisions in your life

INTRODUCTION



How do you solve problems? In the last section, you learned about how to identify a problem. This section will go further into exploring the problem and techniques on how to solve the problem. If learning about the problem is 50%, then solving the problem is the other 50% of the effort.

Solving a problem is not as easy as many people think it is. Solving a problem requires a lot of focus and planning. Even after you make a decision, you need to monitor the solution to make sure you made the right decision.

02-01: GATHERING & ANALYZING DATA

Solving any problem starts with getting information. The more information you have, the better able you are to solve the problem. It is important to get the right information because bad information can lead to bad decisions. Likewise, good information can lead to better decisions.

What kind of information do you need? Well, you need to know what problem you have first. When you know your problem, then you will know what information is required. Here is a good question to ask yourself when you have any problem:

What information do I need to reach a good decision? Answering this question will help you to understand what information you need to gather. Where will the information come from? How much will it cost to get this information?



After you look at the information, it is important to keep an objective mind. Objective means that you do not have any bias. Bias is a strong opinion towards anything. When you do not judge the information, you can see the information in an objective way. Do not have any assumptions or thoughts about the information. Do not look at a fact and dismiss it because you disagree. Let the information speak for itself. This is hard to do. Look at the facts in the information.

What kind of information can you get? Here is a list of different types of information:

- 1) **Financial (money):** company records
- 2) **Process:** employee notes/reports
- 3) **Product/Service:** customer surveys
- 4) **General Advice:** co-workers/colleagues, websites, books

When you find good information related to your problem, you should take a note of where you found the data. This means to write the source. The source is the location of the information. You should write down this information:

- ❖ the book title
- ❖ the author
- ❖ the publishing year
- ❖ the page numbers where you found the information
- ❖ URL website link if it is a website
- ❖ The name, job title and date you talked to a person (if you had an interview with anyone)

The source of the information is important if you are writing an essay. Each essay will have a reference page at the end of your paper where all the sources are listed.

(e.g. Tsuji et al., 2008; Tsuji, 2008a,b)
Tsuji (2008a,b)
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Also, think about the difference between new and old information. When you have a problem, you should first look for old information. What is old information? Old information is information that people already know. New information is information that people need to search for. So, how do you find old

information? You can find existing or old information by talking to people in your company. Do they have any sources or information for you? Talk to others about the same problem. What information can you get from them?



As you talk to other people to gather information, you can get suggestions from them. What would they do if they were in your situation? Getting support from people becomes really important. Maybe they do not have any information for you right now, but maybe they can look for information for you.

After you have gathered all your information, now it is time to analyze the data. Look at all the information from your books, websites, and interviews with people. What can you learn? Is there a pattern? What relationships can you see between the pieces of information?



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- 10) Reflection: When you have a problem, do you look for information? Where do you look for information? What type of information do you look for?
- 11) Experiment: The next time you need information about a problem, talk to at least two different people. What information do they know about the problem?

SELF-TEST 01

- 13) Before you start to collect information about a problem, you should:
 - a. Look for information that you agree with
 - b. Ask your colleagues/co-workers if they have any information for you
 - c. Make a fast decision because there is no time
 - d. Think about what specific information you need to solve the problem
- 14) Before you start to collect information about a problem, you should:
 - a. Look for information that you agree with
 - b. Ask your colleagues/co-workers if they have any information for you
 - c. Make a fast decision because there is no time

d. Think about what specific information you need to solve the problem

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

13) What is the definition of data?

14) When solving a problem, why is it important to talk to other people who have solved the problem?

02-02: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVES

When working on any problem, you will need to find a solution. When looking for solutions to problems, there is always more than one choice. There is always more than one option. If someone tells you there is only one answer, they are usually wrong. Why is it better to have many choices rather than only one choice? Your goal is to make the choice that benefits most of the people. So, if you have a problem and you have three choices, you can think about which choice is best for the majority.

Do you remember our discussion about creative vs. logical thinking? Solving problems requires both creative and logical thinking. So, how do you think creatively? Brainstorming is one tool people use to think in a more creative way. Brainstorming allows you to think of many ideas.



With a partner or a group of people, get a piece of paper for each person. Write the problem in the middle of the paper. Then, think of as many ideas as possible that come into your mind of how to make the solution. Write them down on the piece of paper. Do not dismiss an idea because it seems too crazy. Just write anything down that you think about. If ideas are connected or have a relationship, draw a line to connect them. After some time, you can share your ideas with the other people. What does everyone think about the ideas?

Another way to think about other choices and alternatives is to talk to as many people as possible. What do other people know about the problem? Other people have other opinions, experiences, and perspectives that you do not have. It is best to talk to a lot of different people so that you avoid getting the same opinions from the same types of people. For example, if you work in the IT department, talk to other people in different departments. Maybe they know something that you do not know.

Before you make the final decision, there are some things you need to think about. The things you should think about before making a decision are: time, money, and usefulness.

Time is an important factor. How much time will that decision take? Remember, in business, time is money. Spending time on a solution is not bad. You just need to know how much time you are spending on something before you do it.

The second factor is money. How much money will you spend on each option? Spending money is not bad but you simply need to be aware of how much money you are spending. Is your company prepared to spend that kind of money on that option?

Lastly, you need to know how useful each solution would be. Suppose your problem has three solutions. Look at each solution: how useful is each solution to the clients/customers? How useful is the solution to the company?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

12) Reflection: Think about a problem you had in the past. What was the problem? How did you find the solution?

13) Experiment: The next time you have a problem; look for at least three different solutions to that problem. Choose the best solution.

SELF-TEST 02

15) Why should you be creative when thinking of other choices?

- a. So that you can have many ideas
- b. To enjoy new experiences
- c. To stay with your original ideas
- d. To avoid making a decision

16) What are cost, time, and usefulness examples of?

- a. Resources
- b. Problems
- c. Techniques
- d. Criteria

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

15) When making decisions, why is it a good idea to have many choices for making the solution? Why is it better to have three possible solutions than to have only one possible solution?

16) Why is it a good idea to talk to many people before making a decision?

02-03: IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION

Up to this point, we have talked about how to plan before making a decision. Now it is time to make a decision. Most times, it is better to make any decision than to wait for the perfect opportunity to make a perfect decision. Nothing will ever be perfect so it is better to make any decision than no decision at all. In this section, let us talk about how to make a solution.



The first thing to do before making any decision is to make sure you get approval from anyone involved in the decision. These people would include: your manager, your team leader, your colleagues/co-workers, and the customers/clients who receive your company's services. If anyone involved is not comfortable with this decision, it is OK to negotiate or think of a better solution that benefits most of the people.



Expect people to resist change. Sometimes when we want to make decisions, there will be angry people who are happy with how things are. Some people do not want change. When you are getting permission, the best thing to do is to explain to everyone why certain decisions are the best. If people can understand something, they are more willing to accept your decision.

After you have got permission from the people involved, now you need a plan for implementing the solution. Why do you need a plan? If you do not have a plan, the solution might fail. What things need to be done? What is the schedule? Who will do each task? What will the solution look like when everything is finished? Having this plan will help the solution to be successful.



Once you start making the solution, slowly your team will gain momentum and energy. Keep the motivation by staying positive. However, if something is not working, stop and talk to the team members. Is there something else you can do to have better success? In the next section, we will talk about how to monitor or manage the solution.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

14) Reflection: When you have chosen a solution to a problem, do you get opinions from other people about the solution? Why or why not?

SELF-TEST 03

17) A good plan for applying a solution includes:

- a. Chart
- b. Schedule
- c. List of ideas
- d. All of the above

18) Communication of your ideas about the solution should include:

- a. Saying you do not have a lot of time
- b. Other possible negative outcomes/results
- c. Rules
- d. Details or information about the solution

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

17) When making decisions, is it important to talk about the solutions to your team? Why or why not?

18) When making a decision, is it OK to be very emotional? Why or why not?

02-04: MONITORING & MANAGING THE SOLUTION

When you solve a complex problem, solutions are also complex. Making solutions involves making difficult decisions and doing difficult things. You also have to work with a team to make sure the solution is a success. All of these things are involved with monitoring and managing.

What is monitoring? Monitoring is watching something closely. Monitoring is important because if you do not monitor, the problem could come back or a new problem could arise.

You need to monitor the solution to see if it is working. Monitoring can be difficult. Why? It is because what you are watching may not be something tangible. Maybe what you are watching is not something you can really see. Tangible things are things you can see and touch. So, if what you can see is not something tangible, it becomes difficult to monitor.



When you decide on a solution, you will have to choose tangible things to monitor. So, you can monitor the symptoms. Do you remember the section on causes and symptoms? The symptoms are the effects/results of something. The symptoms are the things we can see. When you monitor, you pay attention to the outcome (result) of the solution. You could monitor the money, the sales, or the number of new customers. Ask your team leader what are some good things to monitor. Here are some questions for you to ask yourself when you are monitoring a solution:

-What + /- things happen with a particular solution?

-How is the solution in the short and long term?

Short term= a short time after the solution

e.g. one month

Long term= a long time after a solution

How often should you monitor a solution? That depends on the solution. Some solutions only require a little monitoring, like once a month. Other solutions require a lot of monitoring like once a week. Sometimes, things need monitoring every hour. Some solutions can see results after a short period and some solutions require a long time to see solutions. Do not make the mistake of changing a solution because you have not seen results. Some solutions take a long time. Ask your team leader how often you should monitor a solution.



When you monitor, you can ask other people to help you. These people could be the people who are affected by the problem or solution. These people could also be your co-workers or your team leader. It is important to invite others into monitoring the problem/solution because they could help you find better solutions.



As you are monitoring, make sure you pay close attention if the problem is being solved. If the problem is not being solved, you should make changes. Work on making changes as soon as you can. If you do not act quickly, the problem might get bigger.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

15) Reflection: Have you ever had a problem that did not go away? What did you do to help the problem? Did you monitor the solution?

SELF-TEST 04

- 19) In this list, what is something you should look at when working on a solution?
- a. Data about the problem/solution
 - b. Customer surveys
 - c. Advice
 - d. All of the above
- 20) What should you do if your solution is not working?
- a. Wait for the problem to solve by itself
 - b. Change something
 - c. Talk to others and get advice
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

- 19) Why is monitoring important?
- 20) Why is it important to know what you are monitoring?

02-05: USING ADAPTIVE TECHNIQUES

When you have a problem, we have learned that you need to gather data, analyze it, and then explore possible solutions. This is the traditional way to solve problems. An adaptive technique is doing something that is different. Adaptive means doing something different from the traditional way. Adaptive means changing the traditional way. When you use adaptive techniques, it means you are not solving the problem the same way everyone else is solving it. Trying something different is a good thing.

A new way to solve a problem involves using different techniques. One of them is intuition. The other technique is logic and another is common sense. These adaptive techniques can be useful but the traditional techniques are also useful. When do you use traditional ways and when do you use adaptive techniques? Maybe you should use both. Ask your team leader what he/she thinks.

Traditional Techniques	Gather data, analyze data, test solutions, come up with alternatives
Adaptive Techniques	Intuition, logic, common sense



Here is when you should use an adaptive technique:

- ❖ When the old way of doing things has not worked
- ❖ When you do not have a lot of time
- ❖ When the risks are low
- ❖ When the solution can be easily changed
- ❖ When others are there to support you



Here is the first suggestion of how to use adaptive techniques: do the most important things first. When there is a problem, what are the most important things that need attention? You will need to decide which things to do first and which things to do later.

Using common sense is an example of another adaptive technique. According to common sense, when you have a large problem, there are always smaller problems inside the larger problem. When you have a problem, consider making smaller decisions before you make a larger decision. When you make smaller decisions, you eventually help the larger decision. Many people are afraid of making decisions because they are too big. However, there are many other smaller decisions that can be made before the larger decision gets resolved.



Intuition is a great adaptive technique that should be used more often. What is your intuition telling you? Do you think you should wait? If you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, your intuition is telling you to slow down. Sometimes, a problem will fix itself. Other times, the large decision requires smaller decisions. Or, do you need more information to make a decision? Answering these questions requires to think about what your intuition is telling you.



The traditional technique is to solve the problem with one solution. A better way is to solve the problem using an adaptive technique. This adaptive technique is to make sure you always have more than one solution. Do you remember the goal of any decision? You want to benefit the most amounts of people. Having more than one solution improves your chances for success.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

16) **Reflection:** When you have a difficult decision to make, do you use more than one technique? For example, do you use a combination of logic, intuition, common sense, and analysis?

17) **Experiment:** The next time you have a problem, use one of the techniques we talked about.

SELF-TEST 05

21) In which of the following scenarios should you not use an adaptive technique to help you make decisions?

- a. You do not have enough time
- b. The solution is risky
- c. The risks are low
- d. All of the above

22) Scenario: As an employee of Happy Travels Travel Company, you would like to talk about the rules regarding the travel package with your international partners instead of cancelling the tour package. Identify the tip which is applicable to this example.

- a. Thinking with your feelings
- b. Thinking of important things first
- c. Making smaller decisions
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

21) What is the difference between traditional and adaptive techniques?

02-06: DEVELOPING ETHICAL SOLUTIONS

Ethics are the standards of living that help people know what is right or wrong. We say



that if you have ethics, you know the difference between right or wrong. What is the right thing to do? Logical thinking is thinking that is connected to related thoughts. Logical thinking is a process where one thought is directly connected to a similar thought that makes sense. For example, if you are hungry, what is your logical

thought? You should eat something. Logical thinking is thinking that makes sense. In the context of your company, logically, it wants to make money. However, what happens when the ethical and the logical thoughts are not the same? What happens when your company wants to make money, but it is not ethical when it makes that decision? This section will focus on how to make ethical decisions.

What are ethics? Ethics are standards of what is right or wrong. What is right or wrong to do? Ask your company president or team leader what the company's ethics are. Here are some questions to consider to determine your ethics:

- ❖ How much do I care about how my decision affects other people?
- ❖ What is more important to me: money or people's well-being?
- ❖ What will make me sad? For example, if losing a customer makes you sad, you know you value customers and making customers happy is a part of your ethics
- ❖ Does each decision bring me peace?
- ❖ How will the decision affect people in the short-term (one week, one month)?
- ❖ How will the decision affect people in the long-term (six months, one year, five years)?

When you make a decision, you need to think about the benefits and the disadvantages. The benefits are like the positive things and the disadvantages are like the negative things. Which one is bigger: The costs or the benefits?

Ethics always involve people. People will always remember how they felt when they had a discussion with someone or when something was decided for them. Make sure to treat people with respect because your customers and clients always remember feelings. The most ethical decisions hurt the least amount of people. They have more benefits than disadvantages.

When you have a strong sense of ethics, you will start to think of other people easily. You will become less selfish and have less of an ego. Ethical people maintain their relationships. When making decisions, ethical people always think about how the decisions affect others.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 06

18) **Reflection:** Do you have ethics? What are some of the values you have in your school life/family life/work life? For example, do you believe you should not lie? That is an example of having ethics.

19) **Reflection:** How often do you think about other people when you make decisions? Or, do you only think about yourself?

SELF-TEST 06

23) Ethical solutions...

- a. Have more positive than negative results
- b. Only benefit a few people
- c. Are always easy decisions
- d. Have more negative results than benefits

24) Which of the following is an example of an ethical problem?

- a. Cut costs for your company and many employees lose their jobs
- b. Reduce the quality of your product to save money
- c. Selling products in a new country even though it is illegal
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 06

22) What are ethics?

23) Give one example of when the ethical decision is not logical (E.g.: maybe something with money)

SUMMARY

In this section, we talked more about how to make a decision. You learned that making a decision is not easy and involves a lot of thinking. Specifically, you learned about how to analyze data, make ethical choices, consider other options, try solutions, and manage a solution.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ Customers/clients= the people who purchase services from your company
- ❖ Usefulness= how much “use” someone can get out of something. Something useful is something people use a lot, like a cell phone/smart phone
- ❖ Complex= complicated. The opposite of easy.
- ❖ Tangible= used to describe things you can see and touch with your own eyes
- ❖ Intuition= your inner (inside) knowledge about something. Intuition is your self-guide (not someone telling you what to do)

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BOOKS

“Problem Solving 101: A Simple Book for Smart People” by Ken Watanabe

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 03-03: THINKING CRITICALLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Assess** your ability to think critically
- ❖ **Plan** to become a better critical thinker
- ❖ **Examine** whether an argument is credible or not

INTRODUCTION



Have you ever wondered why the world's most successful people are successful? It takes a strong mind to be different. Critical thinking involves thinking that is different from the traditional way of thinking. You must be remembering your school days. The teacher might have told you to copy something from the blackboard into your notebook but you did not know why. Also, you might have been told that the answer is B but you might not have known why. Critical thinking is thinking that really examines and analyzes why things are the way they are. Critical thinkers think deeply about something. They want to understand something at a deep level. Critical thinkers are not satisfied with a simple answer. This section will tell you how to be a better critical thinker.

03-01: UNDERSTANDING CRITICAL THINKING

Humans were born with the ability to think, make reasons, make judgments, observe people and places, and understand facts. Humans do these things automatically. However, critical thinking is a process in which humans put more effort into doing these things.

The first thing to know about critical thinking is that critical thinkers do not always follow what everyone else is doing. When everyone in a classroom says to someone: "Yes, you are always right," critical thinkers ask "Why? Is there another option?" Critical thinkers do not always accept the standard answer. They are satisfied without thinking for themselves. They decide whether they should accept the answer, disagree with the answer, or make a different judgment about the answer.

Is there another option?



I'm not sure I agree...why do you say that?

Here is a list of things that critical thinkers do:

- ❖ Ask questions: Why? How?
- ❖ Never assume
- ❖ Look closely at arguments
- ❖ Think of other options

So, now that you know what critical thinking is, let us understand: when do you use it? When should you think critically? You should think critically when you have some problem that needs creative thought. Do you remember the section on complex problems? Complex problems usually involve critical thinking. Critical thinking should be used anytime when there is a claim, argument, or issue. Let us know each one separately.

A claim is a statement that something is true or real. Anything you say about something is a claim. Here is an example of a claim: “Happy Travels Travel Company is the best company.” You need to use critical thinking to see if the claim is true or false. Ask yourself “why?” Why is Happy Travels Travel Company the best company? You should look at data to see if this claim is true or not. Many people falsely believe any claim they hear and they fail to check if it is true or not.

Another opportunity to use critical thinking is when you have an issue. An issue is anything that has different opinions. For example, allowing inter-caste marriages is an issue because it involves many different opinions. Some people support this and other people do not support it. Another issue is which language is better: British English or American English? There are different opinions on this issue as well. When there are issues, you need to use critical thinking to decide what to believe. Before you make your final opinion or decision, use critical thinking skills. Think deeply about each side of the issue.

Lastly, you use critical thinking in arguments. An argument is a set of statements that support your idea. Some people have arguments because there are different statements from different people. A statement is a claim or an opinion on something. So, claims and arguments are similar. Think of the last argument you had with a friend or a family

member. The reason why you had an argument is because each of you believed in a different thing. Each of you believed different statements/opinions. In critical thinking, the goal in any argument should be to understand the other person, not to argue with him/her. What can you learn about the other person and his/her opinions?

Lastly, critical thinking helps you to learn the difference between facts and opinions. Facts are statements that do not change. You can find facts in books, encyclopedias, trusted websites, etc. Opinions on the other hand can change depending on the person who says them. Here is an example of a fact: “Healthy dogs are born with four legs.” This statement is true and can be found in books, websites, etc. Here is an example of an opinion: “Dogs are the best animals.” According to whom? Some people love dogs and other people do not like dogs. Let us look at another example:

Example A: “Happy Travels Travel Agency is the #1 company in America.”

Example B: “Happy Travels Travel Agency made 1 million USD last year.”

Which sentence is a fact and which is an opinion? Example A is the opinion because only some people believe it and other people do not believe it. Example B is a fact because it can be found in a report, in the official data, and probably on the Internet. Example A changes depending on which people you ask. Example B stays the same.

To summarize what we talked about, here is a chart to help you remember:

	Claim	Issue	Argument	Fact vs. Opinion
Goal with Critical Thinking	Decide if the claim is true by looking at data and information	Ask questions and try to understand the other side of the issue	Listen, ask questions, and try to understand the other person	Learn the difference between fact & opinion

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

20) Reflection: Have you ever believed an opinion as a fact? (Do you believe everything is true that you hear and read?)

21) **Experiment:** The next time someone makes a statement, ask yourself if it is a fact or an opinion.

SELF-TEST 01

25) What is a written or spoken statement that someone makes about a topic?

- a. Opinion
- b. Claim
- c. Argument
- d. All of the above

- 26) What is a good scenario (situation) to use critical thinking?
- a. When you have to decide whether to agree or disagree with your boss
 - b. When you have to solve a problem for your department
 - c. When you have to work with your co-workers to discuss many solutions to a problem
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 24) What is the difference between a fact and an opinion?
- 25) What are two characteristics of critical thinking (what are two aspects/parts of critical thinking)?

03-02: ASSESSING THE CREDIBILITY OF AN ARGUMENT

This section will focus on arguments. Do you remember our discussion about arguments? By definition, an argument is a statement about something. For example, my argument might be: “India is a nice place to live.” Arguments take place because people cannot agree on the claim, opinion, viewpoint or statement. In the business or legal world, an argument is a set of beliefs you have about something. For example, if you are in a court room, the judge may ask you to make your argument. You need to present your opinions, evidence, viewpoints, etc. In your academic life, your teacher may ask you to write an essay about your viewpoint on something. For example, you may need to support your argument with evidence. In other words, what do you believe and why? Here is another example of an argument:

Argument: British English is better than American English.

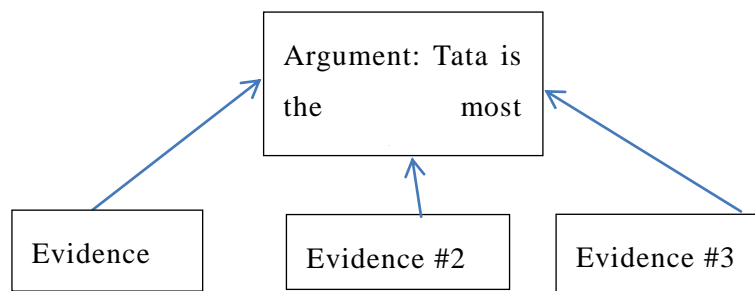
*Now you need to explain why and give evidence about this claim

When someone makes an argument or a claim, how do you know if it is a good argument, even when the evidence has been given to you? Let us go through some ways to know if an argument is credible or not.

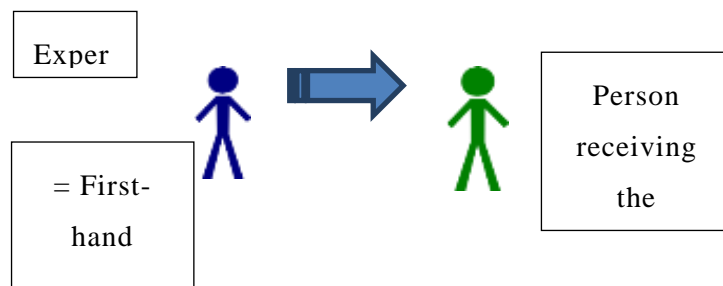
The first step to learning about arguments is to know the evidence. Evidence is something that supports an argument. Evidence can be facts or data. This data or the evidence can be found in reports or proposals.

Next, you have to see if the evidence actually supports the argument. For example, if you have the argument that your company is very successful, the first step is to know the facts and data. What do the data and facts tell you about the success of the

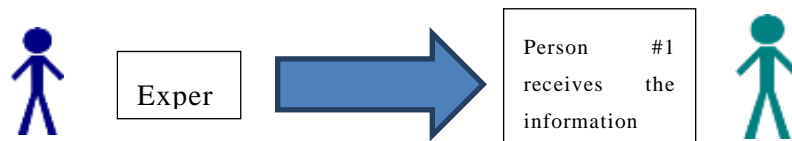
company? You can look and see how much money your company made the other year or how much sales your company has. If you have evidence and it does not support an argument, then it is not a credible argument. For example, let us imagine that your argument is that the Tata Company is the most successful company. Let us imagine your evidence is that Tata has six satellite offices all over the world. You must decide if that evidence has a direct relationship with that argument or not.



Now that you have evidence that seems to have a relationship with your argument, you must decide if the evidence is good or not. You must think about where the evidence came from. What is the source of the evidence? Examples of good sources are trusted books, websites, and experts. Experts are people directly involved with the evidence. Experts have received special education or training in a subject area. An expert is called a first- hand source. If an expert of the information tells you something, it can usually be trusted.



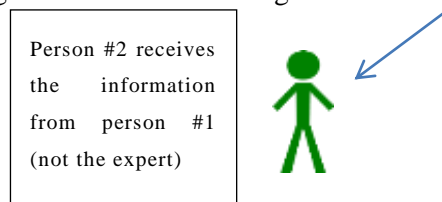
Sources that are considered bad are untrusted or unregulated websites, outdated books, or people not directly involved in the argument. Even Wikipedia cannot be trusted because not everyone who writes on Wikipedia is an expert in something. People who



are not directly involved in an argument are called second-hand sources. Second-hand sources are people who are not experts and who only know information because of someone else. In the following example, person #2 is receiving second-hand information from person #1. Here is an illustration to help you:

Other examples of bad sources are blogs, non-educational magazines, etc.

The last thing to do when assessing the credibility of an argument is to think about what



you know about the argument. What you already know is a part of what we call background information. Background information is the information you have acquired in your lifetime through education, experiences, and observations. When you hear an argument and the evidence, what do you think about it? Does the evidence make sense based on what you already know? You can also be a good judge of character.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

22) Reflection: Think about an argument you had with your friends or family members. What were the different views/opinions? Did you arrive at a conclusion?

23) Experiment: The next time you have an argument with a friend or family member, do some research on the argument. Find good sources. What do the experts say?

SELF-TEST 02

27) If an argument is true and the statements are based on facts, what should the conclusion be?

- a. True
- b. False
- c. Weak

d. Strong

28) **Scenario:** You are working for a company and you are talking with your colleagues about whether or not to offer more services to your customers. Many people are offering suggestions but you do not know if they are good arguments. What should you do?

- a. Look at the data/numbers from last year to see what your company did with the services
- b. Accept all opinions and choose the opinion that everyone agrees with
- c. Ask an expert in your field/industry about what the company did to solve a similar problem
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

26) What is the difference between first-hand and second-hand sources of information?

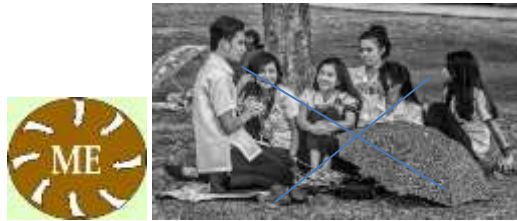
27) What are two factors of a credible argument?

03-03: BECOMING A CRITICAL THINKER

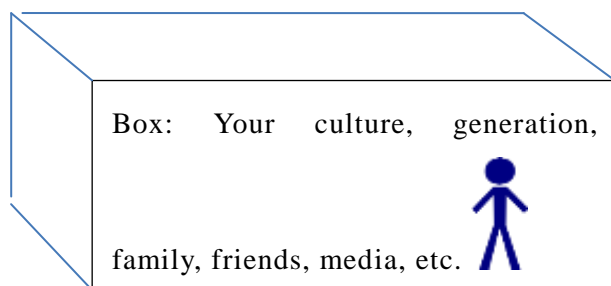
Thinking critically is hard to do. It is a skill that needs to be developed over time. When you do not use critical thinking, you may believe things that are not true or make opinions that are not based on facts. Facts are information that does not change. Let us explore how to become a critical thinker.

First, critical thinkers do not make assumptions. Assumptions are beliefs people have when they do not make beliefs based on facts. When you believe everything you hear without checking the source of the information, you have assumed. Making assumptions is dangerous and should be avoided when using critical thinking. Assumptions are easy to make when you do not receive your information from a first-hand source. When you receive information from a second-hand source, the information may not be correct. Be careful about what you believe from second-hand sources.

Second, critical thinkers think of other people when making decisions. Making decisions involves other people and critical thinkers know that there are many different opinions and viewpoints that are valid. Critical thinkers value their own opinion but also value other people's opinions and viewpoints.



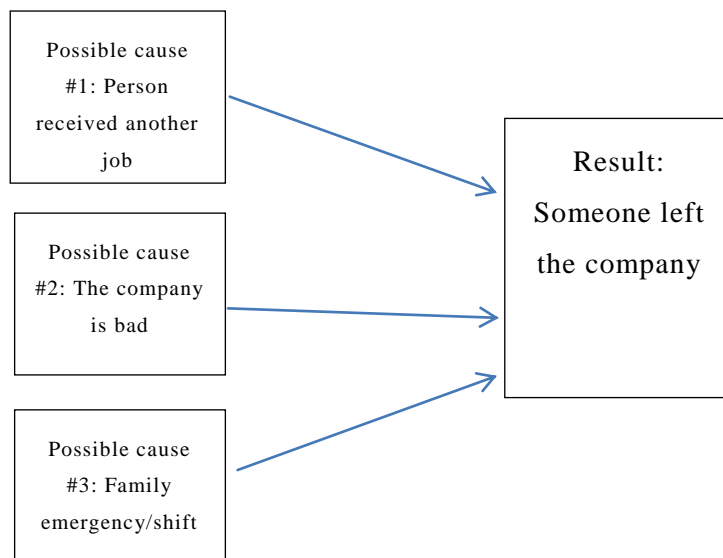
Third, critical thinkers realize that their opinions are influenced by their culture, families, and friends. Imagine that outside influences are like a big box. Your opinions and thoughts are influenced by what is inside the box. You are a product of your culture, the people you hang out with, and the time period you live in. Critical thinkers try to step outside of the box. They talk to people from different generations, cultures, and viewpoints.



Fourth, critical thinkers realize that not all experiences are the same. For example, imagine that you were in an aeroplane and there was a lot of turbulence. Imagine that this happened every time you went on an aeroplane. You might assume that all plane rides are bad because this is true in accordance with your experience. This person might say: “Planes are dangerous.” This is an assumption and is not based on fact. Critical thinkers realize that each experience is independent of each other. Other people have different experiences. A critical thinker would not assume that all plane rides are bad.

Fifth, critical thinkers do not think that all effects have the same results. Do you remember our discussion about cause and effect? Something happens (the cause) and then there is a result (the effect). Critical thinkers understand the real reason for the effect or the result. They do not assume that all causes have the same effect. For example, imagine that someone from your company leaves. That is the result (the effect). What was the cause? Do not assume that the company is bad. This is an assumption. Maybe there is another reason.

□



Next, critical thinkers always think about other options or other choices. When someone tells a critical thinker that there are only two choices, he/she asks if there are other options. You can find other options when you talk to other people with different viewpoints. Maybe they offer solutions that you would not normally think about.



Critical thinkers think about each statement made. Remember that statements are opinions/viewpoints that you believe to be true. Sometimes when we hear someone share his/her statements, we make a mistake; we think that a lot of statements means that the argument is strong. If someone gives ten statements to support his/her argument and another person only gives two statements, we believe that the person who gives ten statements has a better argument. This is not true all the time. A critical thinker should look at quality (good evidence, facts, logic), not quantity.

Lastly, critical thinkers do not mix opinions and facts. Opinions are statements that people make that are only true for them but may be different for a different person. Facts remain the same for everyone and can be verified in books and other trusted sources. For example, “Tata Group is the best company” is an opinion because some people agree and some people do not agree. “Tata Group is worth 118 billion dollars.” This is a fact. Some people think opinions are facts. This could not be further from the truth. Always examine the evidence.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- 24) Reflection: Do you think that you are a good critical thinker? Why or why not?
- 25) Experiment: The next time you hear someone speak (your teacher, friend, family member, etc.) examine if he/she is sharing facts, opinions, or both.

SELF-TEST 03

29) Scenario: You are working for an agriculture company. The production of wheat and corn has declined (gone down). What should you do?

- a. Assume that corn does not grow well in this soil
- b. Ask all the farmers in the area what problems they are having
- c. Assume that farms in India will always have this problem every year and think that your company will fail as a result
- d. Identify the circumstances/facts about what is making this season difficult and take specific action

30) **Scenario:** In your company, your team is told that there are only two solutions to solve the problem. What should you do?

- a. Look at the two solutions and also think of more possible solutions
- b. To save time, only look at the two solutions critically
- c. As a team, only look at one solution critically and spend little time looking at the other solution because it seems to be complex/complicated
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

28) What is the difference between a fact and an opinion?

29) What are three characteristics of a good critical thinker?

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to become a better critical thinker. We learned about what critical thinking is and what critical thinkers do. Critical thinking is important in order to sharpen your decision-making skills. These skills help you in your personal and professional life.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Imagining**= to think of/create something in your mind
- ❖ **Reflecting**= to think quietly/to express your thoughts & opinions
- ❖ **Reasoning**= the process of thinking about something in a logical way
- ❖ **Analysis**= a careful study of something in order to learn about it
- ❖ **Evaluation**= the judgment of something
- ❖ **Complex**= complicated/ not easy

- ❖ **Assumptions**= things you believe without having evidence
- ❖ **Thoughtful**= thinking carefully about something
- ❖ **Reject**= to refuse to believe something
- ❖ **Judge**= to make an opinion about something
- ❖ **Claim**= something that someone says. May be true or false
- ❖ **Issue**= any topic that people are talking about and have different opinions about
- ❖ **Argument**= statements that people use to support what they believe
- ❖ **Egocentric**= thinking focused on you only/ not thinking of others
- ❖ **Fact**= something that is true for everyone
- ❖ **Opinion**= something that is true only for some people
- ❖ **Verify**= to check whether or not something is true
- ❖ **Cause**= some problem that causes something to happen
- ❖ **Effect**= the result of the problem
- ❖ **Hang out**= to spend a lot of time in a place or with someone

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2) “Thinking, Fast and Slow” by Daniel Kahneman

3) “The 5 Elements of Critical Thinking” by Edward B. Burger Michael Starbird

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 03-04: GROUP DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Recognize** the benefits of working with a group
- ❖ **Explain** how individuals transform from groups to effective teams
- ❖ **Apply** the tips on thinking in creative ways for problem solving and decision making
- ❖ **Examine** the negative consequences of groups
- ❖ **Make** a plan to work effectively with large groups

INTRODUCTION



What do you do when you have a problem? Imagine that the problem is a complex one. In the business world, when problems occur, individuals come together in a group to help solve that problem. Many business decisions involve groups. Learning how to make decisions and solve problems is becoming more and more of a group effort. Groups can work together nicely and sometimes not so nicely. This section will discuss how to be successful in group decision making and problem solving.

04-01: UNDERSTANDING GROUP DYNAMICS

Complex problems are more difficult than small problems and many times require a group to deal with them. Groups offer more benefits than working on the problem by yourself. By definition, a group is defined as at least three people who come together to solve a common problem. Group dynamics refer to how well that group performs. The group may not work together well all the time. There can be good group dynamics or bad group dynamics. You may be asking yourself: how do you get the best group dynamics? What are the things that make groups successful? Let us go through some characteristics that successful groups have, when making decisions and solving problems.

The best groups have diversity. Diversity means differences. Diversity can be seen in different ages, genders, skills, educational level, and cultures. If you want to solve complex problems, you need diverse people to help you make those decisions. Below are two examples of groups making decisions. Which group is more diverse?

Good Diversity	Bad Diversity
If a group is deciding school policies for a primary school institution, there might be both men and women making decisions, which helps moms and dads of kids feel that all viewpoints are represented when making decisions	A group deciding which technology products to sell to young women should have only older men in their group because their products are used by young women

It is important to have diverse groups because that is the only way to get a variety of opinions. The most popular opinion or solution may not be the best one. So, in order to have the best outcome or solution, you need a diverse group. An unlikely answer might



come from an unlikely person and it may be the best solution to your problem. You should have creative thinkers, logical thinkers, and critical thinkers. You should also have people who are really good at finding errors or problems in certain decisions. These people might

help you to prevent a big mistake, so people who are more critical are good in a group. When you involve a lot of people in making a decision, every person feels good at having a stake or a responsibility. That is why decisions should be made in a diverse group and not alone.

Next, groups solve problems easier if there are people in the group who have experience in the company. People may be experienced in knowing the processes, rules, regulations, company culture, and past successes and failures of the company. When making decisions, it is important to have someone who knows the history of the company. In order to make the best decisions for the company, you need to know the past. It is said that the key to the future is in learning about the past. Maybe a past decision was not a good idea and people who have been at the company remember this more than newer people. To have good group dynamics, learn from the more experienced people.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

26) Reflection: Have you ever been in a group? Was it diverse? Did you solve any problem in your group?

27) Experiment: The next time you need to make a big decision, get a diverse group (at least three people) to help you make that decision.

SELF-TEST 01

31) What is the definition of group dynamics?

- a. Changes in a plan
- b. How well people interact in a group
- c. Learning about resources
- d. Thinking about costs and benefits

32) Scenario: You are a manager and you are going to form groups in your company to solve some problems. There are at least three problems you want to solve. Each group will solve a different problem. What should you do?

- a. Only put the people who have experience of one problem together
- b. Group the people by skills/knowledge AND after groups have solved the problem, share the solution with everyone
- c. Mix the groups with people who have different levels of experience with the problem (some only have one year experience and others might have 10 years experience)
- d. Mix men and women who have the same knowledge in the same group to offer male/female perspectives

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

30) Why is it important to have a diverse group?

31) What are some ways to be diverse in a group?

04-02: EVOLVING FROM A GROUP TO A TEAM

Do you know the difference between a group and a team? Both groups and teams involve many different people. These people can have different viewpoints, opinions, and values. Working with individuals can be difficult if everyone is trying to work together and trying to make decisions. A group evolves into a team when the members all work together towards a common goal. So, how do you get individual members to become a strong team?

First, allow time to socialize. Members who feel comfortable with one another will have an easier time making decisions and solving problems.



Making decisions in groups involves trust and taking healthy risks and socializing helps. Socializing can happen inside or outside of the work space. For example, if you are a president of a company or a CEO, you can arrange a meeting for everyone at a restaurant or a fun place. Or, you can arrange a social hour at work where you have snacks and opportunities to learn about the team members.

Second, after group members feel comfortable in socializing, you are ready to form an identity among your group. Allow group members to form an identity. If you do not know your identity, think about the purpose of the group. The job title can be a part of the identity. For example, if you are in my group, your identity can be “Michelle’s English students.”



Third, groups are formed when all group members know their responsibility. The best groups work together towards a common goal. Each member has a piece of the larger project. For example, for a group project, maybe one person is an IT expert, another person is the group leader and another person might be the editor. Make sure all group members feel comfortable in the role/assignment that they have. Group members should feel good about what they are doing.

Fourth, successful groups feel comfortable in sharing their viewpoints. Do you remember the part on socializing? If group members do not feel comfortable with one another, they will not share their viewpoints. What happens when you have a different viewpoint than the other group members? It takes courage to share those viewpoints. If you are comfortable, you are more likely to share those viewpoints.

Fifth, successful groups have something called synergy. Synergy is creating something bigger than yourself with other people. For example, if you have a big project, you will need the help of individual group members. You need everyone’s individual viewpoint. By themselves, group members cannot do big projects. Everyone needs to work together. When group members are effective, they can create synergy.



Sixth, groups are successful when they know each other. Making difficult decisions and finishing projects is only possible if everyone knows each other’s strengths, weaknesses, skills, etc. For example, if there is a difficult project, a team leader will know which people have skills in certain areas. If everyone does what he/she is best at, the group can be successful.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

28) Reflection: If you have a job, how well do you know the people who work with you? If you do not know the people so well, how can you learn about your colleagues/co-workers?

29) Reflection: Do you know your personal strengths (things you are good at) and weaknesses (things you are not so good at)?

SELF-TEST 02

33) What do successful teams do when the group members first start to meet?

- a. Schedule the next meeting
- b. Create action plans
- c. Get to know one another in a fun setting
- d. Assign titles/tasks/roles

34) Scenario: You are working in a team and you do not like your title/role in the group. What should you do?

- a. Talk to the team leader
- b. Talk to all members of the group
- c. Hide your feelings and do the job you were assigned even if you hate it
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

32) What is synergy and why is it important for groups?

33) Why is it important for new groups to socialize?

04-03: USING DIVERGENT AND CONVERGENT THINKING

We learned before that every member of the group is unique and special. People in groups can have both divergent and convergent thinking. What is divergent and convergent thinking?



Divergent thinking is thinking of many things that may not have a relationship/connection. When you think of the word divergent, you can think of the word “different.” Divergent thinkers think of different things. A divergent thinker can have a topic and think of different ideas emerging from that topic/idea/problem.



Convergent thinking is different from divergent thinking. Convergent thinking is thinking that takes a lot of ideas and makes relationships with them. A convergent thinker can take many ideas and understand the common ideas among them.

Which type of thinker are you? Here are some tips on becoming a divergent thinker.

Divergent thinkers make mind maps. This is also called brainstorming. Take an idea/problem and write it in the middle of the paper. Draw a circle around it. Next, think of as much information as possible connected to that idea. What comes into your brain? Ask all group members to do the same. Draw lines that connect ideas that have a relationship.



relationship.

Divergent thinkers also do something called free writing. Free writing is exactly as it

sounds: writing freely. Free writing is beneficial because it is an activity where you just write everything that comes into your brain. The only difference between free writing and brainstorming is that brainstorming involves pictures, circles, and lines to connect ideas. Free writing is simply writing. It allows you to be creative and think of many different ideas.



Another tip for divergent thinkers is journaling. Encourage group members to carry a small journal with them. When ideas come into your brain, write them down in the small notebook. Sometimes, the best ideas can come to us when we are not in the office.

Now, let us explore some ways to become a better convergent thinker. Remember, convergent thinkers are good at taking many ideas and summarizing them so that in the end, the final decision is a summary or synthesis of all the ideas.



One activity convergent thinkers can do is to separate ideas into three separate piles: yes, no, or maybe. The goal is to see which ideas are good, bad, or maybe for a different time. If you have a lot of “yes” ideas, you need to think about which ideas you should work on right now and which

ideas can be worked on later. Suppose you have a problem and after doing some divergent thinking with brainstorming, you need to choose only a few ideas. Look at each idea and with the team, think if it is a good idea, a maybe, or a bad idea. Later, look at the notes/ideas for the “yes” and the “maybe”. Think if you can combine any ideas or put more into the “no” pile.



Convergent thinkers are really good at understanding pros and cons. The phrase ‘pros and cons’ means the reasons for and against something. The pros and cons of something are its advantages and disadvantages, favourable and unfavourable factors or reasons. If you have an idea or a solution, convergent thinkers think of the benefits and the disadvantages of each idea. Are there more benefits than disadvantages? More disadvantages than benefits?



In summary, it is important to use both divergent and convergent thinking in order to make the best decisions in a group.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- 30) Reflection: Are you more of a divergent or a convergent thinker?
- 31) Experiment: The next time you have a big decision to make, make a list of pros and cons.

SELF-TEST 03

- 35) Scenario: As group leader of your team, you need to come up with three creative solutions to a complicated problem with the business. Which type of thinking is best to get many ideas on paper?
 - a. Convergent
 - b. Divergent
- 36) Scenario: In your group, you want to use convergent thinking. You have many great ideas on how to solve the problem, but now you must select one solution that is the best for the business. Which technique should you use?
 - a. Brainstorming/mind map
 - b. Journaling
 - c. Pros/cons list
 - d. Three piles: yes, no, maybe

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

- 34) What is the difference between convergent and divergent thinking?
- 35) What is one benefit of convergent thinking? What is one benefit of divergent thinking?

04-04: AVOIDING COMMON GROUP ERRORS

No group is effective all the time. Groups can make errors and have problems too. If a group has good group dynamics, the group makes fewer errors. If the group has bad group dynamics, the group is more prone to making errors. This section will explain how to make fewer errors as a group.

The first error groups can make is not being organized. Not being organized is called disorganization. Disorganization happens when members of the group do not know what they are supposed to be doing. They do not have a clear idea of what their responsibilities are. Group members may not know who to talk to when there is a problem. To make your work life more organized, you should know exactly what you need to do and who you talk to when you have a problem.

The second possible error is stress/tension. Stress/tension happens when group members have too much responsibility than they can handle. Stress can also happen when there is too much disorganization in the group. To help, team leaders should make sure that everyone in the group feels good. Do they need more organization? Do they



need clear job titles? Do they need less projects/work? Do they need more socializing? Team leaders should find out what the group members need. Team leaders should also motivate their group members and be positive.

Third, another error groups can possibly make is thinking they are the best. Sometimes, groups are so positive that they feel as if nothing can go wrong. This is also a problem because it is not realistic. Group members who ignore other viewpoints and opinions



make a big mistake. It is good to feel confident, but do not think you are the best and therefore do not need any help. Avoid this common error. It is called the Superman Complex. The goal of any group should be to learn from many types of people, to learn from all viewpoints. Groups should invite specialists and talk to people who have solved similar problems.

Fourth and last, the final error to avoid is Groupthink. Groupthink happens when you start to think like all the other members of your group. When you are afraid to express an opinion/viewpoint that may be different from the group you are in, you have suffered from Groupthink. To avoid this, always remember to have an open mind. Also, do not be afraid to say how you really feel.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

32) Reflection: Which group error do you want to work on? (Disorganization, stress, Superman Complex, or Groupthink). If you are a student, think about which error you make in group projects.

33) Experiment: The next time you think you have the answer, ask someone else for his/her opinion.

SELF-TEST 04

37) What should you avoid in a group?

- a. Disorganization
- b. Stress
- c. Groupthink
- d. All of the above

38) When group members are afraid of sharing ideas that may be different than the popular belief, what are they showing?

- a. Group analysis
- b. Superman Complex
- c. Groupthink
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

36) Why is it important to avoid group errors?

37) Explain when confidence can be a good thing. Explain when confidence is a bad thing.

04-05: WORKING WITH LARGE GROUPS

In today's world, groups are getting larger as we work with people from many different countries and cities. How are large groups special? They require more organization and communication. This section will give you some tips if you are in a large group involving many people from different departments/cities/or countries.

Large groups require better communication than smaller groups. Larger groups need to know all the information about the group members and about the projects. People need to know about the other group members, their job titles, and what they each do. You also need to know who to report to when you have a question. The more information

you know, the easier it is to get things done. An easy way to do this is to pass information electronically.

A large group needs to know which people work best together. Usually in a project, you can divide group members by skill level. Or, you can make diverse groups where different skills are together in the same group (to encourage creative thinking). Think about what a project requires and group the members accordingly. For a large group to be successful, you must make smaller groups within the larger group that have a common identity.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

34) **Reflection:** Have you ever worked in a large group? (More than twenty five people). Was it difficult?

SELF-TEST 05

- 39) As a team leader, before a meeting with a large group, what should you do?
- a. Give everyone the documents electronically
 - b. Allow everyone a chance to speak
 - c. Make sure everyone knows the task you are working on at the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting two days **before** it starts
 - d. All of the above
- 40) Which of the following is a useful tool when working with large groups?
- a. Online calendar
 - b. Skype meetings
 - c. WhatsApp
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

- 38) What are the benefits of working with a large group?
- 39) What are some disadvantages of working with a large group?

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to make decisions and solve problems in a group. Learning to work with groups is a very normal part of society and life. The more experience you have working with groups, the more successful you will be in making decisions and solving problems.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Group dynamics**= the interaction among group members

- ❖ **Logical thinker**= a person who uses logic to make decisions
- ❖ **Logic**= a proper or reasonable way of thinking about or understanding something
- ❖ **Synergy**= the combined energy of multiple people
- ❖ **Socialize**= to have fun with other people
- ❖ **Pros and Cons**= the reasons for and against something, advantages and disadvantages, favourable and unfavourable factors or reasons
- ❖ **Disorganization**= lacking organization, arrangement, or planning

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 04-01: WORKING IN GROUPS AND TEAMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Explain** the benefits of teams in relation to companies
- ❖ **Define** groups, teams, and committees and Describe their uses
- ❖ **Explain** how to be successful in a team
- ❖ **Make** a plan to work with team members in different locations

INTRODUCTION



Teams are needed in business to do research, make new products, find solutions to problems, improve quality of services, and work on projects. Have you ever wondered what makes a team effective? What separates effective teams from non-effective teams? This section will focus on working with groups and teams.

01-01: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF TEAMS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Groups are more effective than individuals and effective groups can help companies to be successful. Let us explore the ways in which a group benefits a company.



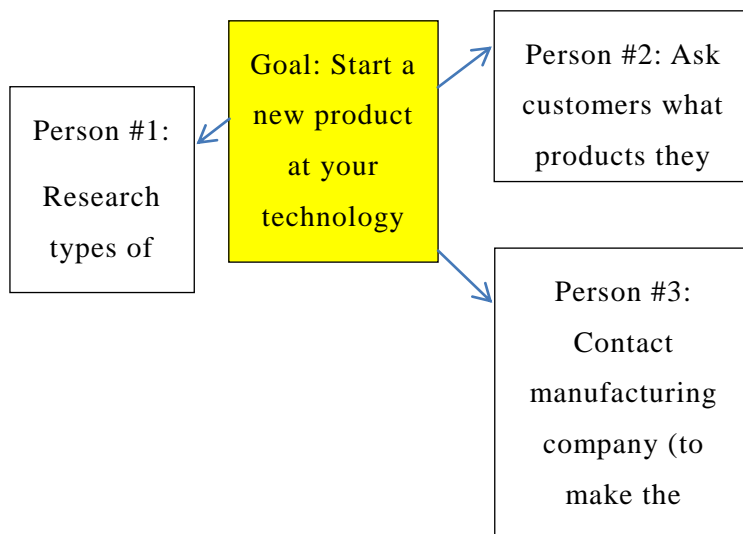
An effective group reflects a company. If a company has a reputation of being diverse, the teams should also be diverse. If a company has many departments, this can be reflected in different ways in a company.

One option is that a company can have separate departments like marketing, IT, human resources, etc. Another option is that a team can have members of different divisions like one person each from IT, marketing, and human resources in the same group.

The type of project will determine which type of team a company has: members of the same division or members of different divisions together.

Effective teams accomplish more than what an individual can accomplish on their own. Do you remember the word ‘synergy?’ Synergy is the combined efforts of many people working together for a common goal. Individuals cannot accomplish a lot by themselves because they have a fixed schedule and limited knowledge. A team can do more than what one individual can. A team has multiple perspectives, a lot of combined experience, and more than one person dedicated to the project. As long as a team is

working towards a common goal, a team will almost always accomplish a lot more than a single person. Teams have exponential growth.



Effective teams are committed towards the goal. If teams do not know the goal or are working on other problems, they will not be effective. Team members must know what and why they are working on. If team members are doing other tasks not related to the project, they are wasting time. It is important that everyone knows the goal or the objective.



Effective teams are excited to work. Happy workers stay at a company longer and contribute more to a team. Happy workers spread positive energy and encourage everyone to give their best to their projects. The best teams have happy workers.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- 1) Reflection: Have you ever worked in a group? What was one thing your group did really well? What was one thing your group did not do so well?
- 2) Reflection: Think about your friends (a group that you have). Do your friends reflect the kind of person you are? Yes or no. Why or why not?

SELF-TEST 01

- 1) In this list, which is not a positive thing about working with a team?
 - a. Teams can find creative solutions
 - b. Teams can do more than a single person

- c. Teams can create new connections and friendships
- d. Teams work as individuals

2) Scenario: You are in charge of forming a team for your company. There are many departments in your company. You work in the IT services of your company. How should you do it?

- a. Only put the same people of the same age, gender, and skills together
- b. Mix the groups by age, gender, department, and skill
- c. Put men of different departments together
- d. Put women of different departments together

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 1) What are the three benefits of groups?
- 2) What is the definition of synergy and why is it important?

01-02: GROUPS, TEAMS, AND COMMITTEES

In a company, groups, teams and committees are all needed. These are all required for a company to be successful. All are different and serve different purposes in order to get most of the work finished. So, what is a group, a team, and a committee?

A group is a lot of individuals who work independently of one another. One person's work does not affect another person's work. For example, if a company has a customer service department, everyone's work might be separate. All the customer service agents might do the same type of work, but everyone's work is independent.

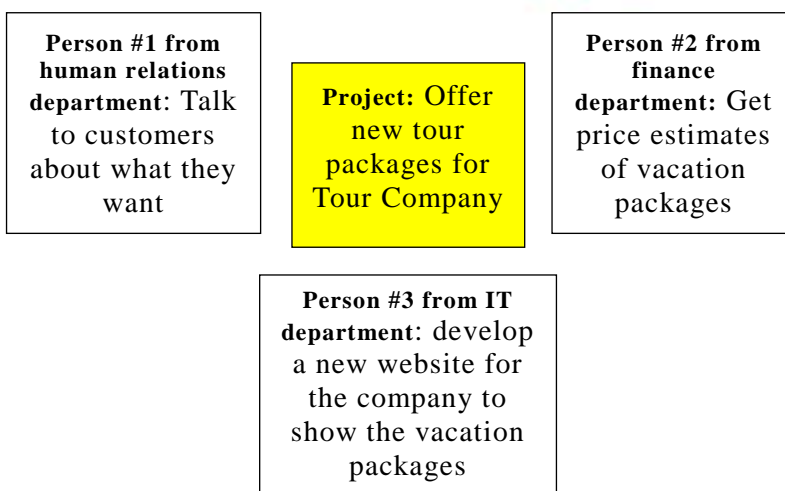


Groups are important if you want many people to accomplish one task. Groups are good for manpower. But, group members do not have to communicate much. Groups are good for simple tasks that require many people to either do the same or the different task.

A team is defined as a group of individuals who work together towards a common goal. The difference between a group and a team is that a group has individual members working on separate projects. In teams, all people work together on the same project. Teams are good for solving complex problems that require many different people with special viewpoints and opinions.

Here is a chart to help you remember the difference between groups and teams.

Groups	Teams
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A collection of individuals • Separate job responsibilities • Separate goals/missions • Less group bonding and less group community • Make decisions individually • Rewards are individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People work on the same goal • People share pieces of the larger big project • More group bonding/unity • Rewards are based on group accomplishments



Lastly, committees are groups of people who represent others and make decisions.



Think of a committee as a small government. The committee will make important decisions for the company like salary, discuss problems, or propose solutions. They will vote on the issues and make a collective decision. The best committees are from members of the different departments. For example, if your company has an IT department, a human resources department, and a finance department, then the committee should have one person from each department.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

3) Reflection: If you are a student, does your school have a student government? If you are working for a company, does your company have a committee?

4) Reflection: Have you ever participated in a school project? Did you form a group or a team?

SELF-TEST 02

- 3) What type of group talks about topics/things that matter to the whole company/organization?
- a. Work group
 - b. Committee
 - c. Team
- 4) A group focuses on individual tasks/responsibilities. What does a team focus on?
- a. Individual goals
 - b. Team accomplishments
 - c. Shared tasks/responsibilities
 - d. Decisions that affect each member

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- 3) What are the main differences between groups and teams?
- 4) Why are groups, teams, and committees required in a company?

01-03: ENSURING TEAM SUCCESS

Do you remember group dynamics? A team can either be successful or unsuccessful. Teams can be successful when there are certain elements involved. A group can evolve into a team over time.

First, all effective teams understand that each member is important because every person works towards the same goal. If a project is a pizza, then each member is like a piece of pizza. Everyone is working towards a similar goal. Nobody should be in competition because each person is important and does separate work that is required to



help the project.

Each team member can have a speciality and have a different role. Let us explore the different roles or jobs each person can have within a team.

Role:	Good at:
Leader	Motivating team members to finish tasks, encourage others (not dictate), and making difficult decisions
Secretary	Helping leader with administrative tasks
Facilitator	Help other group members agree
Detail Recorder	Writing documents/reports
Peacemaker	Solving conflict within a group



Second, all members of successful teams respect one another. Everyone values all opinions because he/she knows that diversity is a good thing. The best idea might not be the most popular viewpoint. Everyone listens to everyone speak and does not ignore other viewpoints just because they sound crazy or weird.



Third, all successful teams have a deadline. People know when projects need to be completed. If groups do not have a finishing date, then it becomes difficult for groups to stay focused. Teams work better with a little pressure.



Fourth, successful teams know all the important information. Team members cannot be effective if they do not know all the information. You cannot make important decisions if you do not have all the information. The more information you know, the more informed decisions you can make. Things that all group members should know at all times are:

- ❖ The company's mission
- ❖ The mission of the project
- ❖ The financial situation of the company (if they are gaining or losing money)
- ❖ Changes happening inside the company (departments changing, people leaving, opportunities for promotion)



Lastly, successful groups have rewards. Rewards are important for group members to feel motivated to work. If there are no rewards or prizes, group members might not want to work. Everyone wants to be recognized. Recognition is when someone sees what you are doing and compliments you or rewards you. Rewards can be verbal or in the form of things. Here are some examples:

Verbal Rewards	Tangible Rewards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Thanks for your hard work." • "You are doing a great job." • "Nice team efforts." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher salary (more money) • A team party • Certificates, travel vouchers, luncheon vouchers or coupons, gift vouchers

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

- 5) **Reflection:** Are rewards important for you? Why or why not?
- 6) **Reflection:** Do you work best if you have a deadline? Why or why not?

SELF-TEST 03

- 5) **Scenario:** You are working in a team and the group members are not being too successful. What is one thing you can do to help?
- a. The group leader can have an individual meeting with everyone to make sure they are doing their jobs
 - b. Make sure you are doing exactly what you are supposed to do
 - c. Organize a fun outing to a tea shop with your team so you can all relax and talk in an informal setting
 - d. All of the above
- 6) What is the main difference between a group and a team?
- a. A group has individuals working on different tasks that may look similar and a team has a shared purpose (everyone working on the same thing)
 - b. A team is larger than a group
 - c. Groups are more successful than teams
 - d. Teams have people from the same department and groups have people from different departments

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

- 5) Why are deadlines important?
- 6) Why is it beneficial that each group member has a different role?

01-04: WORKING WITH DISTRIBUTED TEAMS



Distributed teams means team members who are in different locations. The team members could be in different cities, states, or countries. As business gets more and more globalized, teams are becoming distributed. Distributed teams allow businesses to be multi-national and work in different countries. Distributed teams also encourage global partnerships. Despite these benefits, distributed teams have special challenges that local teams do not have. Let us explore the difficulties and the solutions that distributed teams have.

The first challenge is in organization. They are also in different locations. How do you organize meetings? Due to the different time zones, meetings will have to be fixed in advance. Electronic communication becomes very important. E-mails and social media need to be used to coordinate things. It is best if one person coordinates all meetings and e-mail communication for the whole team.

The second challenge is in communication. The more people you have, the more communication you need among the people. The solution is finding the communication medium that works for everyone, depending on what you want to accomplish. Look at this chart:

Communication Medium	Purpose
E-mail	Attaching files like reports/documents, long messages
Text message/group chat	For things that require a fast/quick reply
Phone Calling	When you need to explain things in detail (that might be confusing in text/email), for sensitive topics that are more personal
Skype video calls	For meetings



Lastly, distributed teams should meet at least one to two times a year to build personal relationships. The number of times you meet with your distributed team is up to your team leader. Teams with members in different countries might have a difficult time meeting due to distance. So, depending on the needs of your team, try to meet as often as possible. Electronic communication is fast, but meeting face-to-face builds real relationships.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

7) Reflection: Do you have any family members in different cities, states, or countries? How do you maintain the communication? By e-mail, text, phone, Skype, face-to-face, etc.

8) Reflection: If you are a student, think about how best you communicate with your teacher. Do you prefer face-to-face, phone calling, e-mail, etc.?

SELF-TEST 04

- 7) What does a distributed team have?
- a. Members in different locations in the world
 - b. Long-term members (many years in the company)
 - c. Many contacts with other people in the organization
 - d. More unity

- 8) What is a problem for distributed teams?
- a. Lack of (not enough) coordination
 - b. Difficulty in finding a common meeting time
 - c. Not enough technology
 - d. Members are not motivated when they can't meet facet-to-face

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

- 7) What is the definition of the term 'Distributed Teams?'
- 8) What are the benefits of working with a distributed team? What are the challenges?

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to work in groups and teams. We learned that teams and groups are very useful in a company and in life. Everywhere we go, we will have to work with people at some point of time. Most of us learn how to function in groups in our social circles with friends, then at school, and also in companies. Learning how to function in a team will help you to be successful in life.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Division**= a department within a company, like marketing, IT, human resources, etc.
- ❖ **Deadline**= the last day to finish something
- ❖ **Recognition**= to know or remember someone or something for the work they do
- ❖ **Distributed**= spread out in different cities, states, or countries
- ❖ **Exponential** = more and more rapid

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

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UNIT 04-02: EXPLORING TEAM ROLES AND PROCESSES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Identify** the traits/characteristics of team leaders
- ❖ **Describe** the process of choosing team members
- ❖ **Evaluate** the best size of a team and Define the common roles of groups
- ❖ **Frame** rules/objectives for your team or group
- ❖ **Make** collective decisions in your professional life

INTRODUCTION



Do you remember that a group needs time to evolve into a team? A group needs to pass through specific stages before it can function as a team. Do you know when a team is effective? Effective team members will have specific roles or responsibilities that help them function as a team. This section will focus on the most common group roles, how groups change or develop, and how teams can be successful.

02-01: RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR TEAM LEADERSHIP

Leaders are required for any group or team to function properly. Leaders are people who motivate other people to change and to be the best they can be. Do you remember some great leaders of your country? These people had special qualities that made them leaders and allowed them to do great things. You may have needed to perform the job as a leader in school. At work, you will have other opportunities to be a leader. Good leaders are required for a team to be successful. Let us explore the qualities of a great leader at the workplace.

First, the best people in the team are chosen as leaders. How do you choose a leader for



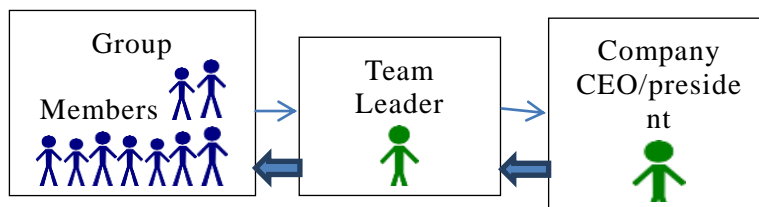
your group? Should the person who speaks the most be the leader? Leaders should be elected from a group. This means that leaders should be voted from the group, like a democracy. Team members are more likely to respect a leader whom they elect. If you want to be a leader, you should think about your relationship with other people. Do you have a good relationship with them? If yes, then they are likely to elect you.



Second, effective leaders help everyone. After a leader is chosen, it is the responsibility of the leader to help everyone, no matter what their role is. Leaders should not just help their friends; they should help everyone. The best leaders meet the team members to know their progress on their projects. The leader may be busy, but is

never too busy to personally know each person on his/her team.

Third, team leaders establish the communication link between the group and the CEO/president of the company. The leader is the elected representative of each group or department. The leader represents the group. Think of the leader as the face and voice of the whole group. The leader passes along all important information to the highest level of a company. Also, if there is any news from the CEO/president, it is the leader's job to pass that information to the group.



Third, effective leaders manage conflict. A conflict is any problem that is in the group. Maybe group members are fighting. Maybe group members cannot agree on something. An effective leader sees conflict right away and tries to solve the problem before it

gets bigger. Leaders are not afraid of conflict. The best leaders solve the conflict in a way that benefits everyone involved and think of the best solution. A good leader will find the root cause of the conflict/problem. The root cause/problem is the real reason why the conflict exists.

Effective leaders have many special qualities that make all the members work together. Leaders are not just good communicators; they are also responsible people. Good leaders have many qualities in combination. This means there are many things that make the leader effective. Here is a short list. Can you think of more?

- ❖ Curious (ask questions)
- ❖ Original/creative (new ideas)
- ❖ Organized (not confused)
- ❖ Punctual (on time)
- ❖ Dependable/responsible

- ❖ Sociable (knows about other team members)
- ❖ Tolerant/sensitive to other people
- ❖ Confident/Positive



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- 9) Reflection: Who is your favourite leader? What qualities does this person have? (In other words, why is that person a great leader?)
- 10) Reflection: Do you think you are a good leader? Why or why not? What qualities make you a good leader?

SELF-TEST 01

- 9) What does leadership mean?
- a. Giving information to many groups
 - b. Reaching an agreement with a group
 - c. Being independent
 - d. Motivating others to achieve a goal
- 10) Which of the following is not something a leader should do?
- a. Manage conflict in a group
 - b. Participate in all meetings
 - c. Communicate everything to higher authorities/managers
 - d. Tell slow group members that they must leave the team if they do not do their work

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 9) What are three qualities of a good leader?
- 10) Now that you know the qualities of a good leader, can you guess the qualities of a good follower?

02-02: SELECTING TEAM MEMBERS

Who you choose to be in your team will decide the success or failure of your team. Each member is very important. Think of each team member as a link in a chain. Each



link needs to be strong. The team is only as strong as the weakest chain. If one link in the chain is broken, it affects the whole team. So, choosing good team members is very important. As for a team leader, there should be certain criteria for choosing team members. Are skills important? Social intelligence? What things should you look for when choosing a team? That will depend on what you want. Let us look at some general qualities that you should look for in any type of team.

First, you should choose positive people. Positive people make you feel good about the project and help keep you motivated. Positive energy is required in order to remain happy about the project. Imagine having negative energy all around you; negative energy is heavy and does not feel good. People are attracted to positive energy. When a team is positive, more work will be accomplished. People will be excited to start work every day.



The second criteria when deciding team leaders is to think who knows the most information about the project. Team members who have knowledge, experience, and skills connected to the project are necessary. Think about what skills you need and then think of the best person who has those skills. For example, if you are doing an international project, it is best to have members who have language or international skills. Many people just choose team members who have the most experience at a company. This is a mistake. Years at a company does not mean that that person has the skills that you need.



Third, you have to think about how all the people work together. Having the perfect people is nice, but it is not nice if those people cannot work together. Group members need to feel comfortable with one another if they are to make difficult decisions and take risks together. This element, called synergy, is very important. Synergy is created when all group members can do more together than they can do apart.

How do different personalities work together (or not work together)? Personality is important when thinking about how people work together. You need to have balance in different personalities. For example, if all group members like to talk (and not listen), then you have a problem. Or, if all group members are shy and do not like to talk, then also you have a problem.

Work ethic is another element within your group members. Will all group members work hard? Will one lazy person cause the other group members to also be lazy? Think about how group members will motivate (or not motivate) other group members.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

- 11) Reflection: Think about your friends. Does each friend have a different skill? Do your friends help you to make good decisions?
- 12) Reflection: Do you have any special skills? For example, do you have any language skills? Technical skills?

SELF-TEST 02

- 11) What is the most important thing to think about when choosing team members?
 - a. Attitude/motivation
 - b. Skills
 - c. Experience
 - d. Friendship
- 12) What is the first thing you should you do before choosing your team members?
 - a. Think about the employees who are loyal to the company
 - b. Think about your team rules
 - c. Think about which skills you need
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- 11) Why is it important to think about personalities or qualities when deciding group members?
- 12) What are two things to think about when deciding group members?

02-03: CHOOSING THE OPTIMAL TEAM SIZE



Teams are required for finishing projects, forming committees, and communicating about business. Let us explore how to choose the best team size in each of those areas.

Research supports that the best team size for managing projects is between five and ten members. Here are some benefits of this group size:

- ❖ People who talk less might feel more comfortable in talking. In smaller teams of three people or less, shy people talk 23% of the time.
- ❖ Group members can form bonds and friendships with other group members
- ❖ Communication becomes easier

There are some problems with large groups:

- ❖ Shy group members might not be comfortable in talking. In teams of more than 10 people, shy people only talk 3% of the time
- ❖ It is more difficult to form close relationships with group members
- ❖ Communication becomes more difficult

If the team is a distributed team, this means the team uses technology to communicate among the different members who live in different cities/states/countries. In distributed teams, members do not see each other face-to-face. Distributed teams tend to be larger and the best size is between 20 and 25 members. With this group size, the communication will still be manageable even if it is a little slower.

Let us talk about communication. To have the best communication among group members, what is the best size? Research supports that 12 or less members in any group is best for communication. Communication in a large group is difficult because there are more people who need to understand the message. If you send an e-mail message, you must wait until everyone has read the message. At meetings, more people will want to talk and more viewpoints will be shared. Larger groups of more than ten people usually have a more difficult time communicating.



Let us talk about committees. Committees are groups of people who represent a company, like a government. In a committee, having more people is better because the more viewpoints that are represented, the more diverse the opinions are, and the better the decisions will be.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

13) Reflection: Think about your school projects or friends group. In a group/team, do you like to talk more or listen more? If you do not like to talk, is it because you feel shy?

14) Experiment: Observe different sizes of groups. For example, in school or in your community, observe as people talk. Observe a small group of less than 5 people. Does everyone talk? Next, observe a large group of more than 10 people. Does everyone talk?

SELF-TEST 03

13) What is true about group size?

- a. Small groups are more effective than large groups
- b. Large groups are better than small groups
- c. Groups should have exactly 6 members
- d. Groups should never have less than 3 people

14) **Scenario:** You are the group leader who is working with 20 people from the same location but the group is not effective. People are not completing the tasks on time. What can you do?

- a. Split the group into 2 groups of 10 people each
- b. Tell the group to work harder
- c. Split the groups into 2 smaller groups based on skills and task
- d. Make sure everyone is communicating
- e. C & D

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

13) What are two benefits of a large group?

14) What are two benefits of a small group?

02-04: DEFINING COMMON TEAM ROLES

In a team, members tend to find a role. A role is defined as a specific job that that person does. Each person has special skills or talents that allow him/her to be successful in different roles. Let us explore four common team roles that members tend to adopt.

The first role is a leader. Every group needs a leader. One leader is sufficient for the group. If there is more than one leader, then the leaders might disagree and fight. It is best for unity to have one central leader.



The person who speaks the most should not always be the leader. The person who represents the group should be the leader. The leader should be the spokesperson for the group and the person

who knows the group members well. Sometimes a leader can be a shy person or a person who talks a lot. This person needs to have a good relationship with everyone and respect every member of the group. If the group members do not like the leader, then that person should not be the leader.



The second role people can choose in a group is a doer. A doer is a person who likes to be active and “do” things. These people work very hard and like to stay busy. These are the people who like to start new projects and are always doing something to help the project. There can be more than one doer in the group.



A third role members might choose is a thinker’s role. This role is good for people who are very creative and like to think of new ideas. Just as the doer likes to “do” things, a thinker likes to “think.” Thinkers might be shy people who do not like to talk, but like to think of new ideas and write them down in their notebooks. A specialist is an example of a thinker. A specialist is a person who has special skills in an area, like a language specialist or a technology specialist. There can be many thinkers in a group, each with a speciality.



The last role in a team is the role of a socializer. A socializer is a person who loves to talk and make people feel comfortable. These people are great at making friends and communicating with them. Socializers are the best people to work with clients and customers (the people who use the company’s services/products) because they are easily liked. There can be more than one socializer in the group.

How are roles decided? There are three options for this:

- ❖ Managers decide based on what they know about each person
- ❖ People decide themselves what they are good at (skills, experience, etc.)
- ❖ Doing what is necessary (what roles are needed to be filled)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

15) Reflection: Which role is best for you: leader, doer, thinker or socializer? Is there more than one role you are good at?

16) Experiment: Choose a role that is difficult for you and try that. It is always a good idea to do things that are challenging for you.

SELF-TEST 04

15) Which is a good role for someone who has a lot of new ideas?

- a. Leader
- b. Doer
- c. Thinker

d. Socializer

16) Scenario: You are in a team of three people but you are working on a big project that requires a lot of different roles (jobs). What should you do?

- a. Choose more than one role that you might be good at
- b. Choose another role that you are bad at
- c. Ask your team leader what he/she thinks
- d. Find a specialist who can help you who has skills in that role

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

15) What is one benefit of each role?

16) In your opinion, why are all the roles necessary in a team?

02-05: ESTABLISHING TEAM ROLES & CLARIFYING TEAM OBJECTIVES

Rules are guidelines on how a team should function. Imagine a city or a country with no rules. It would be difficult to know what is right or wrong. Rules are necessary for everyone to know the expectations and for order to be maintained. Rules are important, but they should not be the first thing that managers and team leaders talk about. If your team leader focuses on rules right away, the team might feel that you are a dictator. Rules should only be made after all the group members feel comfortable with one another. Also, rules should be made by the group members themselves, with the help of their team leader. A team leader can tell a group that they want some rules related to: courtesy, communication, operation, and problem-solving. The group members can brainstorm a list of rules in those categories. Let us explore those four types of rules that teams should have.

Type of Rules	Ideas from Team Members
Courtesy Rules	(team writes in ideas)
Communication Rules	(team writes in ideas)
Operation Rules	(team writes in ideas)
Problem-solving Rules	(team writes in ideas)



The first type of rules is courtesy rules. These rules are basic and apply to how group members should treat one another. Courtesy rules are very basic and can be applied to any situation. Here are some examples of courtesy rules:

- ❖ Treat other team members with respect

- ❖ Challenge others in a **positive** way (ask them questions so they think of different things)
- ❖ Do not attack a person (do not be offensive)
- ❖ Do not attack others in your reaction (do not be defensive)
- ❖ Help other team members complete tasks



The second type of rules is communication rules. These rules are similar to courtesy rules, but focus on how team members should communicate with one another. Most problems occur because of the lack of communication rules. Here are some examples:

- ❖ Each person has a chance to speak
- ❖ One person talks at a time
- ❖ Stay focused on the topic
- ❖ No interrupting others
- ❖ Talk for a short time so others can speak
- ❖ When you are confused, ask questions
- ❖ Allow equal participation of **all** group members



The third group of rules is operation rules. These rules are good for knowing how to operate or function in a meeting. There is a specific process that should happen and operation rules should help people know that process. Here are some examples:

- ❖ Team meetings are every Tuesday at 10 am in conference room B
- ❖ All team members are expected to attend meetings on time
- ❖ Inform team members if you cannot attend a meeting
- ❖ The team leader needs to send the notes/agenda to all team members to their emails
- ❖ Cell phones need to be on silent mode
- ❖ End the team meeting by clarifying which person will do which task



The last type of rules is called problem-solving rules. These rules explain how to solve problems and make decisions. Here are some examples:

- ❖ If you have a problem, ask a question or suggest a solution
- ❖ Everyone needs to think of at least one solution
- ❖ Discuss issues/facts, not personal problems E.g.: *“You are always late. You are lazy.”* Instead, say: *“Please arrive on time to meetings.”*

- ❖ Listen and keep an open mind before you make the final decision
- ❖ Everyone needs to share his/her viewpoints
- ❖ It is okay to politely disagree



After the group has finished making its rules, the group leader/manager should type them nicely and put them in a place where they can be seen so that everyone knows the rules. When a team member breaks the rules, the team leader should point to the team rules.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 05

- 17) **Reflection:** Do you like rules? Why or why not?
- 18) **Reflection:** Look at the examples of the rules. Which types of rules are the most difficult for you to follow: courtesy, communication, operational, or problem-solving?

SELF-TEST 05

- 17) Which of the following is a **communication** rule?
- a. One person talks at a time
 - b. When you give a problem, you also have to give a solution
 - c. Treat everyone with respect
 - d. When you are confused, ask a question
- 18) **Situation:** You are a team leader and you want to establish rules for your team. What is the best way to do that?
- a. Decide the team rules yourself and tell the team members on the first day that the rules can never change
 - b. Since you are a new team leader, use the rules from the previous team leader. Just copy those same rules
 - c. Ask the person who talks the most to think of the rules for the group
 - d. After allowing the group to socialize and feel comfortable, ask the team members to think of some rules that will be good for their group

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 05

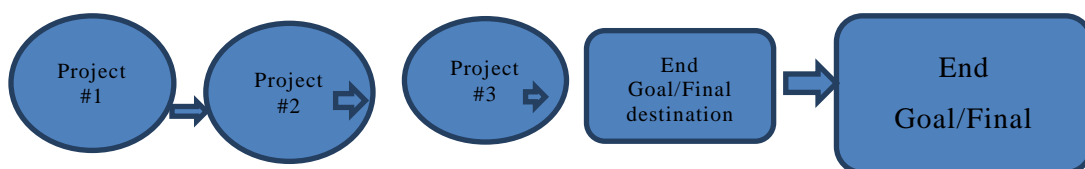
- 17) Why are rules important for a team?
- 18) Why is it a good idea for team members to make their own rules (and not just the team leader/manager)?

02-06: CLARIFYING TEAM OBJECTIVES

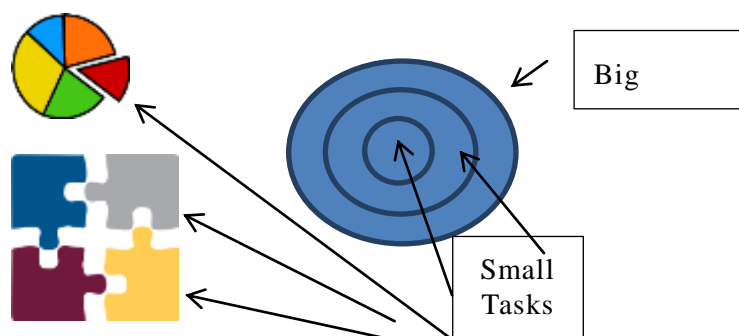


Clarifying means to make something clear or known. Objectives are goals or things that a team wants to accomplish. To clarify team objectives means to know the goal or the purpose of doing something. When a team works on a project, it needs to know the purpose. If you do not know the purpose, it is very difficult for you to stay motivated and excited. Imagine if you are in a car and you do not know where you are going, or you are a sailor and you do not know which direction to go; you will be lost. A team must know where it is going if it is to be successful.

The first step in knowing the purpose/objective is to know the big picture. The big picture is the end goal. What do you want to accomplish? The team leader or manager should know the purpose of the project. If you are lost and do not know the reason, ask your team leader or manager. If everyone understands the final destination/the end goal, all of them can be excited about it and are more motivated to work.



Second, the team leader or manager should know the small details related to the big



project. Inside the big project are a lot of small details that need to be completed. Team members need a detailed list of things they need to finish in order to be successful in the project. The team leader needs to write down the specific tasks/jobs for each person. Look at the pictures below. The big project is the last circle and inside the circle are a lot of smaller tasks that need to be finished in order to accomplish the big project. You can also think of a puzzle as the final project and each piece is a small part of that project.



Third, in order for groups to know the objective/goal, they need to have good communication with their team leader/manager. Having a good relationship with your team leader or manager shows that you respect him/her. Also, the manager can help a team if it needs other ideas or any help. Sometimes, the objectives change, so the manager needs to communicate with the team about changes and updates.

Fourth, you should know your role. Do you remember the last section on roles? Are you a leader? Doer? Thinker? Socializer? Here are a few more roles: secretary, peacemaker, facilitator, detail recorder. We discussed those roles in the previous section. If you know which role you are given, it is easier to work. Remember, a role should be something you are good at.

- ❖ Leader (helps everyone)
- ❖ Secretary (take notes)
- ❖ Facilitator (helps group members agree)
- ❖ Detail recorder (documents notes & reports)
- ❖ Peacemaker (helps resolve conflicts inside a group)



Lastly, in order to achieve the objectives, the groups should have a deadline. Teams are more successful if they have a deadline or a finishing date. This helps them to stay focused and be on task. If you are not finishing things on time,

maybe the tasks are too difficult. Talk to your team leader/manager if you need more time.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 06

19) **Reflection:** Think about your school projects/assignments. Do you always understand the goal/purpose/objective of the project/assignment?

SELF-TEST 06

19) Why is it important to communicate with the manager about your team's project?

- a. The manager can help you identify more problems or solutions
- b. The manager is the leader of the company and needs to know everything
- c. The manager deserves respect

d. All of the above

20) Why is it important to know the details/tasks of a team project?

a. So that you know exactly what to do

b. So that the project is more successful

c. So that you can help other team members who need your help

d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 06



19) What is the relationship between a small task/assignment/detail and the “big picture” or end goal?

20) Why is it important to have good communication with your team leader/manager?


02-07: MAKING COLLECTIVE DECISIONS


Making collective decisions means to make a decision with other people. When you work with teams, you will have to make collective decisions with other people. Making a decision with many people can be very difficult because people may have different viewpoints and opinions. Let us explore some ways to make collective decisions.

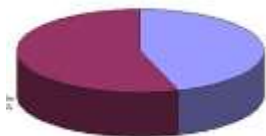
The first suggestion to make collective decisions is to set rules for how you will make a decision. For example, you will have to know which team members will be involved in making the decision and you will also have to know how the decision will be made. Here is an example of a chart of how one team sets its own rules based on the type of decision:

Type of Decision	Who Should be Involved	How to make the Final Decision
Financial	Pratik	Manager
Task Assignments	Prasanna	Vote (the whole team decides)
Resources: Time, money	Gaurav	Team Leader

Voting is a way for the whole team to be a democracy. When a team votes, each member is important. If you are going to vote, think about which type of voting your team will use. Look at this chart to see the types of voting available for your team:

Type of Vote	How the Team Will Decide
Majority vote (majority = more than half)	Raise hands 
Unanimous vote (agreed by everyone)	Write on a piece of paper
Consensus (come to a decision)	Secret Ballot (write on a piece of paper in secret)

	
Ranking choices (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , etc.)	Group Leader decides 1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____



When you give a vote, be very careful about choosing the majority. The majority means more than half. For example, if there are 100 people, what is the majority? Anything above 51 is the majority. What happens when you cast a vote and 51% of the people vote “yes” and 49% of the people vote “no?” When the majority is very close to the other number, this is not a fair vote. If your team chooses the majority of only 51%, then 49% of the people will be upset. If 70% vote “yes” and 30% vote “no,” then it is more fair because the numbers 70 and 30 are not close to each other.

Lastly, when making collective decisions, it is very important to respect everyone’s opinion because everyone has a special viewpoint. Do not be afraid to express your viewpoints because every person has something to say and all points should be respected. Good solutions come from multiple perspectives. If people in the group disagree, then wait some time and discuss later when people are ready to be flexible.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 07

20) **Reflection:** Have you ever made a collective decision at school or at work? Was it difficult?

SELF-TEST 07

21) What is the definition of a collective decision?

- a. A group making a decision
- b. An individual making a decision
- c. People vote on a decision
- d. A majority decision

22) **Scenario:** You are a team leader and are trying to make a team decision. However, only 60% of the people said “yes” while 40% said “no” for the vote. Now the group is divided. What should you do?

- a. Let the 60% majority win. “Yes” is the winning side
- b. Discuss more and vote in three days

- c. The 60% voting members can persuade (convince) the 40% voters why they are right
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 07

- 21) Why are collective decisions difficult to make?
- 22) What are some benefits of collective decisions? What are some difficulties?

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to function in a team. Knowing the roles and responsibilities of each group member helps the team to be successful. The team also needs to know the rules/expectations as well as the objective of the project. Learning how to function in a team is very important for your success.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Role**= a set of behaviors required for a person e.g.: mother role, sister role, leader role, etc.
- ❖ **Democracy**= a system where people vote for elected officials
- ❖ **Leaders**= people with special power who are in charge of a group
- ❖ **Elect**= to vote for someone
- ❖ **Representative**= the spokesperson for a company (the face of the company)
- ❖ **Qualities**= characteristics/things that describe you (E.g.: smart, responsible, strong, etc.)
- ❖ **Risks**= unknown things
- ❖ **Drawbacks**= negative things about something
- ❖ **Shy**= people who do not talk often
- ❖ **Benefit**= a good thing
- ❖ **Brainstorm**= to think of many things/ to think a lot about something
- ❖ **Courtesy** = polite behavior that shows respect for other people
- ❖ **Operation**= the details, mission, post or process of any team or project
- ❖ **Reduce**= to make something smaller
- ❖ **Expectations**= beliefs that people have about how something will be
- ❖ **Common sense**= the ability to think and behave in a reasonable way and to make good decisions
- ❖ **Challenge**= to question or test something
- ❖ **Objective**= aim, goal, purpose, or target to be achieved

- ❖ **Stay focused**= to stay working/concentrating on your task/job
- ❖ **Clarifying**= making something easier to understand
- ❖ **Suggest** = to mention something as a possibility
- ❖ **Display**= to show something in public
- ❖ **Collective**= shared or done by a group of people: involving all members of a group
- ❖ **Majority**= a number that is greater than half of the total
- ❖ **Unanimous**= agreed by everyone
- ❖ **Consensus**= a general agreement about something
- ❖ **Ranking** = putting things in an order of preference

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BOOKS

“The 17 Essential Qualities of a Team Player” by John C. Maxwell

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 04-03: BUILDING AND DEVELOPING TEAMS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Explain** how to interact with others successfully
- ❖ **Identify** and **Overcome** problems in group dynamics
- ❖ **Recall** and **perform** team-building activities
- ❖ **Explain** how to work with difficult team members

INTRODUCTION



How do you keep a team together for a long period of time? This section will offer some suggestions regarding how to interact with other members of a group so that everyone is happy working in the team.

03-01: INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

Working with a group requires a lot of interaction every day with a lot of people. However, do you know the basics of how to behave with someone? When you meet someone, the person will form an impression about you, so it is important to leave a good effect on someone. Let us explore the basics of what to do when you meet someone.

The first suggestion is to stand up when you greet someone. When you stand up, you are showing respect. Imagine you are sitting down at your desk and a friend introduces you to someone. It is polite if you stand up. If you remain sitting, it does not show as much respect. You should stand up for both men and women. If you cannot stand up (eg: if there is something in your lap like a child or a computer), then excuse yourself and say: “I am sorry I cannot stand up.”



The second tip is to smile and make eye contact with people you talk to. This seems obvious, but many people forget to do this. When you smile at someone, that person will feel more comfortable with you and it shows that he/she can trust you. Not smiling or not having eye contact makes you look suspicious or untrustworthy.



The third tip is to have a strong handshake. In international business, the handshake is a standard way of greeting others. A handshake should not be weak because a handshake is like an introduction. If you have a strong handshake, other people think that you are a confident person.



The next tip is to always be prepared to talk. If you are meeting someone for the first time, have a small speech prepared that includes your name, job title, and company. Here are some examples of small introductions you can make to people if you do not know what to say to them:

A) Gaurav-travel consultant with Happy Travels Travel Industry

“Hi! I am Gaurav. I work for Happy Travels Travel Industry as a travel consultant. I help corporate companies plan their vacations.”

B) Jyoti- customer service with Tata Consulting Company

“Hello! Good morning. I am **Jyoti**, a **customer service agent** with **Tata Consulting Group**. I help customers with **Tata’s products**.”

If you are at a social function for work, some safe topics to talk about are: sports, weather, and pop culture. Avoid sensitive topics like religion, philosophy, or caste issues.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

- 21) Reflection: Have you ever been to a party where you did not know everyone? What topics did you discuss with the people at the party?

22) Reflection: When you speak with someone, do you smile and make eye contact?
Why or why not?

SELF-TEST 01

- 23) How can you make your first meeting with someone positive?
- a. Shaking hands while standing up
 - b. Telling a joke that might be offensive
 - c. Staying seated in your chair
 - d. Answering your cell phone
- 24) What is a good topic to discuss with someone new at a work function?
- a. Religion
 - b. Politics
 - c. Bollywood industry
 - d. Cricket

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 23) What are the three things you can do to make a good impression on someone?
- 24) Why is it a good idea to avoid talking about sensitive topics at a work function?
(religion, politics, philosophy)

03-02: FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS & TEAM BUILDING-ACTIVITIES

Teams are like a family. Members must learn to work together if they are to be successful. Teams should have fun. This should happen at the beginning of forming your team. When you are having fun, you are more relaxed, relate better to others, and make better decisions. Let us explore some ways to have fun at work.



group.

The first tip is to allow group members to talk. Many times, the group leader or manager makes the mistake of doing most of the talking. If group members are to feel good, they need to be active in the group. During team discussions, the team leader should ask each person to say something: opinion, idea, or solution. Also, the team leader should ask for help with the leadership responsibilities. Team members should feel like they are actively participating in the

Second, the team needs to feel special. As a group leader, you can ask your team members to think of a fun team name. Also, if you have the money, you can make shirts and other apparel for the team. Maybe everyone in your team should wear red. Also, the team leader should write encouraging notes to each team member to acknowledge their hard work. This helps group members feel good about their work. They are likely to remain happy with the team.



Third, try to play some ice-breakers. Ice-breaker exercises are activities that allow group members to have fun and learn from one another. Ice-breakers ‘break’ the ‘ice’ or the barriers people have. These activities are good to play when a team is new. Let us explore some fun ice-breaker activities you can play with your team.

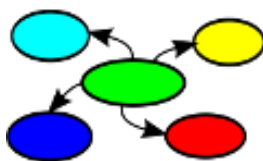


One activity is called “the interview.” Team members interview one another. After the interview is finished, each group member introduces that person to the group. You can use any question you want, but good questions are about family life, friend circle, and hobbies.



Another activity is called “two truths and one lie.” On a piece of paper, ask team members to write two true statements and one false statement. After team members have finished writing, ask them to read the three statements. Group members have to guess which statement is false.

The next set of activities is called warm-up activities. These activities are for group members as they begin a project. Starting a new project can be very stressful but there are a few ways to make this enjoyable. Let us share three activities groups can do as they begin a new project.



The first activity is called brainstorming. You already learned that brainstorming is writing down as many ideas as possible and connecting ideas together with lines. This can be a really good activity to solve a problem. Write the problem in the middle of the paper and draw a circle around it. Then, write down possible solutions to that problem and draw circles around those ideas. Ask group members to share their brainstorming ideas with the rest of the group or with a partner.



The second warm-up activity is called “research and share.” When you have a project to work on, ask group members to refer to the Internet or books. Find as much relevant information related to the topic as possible. This is the research part. Next, ask group members to share their research with the rest of the group. What did group members find that was the same as other group members? What was different? This is a good way to interact with other group members.



The last warm-up activity is called “learn from a specialist.” A specialist is a person who knows a lot about a specific topic. For example, if your company needs to develop a new technology product, you could invite a specialist in technology to talk to your group. This allows group members to feel comfortable with that topic so that they can learn more about it.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

23) Reflection: When you work with groups, do you have fun? For example, in your friends group, what activities do you do that are fun? At work, can you use some of the same activities to learn from other group members?

24) Experiment: Choose one activity: interview, two truths and one lie, brainstorming, research and share, and learn from a specialist. Use this activity with your friends group or with your work group.

SELF-TEST 02

25) What are some ways to make the group members feel special?

- a. Make a team name
- b. Write encouraging notes to the team members
- c. Allow each group member to talk
- d. All of the above

26) Why are team-building activities important?

- a. Because they discourage you to do work
- b. Because they help team members work together better
- c. Because they are only used to have fun
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- 25) How are ice-breaker and warm-up activities the same? How are they different?
- 26) Why is it important to have both ice-breaker activities and warm-up activities?

03-03: OVERCOMING PROBLEMS

Problems are a normal part of any group. As a team solves complex problems and makes decisions, there may be disagreements. People may disagree with the solutions and there may be different viewpoints. Other people in the group may feel as if their viewpoints do not matter. Some people may leave the group and that also requires change. As a group leader, you will have to manage problems for your group. Let us explore how to work with problems.



The first step in overcoming problems is to keep the communication open with the group. If there is a problem, you should tell the group that there is a problem and that you are working hard to resolve the problem. The more information the group has about the problem and the possible solutions, they will feel better. For example, if there is a change in work schedule or payments, a group leader should communicate that to the group as soon as possible so that people are prepared.

Second, talk about the problem and the possible solutions. This is important because people need to know that there is a solution. This is called talking about the positive and negative sides (+/-). The negative side is the problem or the change and the positive side is the solution.

Thirdly, whenever there is a change or a problem, there might be questions. Ask the group members if they have any questions. This is important because people will feel better if they know they can ask any questions. As a team leader or manager, do your best to answer the questions. If you cannot answer the question, then make sure to tell them about someone who can answer their question later.

Fourthly, when trying to prevent problems from happening in a group, it is best if team leaders and managers persuade (and not force) others to adopt changes. Usually, problems occur when people disagree with someone or something. For example, if your team needs to change their work schedule from 30 hours a week to 40 hours a week, this change needs to be communicated. If some people disagree with that, they may leave the team. So, as a team leader or manager, it is important to never force others to change. If you force others, you are behaving like a dictator. It is best to motivate and

persuade others. Here are some examples of bad language to avoid and some better language to use:

Forceful Language to Avoid	Better Language to Use
A) “ You must work longer hours to complete this work!”	A) “The new project requires more work and I would really appreciate it if you could work longer hours this week to get the work done. It would be a huge benefit to the team.”
B) “ You will have to do different tasks on this new project!”	B) “ Would you be willing to do something different for the new project? The team would really like you to work on this task just for this project.”

Using sentences that start with “you” sounds like you are blaming the person. People who blame others are attacking someone and the other person feels that he/she needs to defend himself/herself. Avoid blaming others and use polite language or ask polite questions.



Fifth, make sure rules and expectations are reviewed. Many problems can be prevented if people knew the rules and expectations. For example, if there is a rule that everyone must report to the office by 9 am and someone comes to the office at 10 am, that person might upset the group. However, if the manager knows the rules, he/she can politely tell the person that he/she needs to come at 10 am. Make sure the rules are seen by everyone so they know the expectations.



Sixth, managers should know what causes the problems. What is the root cause? The root cause is the original problem that causes all other problems to happen. Managers should understand the root cause in order to manage the problem and prevent it from happening again. For example, sometimes a team member who does not want to work with someone else is because of a fight they had two days ago

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

25) Reflection: Think about the time you had a problem with your teacher, a friend, or a family member. Maybe you disagreed with something. How did you resolve the problem?

SELF-TEST 03

- 27) What are some reasons why people may not like working on teams?
- a. New teams require change
 - b. Teams cause many problems
 - c. People do not like social interactions
 - d. Team-building activities (getting to know the team) are unsuccessful
 - e. All of the above
- 28) Scenario: You are a team leader and your team needs to find a solution to a problem but it requires changing the team members. The people in your original team are upset. What should you do?
- a. Answer any questions you have
 - b. Tell the group why there needs to be a change in the team members
 - c. Ask the new team to be positive and encourage one another as they help find the solution
 - d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

- 27) What are at least two reasons why problems might happen in a group?
- 28) As a team leader, why is it important to encourage other team members by using kind language and not forcing them to change with bad language?

03-04: PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Teams are formed by relationships. How do relationships get formed? By talking to others. As a team leader or manager, how do you get people to talk? Networking is one way to get many different people to talk. Networking is the process of talking with many people with the purpose of talking about business. If you are a president or CEO of a company, you can think of your company as a big team. Maybe there are 500 people in this team. Networking is useful for many people to learn about one another. Here are the benefits of networking:

- ❖ Meeting many different people
- ❖ Exchanging business ideas with many people
- ❖ Learning about the people in a company
- ❖ Learning about the departments/teams in a company

❖ Learning about job opportunities in a company



If you are talking to many people, it can be a little difficult. As mentioned before, you can make small introductions like your name, your company, and your job title. When you meet someone you are interested in doing business with, you can give him/her your visiting card. The visiting card has all the important information on it.



After making simple introductions, you should ask some questions. Ask the question that will give you the answer you are looking for. If your purpose is learning about that person's job, you can ask the person why he/she likes his/her department and the team. "Why do you like your job?" If you are looking at switching teams, ask if he/she knows of any opportunities in the company. "Do you know of any job opportunities at the company?" If you are thinking of developing a new product, you can ask a different question: "Have you ever developed new products in your team?"

For every person who is a good business contact, make sure to maintain the contact. Keep his/her business card and follow-up with that person when needed.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 04

26) Reflection: When you need something for school or for work, who do you talk to? For example, if you need help, who do you talk to?

27) Experiment: This week, make a new friend at school or at work. Introduce yourself.

SELF-TEST 04

29) What is the definition of professional networking?

- a. Showing business etiquette
- b. Following an organization chart
- c. A social protocols
- d. Creating and keeping business friendships

30) When is a good time to network with other professionals?

- a. When you look for a job
- b. When you start a new job
- c. When you want to get a higher or different position at your current company
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 04

29) What are the benefits of professional networking?

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to maintain a team. In order to maintain a team, we learned that relationships inside a team are very important. We focused on how to network and develop relationships. We also explored how to reduce conflicts and problems. All of these skills can apply to your family as well as working life.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Untrustworthy**=cannot be trusted
- ❖ **First impression** = the first thing you think about when you meet someone for the first time
- ❖ **Recognized** = to notice something/ to see something
- ❖ **Ice-breaker activities** = activities that help team members learn about one another if they are new
- ❖ **Warm-up activities**=activities that help team members get prepared to start something new
- ❖ **Hobbies**= things you like to do for fun
- ❖ **Statement** = a sentence that says something about anything or expresses an opinion or thought. (Can be true or false).
- ❖ **Networking** = the process of meeting new people for business purposes
- ❖ **Apparel** = formal clothing

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COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 04-04: PRESENTING YOURSELF PROFESSIONALLY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Explain** the rules of professional clothing
- ❖ **Explain** how to maintain a professional wardrobe and keep good hygiene
- ❖ **Apply** the given tips to improve your speech

INTRODUCTION



Do you remember that your body language is 93% of all your communication? Included in your body language is how you dress and groom yourself. What you wear communicates a lot about you and your company. In order to have good body language in the

business world, we need to learn about good grooming habits. Let us explore how to dress in a professional manner.

04-01: MEETING BUSINESS CASUAL STANDARDS

How do you know what the business standards are at your workplace? The human



resources manager will have this information. Do not have a guess at your business dress standards based on what you see other people wearing. Other people may be in different departments and have different rules. Or, the people you see may not be following the rules. Ask your manager or human

resources department what the rules are for dress codes for men and women. If you cannot talk to someone on the first day of your job, dress more formally. A simple dress can look formal with a suit jacket.

Each company may have many departments and it is important that you know the rules for your specific department. For example, the dress rules might be different for the IT department and the human resources department.



The dress standards and rules also might be different based on your industry or location. For example, the medical industry might have a completely different dress code than the education industry. Even the same industry, like finance, might have different dress codes based on location. The finance industry in New York City might be completely different from the finance industry in Miami.



Lastly, a company may say that the dress code is ‘business casual.’ This term is very common in the business world. Business casual is a combination of both traditional clothing and casual standards. If traditional clothing is a suit, then business casual will

be the same thing without the jacket. If you are not sure what business casual is, just go to [google.com/images](https://www.google.com/images) and type in ‘business casual.’ You will get many ideas for both men and women.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

28) **Reflection:** If you are a student, what is your dress code for school? If you work, what is the company’s dress code?

29) **Experiment:** The next time you have a formal presentation at school, wear a suit jacket. If you are a woman, you can do the same.

SELF-TEST 01

31) The dress code can change with:

- a. Location
- b. Department
- c. Industry
- d. All of the above

32) Which outfit is best for the first day at work for the IT industry (assuming that you do not know the dress code)?

a.



b.



c.





d.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

30) Why is it a bad idea not to ask about the dress code on your first day of work?

31) Why is it important to dress more formally on the first day of work?

04-02: MAINTAINING A PROFESSIONAL WARDROBE

Like your career, you should also maintain your wardrobe. A wardrobe is the set of clothes that you own. The clothing you wear can add to your professional image. The clothes you wear also contribute to your body language. Keeping your clothing nice and neat is important for your career.

First, colours are important. For international business standards, the best colours to wear to the office are: light or dark blue, black, grey, white, dark brown and light brown. These are the best types of colours to have in your wardrobe. With those colours, you can make many different combinations of different colours.

In every wardrobe, you should have professional pants, a jacket, a blouse and long skirt (for women) and nice shoes. In the Indian context, professional wardrobe for men can include pant, shirt, and suit for men. For women, a professional wardrobe can have a saree, salwar suit, salwar kameez, pant and shirt.

After you have selected your colours and garments, you need to maintain them. Make sure that the garment is properly cleaned. Refer to the cleaning label on the garment to see what it needs.



You should learn how to wash your clothing properly so that it will last a long time. When you wash the garment, make sure to separate the different colours. An easy way to do this is to separate the whites from the non-whites. Anything that is not white can be separated into dark colours and light colours. So, now you have three piles: whites, non-white darks, non-white lights. Make sure to follow the instruction on each garment to see what it requires. Sometimes a garment requires that it be washed separately or with similar colours. You may be able to add bleach to your white colours to maintain

their brightness. Make sure to follow the instructions on how to use bleach. Other colours can use regular washing powder. You can maintain the quality of the garment while washing or drying by putting it inside out. That means that the outside part is inside and the inside part is outside. If a garment has this label: “dry clean only,” that means the garment cannot be washed in water. You need to bring your clothing to a dry cleaner. Those materials are likely to be silk, wool, business suits, and other delicate garments.



After washing, press your clothing so that it is wrinkle-free. Ironing is important so that you have a professional look. If your clothes are looking messy, people might not give you the same respect.



Here are some other suggestions. Hang your clothing on hangers so that they continue to look smooth and neat. Shoes can be maintained with a shoe insert.



Shoe Insert

Here are some other suggestions on how to have a professional wardrobe:

- ❖ Have at least two business outfits so that when one is dirty, you can use the other one
- ❖ Suits are good for interviews and other special events
- ❖ Make sure your accessories (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, etc.) are matching your outfit and are not too big
- ❖ Remember that T-shirts, short skirts, shorts, shoes, sandals or athletic shoes are not acceptable
- ❖ Wear a different pair of shoes every day so that you can maintain their quality



Clothing is a large part of your professional image, but grooming and smell are another part of looking professional. Here are some tips on grooming and smell to maintain at work:

- ❖ When using soaps and perfumes, make sure to use a light scent because some people are allergic



- ❖ You should groom your facial hair: beard or moustache



- ❖ Maintain good breath-brush, floss and use mouthwash



- ❖ Dust your shoes with foot powder to keep them fresh smelling



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

30) **Reflection:** What professional clothing do you have? Do you have anything in brown, black, white, blue, or grey?

31) **Experiment:** Go to [google.com/images](https://www.google.com/images) and type in “business clothing men/women.”

SELF-TEST 02

33) If your company has a rule of dressing in “business casual”, what does that mean?

- a. You can wear the same clothes that you do at home

- b. You never need to wear a suit
- c. You should wear clothes less formal than a traditional suit and tie and more formal than jeans and t-shirt
- d. You should wear a jacket or blazer, even if it is wrinkled

34) In this list, which clothing item is **not** a common part of business casual clothing?

- a. Collared T-shirt 
- b. Athletic T-shirt 
- c. Comfortable and professional shoes 
- d. Slacks 

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

- 32) Why is it important to maintain your clothing?
- 33) Why is clothing important for your professional image?

04-03: IMPROVING YOUR SPEECH

In the business world, how you say is as important as what you say. The manner of speaking is very important. When you speak, you are speaking more than words. You are showing people your vocabulary level, your tone of voice, and your pronunciation. People are judging you depending on your manner of speaking. People may judge your level of education and the level of respect they give you might be different depending on how you speak. That is why speaking properly is very important in the business world. Usually, the people who can communicate clearly in the required language are preferred. Let us explore some ways to improve your speech.

The first suggestion is to record yourself. You can record yourself by using a recorder on your smartphone. Simply have a conversation with a friend or family member. While you are speaking, record the conversation. Then, listen to the conversation. How do you sound? Is your message clear? How is your pronunciation? Does your voice go up and down? Does it stay the same? How does it sound?



The second tip is to read out loud. This means that you need to speak what you are reading. The next time you are reading anything, practice speaking the words. This is good because you can hear what you say. Just like recording, when you read out loud, you can hear what you are saying. By reading out loud, you are practicing your speech.



The third tip is to watch professional speakers. People who are naturally good speakers are news anchors, professional motivational speakers, and people in government who give many speeches. The more you listen to them, the more you can copy or imitate their speech. Go to Youtube.com and find these people. Watch how they speak.



The fourth tip is to speak slowly. Speaking slowly forces you to pronounce every single sound and every single letter. Many people speak so fast that other people do not understand them. If you speak slowly, people can understand you more. Imagine speaking to someone who speaks very fast. Even if you speak the same language as them, there may be some things you do not understand. Speaking with someone from a different culture can be difficult, so speaking slowly is very important. If you cannot speak slowly, put marshmallows into your mouth. Now try to speak. You are forced to speak slowly.



The last suggestion is to increase your vocabulary. Each day, learn a new word. If you are reading a book and do not understand a word, find the word in the dictionary and look at the meaning. With all your new words, try to use them in sentences. Practice your speaking with your new words. It is OK if you make a mistake; it is better to try

speaking with new words. People will think you are more intelligent if you have an extensive vocabulary.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

32) **Reflection:** Do you speak fast? Slow? Have you ever spoken with someone from a different culture or mother tongue?

33) **Experiment:** Get a book. Choose a paragraph. Read the paragraph. Record your voice with your Smartphone. Listen to the recording. How do you sound?

SELF-TEST 03

35) Why is it important to know a lot of words/have an extensive vocabulary?

- a. To make people find new words in a dictionary
- b. To follow the rules of business casual standards
- c. So that you can fully communicate your ideas
- d. It improves your dictation

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

34) Why is it important to improve your speech?

35) What are two things you can do to improve your speech?

SUMMARY

This section discussed how to present yourself in a professional manner. We explored how to dress professionally and how to improve your speaking ability. Dress is a part of your body language and speech is important if you are interacting with people. Both dress and speech are important if you want to maintain your professional image at work.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Dress code** = the rules about how to dress
- ❖ **Formal** = conservative/traditional
- ❖ **Garment** = a piece of clothing, E.g.: shirt

- ❖ **Business Casual** = a type of dress code that is not very formal but also not casual. In the middle of both formal and casual
- ❖ **Grooming** = To make something neat and attractive (referring to hair in this book). You can have good grooming or bad grooming.
- ❖ **Hygiene** = the things you do to keep yourself clean. You can have good or bad hygiene
- ❖ **Marshmallow** = a light, soft, and round sweet

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Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

UNIT 04-05: DEVELOPING YOUR INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After successful completion of this unit, you will be able to

- ❖ **Recall** and follow basic office courtesies
- ❖ **Explain** how to recover from difficult interpersonal situations
- ❖ **Describe** how to be diplomatic in the office

INTRODUCTION

The success of your job depends not only on how well you do your job but it also depends on how well you can relate to other people. People who have a lot of interpersonal skills can make professional relationships with their colleagues and managers easily. If you have interpersonal skills, you are usually more successful at work, have less conflicts with others, make better decisions, and make better connections with people. If you have interpersonal skills, people trust you easily. Let us explore how to develop your interpersonal skills.



05-01: SHOWING BASIC OFFICE COURTESIES & RESPECTING SOCIAL PROTOCOLS

Following the company's rules is important. People at work will judge you based on how you act or behave. Protocols are the rules for fulfilling specific actions or behaviors. Think of protocols as rules or etiquette. Social protocols are the accepted ways that people should interact with one another. Let us explore how to behave nicely at the office and how to follow the rules.



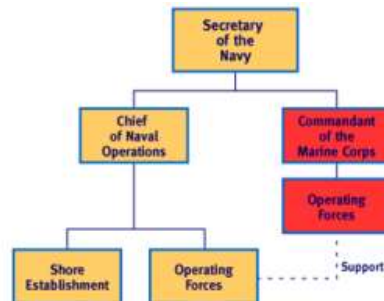
First, you must know what the rules are. How can you follow the protocols if you do not know the rules? Know the rules of the standard behavior required for your team, your department, and your company.

Remember, the best rules are established by the people themselves.

Many people disobey rules because they do not like them. If you disobey the rules at work, you will be seen as having bad character. So, if you do not like a rule, ask your manager/supervisor/team leader if you can make a new rule or change the old rule.

Second, know who your adviser or supervisor is. Many people make things very complicated at work by not approaching the correct person. For example, if you need help with a project or you have a disagreement with a team member, who do you talk

to? What if you have a new business idea? Who is the correct person to talk to? The answer is in the “chain of command.” The chain of command is the line of authority to whom each person needs to talk to. Many people make the mistake of doing things themselves without getting permission from their supervisor. Know the chain of command. Who do you report to? Ask your team leader for the chain of command.



The third way to respect social rules at work is to make friends. Avoid talking to the



same people. Many times, we talk to people with whom we feel comfortable. Maybe you only talk to your friends at work. This is a bad idea because in business, everyone needs to learn about one another and learn how to work

together. You might have a project with people you do not know. It is important that you learn to interact with anyone. Learning to talk to new people might give you new business ideas, new business contacts, or new business solutions.

So, how can you make friends with other people? A nice way to do this is something called “small talk.” Small talk is a technique where you talk about simple things with new people. For example, when you enter the office, you can give a standard greeting like “good morning / afternoon / evening.” Or, “have a good day/weekend/evening.” You can talk about simple/general topics like weather, sports, and pop culture.



Fourth, if you want to have good business etiquette, you need to respect one thing: time. People are busy. Do not waste time by talking about personal things with others when they are busy. Finish your work on time. Respect the deadline. Be on time for meetings and appointments.

Fifth, to respect social protocols, you should have respect for everyone. You do not need to make friends with everyone, but you need to give respect and be polite.

Being polite means to be nice. Learn polite expressions like: “please,” “thank you,” “you’re welcome” or “excuse me.” The more you use these expressions, people will like you. It also shows that you respect others.

Also, remember people’s names. Remember people’s names and call people by their name. Instead of saying: “Hey you!” Say: “Hi Jyoti!” Using a person’s name shows respect. If you are talking to your manager/supervisor, you can use “sir” for men and “madam” for women.

It is important to give respect to everyone. Everyone is human, regardless of their job.



The cleaning staff and the supervisor may have different job titles, but they are also human. People make the mistake of giving respect only to people of higher authority, like their teachers, bosses, managers, or supervisors. However, everyone deserves

your respect. The janitor, the cleaner, the cook, and the administrative staff all deserve respect. If you give respect to everyone, you would receive respect in return. Be a person of good character and give respect. Call people by their names if you can. Learn to say “please” and “thank you.”

Sixth, learn to be kind to everyone. Find ways to be nice. For example, if you are in the



elevator, hold the door for a person who needs to come in. If you are eating, wait for the other person to finish eating. If you see someone drop something

on the ground, pick it up for him/her. If you use the

last amount of coffee at the office, offer to replenish the coffee and get more.



For example, do not use all the paper at work. If you use the last paper, tell someone to replace it. Or, if you are in the washroom, keep it clean. If you drink the last coffee, make sure you make some more. Do not be messy with public areas and always replenish the resources that you have finished. If something is broken, make sure you tell someone about it so they can fix it.



Eighth, respect the privacy of others. If someone is having a conversation that seems private, do not listen to it. Also, never read files on someone’s desk or look at information on his/her computer screen.



Lastly, remember to give your company all your talents and skills. If you are really good at languages, make sure that other people use your skills if they need to. Make sure you help with projects that need your skills. The more active you are in the company, the more people will like you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 01

34) **Reflection:** At home, do you respect social protocols? For example, do you talk to everyone in the family? Do you give your skills to the family? Do you respect common spaces and keep things clean?

35) **Reflection:** Do you show your skills at school? For example, if you are good at technical things, do you work on school projects where you can offer technical help? If you are good at math, are you helping other people with math?

SELF-TEST 01

36) In this list, which is **not** a way to show basic courtesy in the office?

- a. Keep to yourself and avoid social contact
- b. Have small talk
- c. Give your help
- d. Honor the privacy of co-workers

37) In this list, which one is an example of how to respect privacy, space, or resources at work?

- a. Listen to a conversation of your co-workers
- b. Keep your dirty food plate on your desk for two weeks
- c. When the department coffee is finished, offer to get/make more
- d. Ignore the empty paper tray in the copy room

38) What is the definition of a protocol?

- a. A written policy/rule on how one should do something
- b. A regular workplace procedure
- c. An unwritten (socially known) rule that influences how people should behave
- d. A document that your manager has

39) Why is it important to follow protocols/rules?

- a. Protocols help projects go smoothly

- b. Protocols help make you a better person
- c. Following protocols shows that you respect your company
- d. All of the above

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 01

- 36) Why is respecting social protocols important?
- 37) Why is it important to give respect to everyone at work?

05-02: RECOVERING FROM DIFFICULT INTERPERSONAL SITUATIONS

Everyone makes mistakes. It is very important to learn how to recover from the mistake. Mistakes can be normal when there is bad communication, when people misunderstand, or there are other errors. If you do not deal with the mistake properly, you will hurt someone and relationships might be lost. Let us explore how to recover from mistakes.



The first step is to apologize in person. In today's world of technology, many people use technology to communicate like texting, WhatsApp, and Facebook. When you apologize, it is important to use face-to-face communication whenever possible. It is OK to take a little time, but be sure to apologize as soon as you can after



making the mistake. If the other person is still angry, you can wait for a little while, but do not wait too long. Apologizing face-to-face shows you are more sincere and you can see how the other person reacts. If the other person still looks upset, then you can try and be more sensitive to his/her emotions. Be patient if the person needs time to receive your apology. Forgiveness can be a slow process. You can always apologize, but do not expect the other person to accept your apology in the way you want. Sometimes, hurt people need more time.

Second, do not blame other people for your mistakes. Take responsibility for your part of the mistake. This is important. If you blame others for your mistakes, you will never learn from the mistake. Even if many people contributed to the problem, you should apologize for your part of the mistake.



Third, make sure you take actions so that you do not repeat the same mistake. You can also tell the affected people how you will change your behavior. For example, imagine that you are always late to work. Your boss is upset. You should apologize in person. Next, tell your boss how you will find the solution. Perhaps you

can tell him that you will go to bed sooner, get up earlier, and take an earlier bus. By telling others about how you will fix the mistake, you are helping to preserve the relationship.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 02

36) **Reflection:** Have you ever made a mistake? Which mistake? How did you recover from the mistake? How is your relationship with the person after apologizing?

37) **Experiment:** The next time you make a mistake, apologize in person (not a text or e-mail). Also, tell the other person how you will prevent the same mistake from happening again.

SELF-TEST 02

40) When you send an e-mail message to a co-worker that creates tension or anger, what should you do?

- a. Apologize in person
- b. Send a formal apology through an e-mail
- c. Politely ask your co-worker to forget about the situation
- d. Explain that your office mate (co-worker) made the mistake

41) Which of the following is a nice way to apologize for a mistake?

- a. Very quickly, send a text message
- b. Wait until next week to talk to the person you offended
- c. Explain how you will avoid similar mistakes in the future
- d. Take away the apology if it is not accepted

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 02

38) What is the difference between apologizing face-to-face and apologizing with a text message? Which option is better? Why?

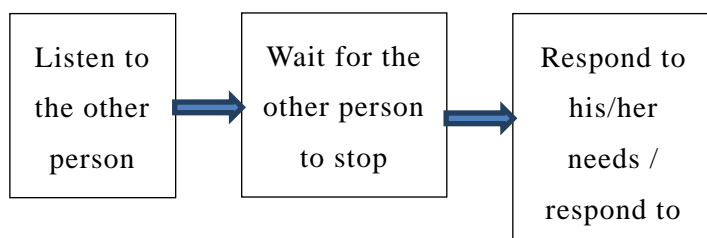
39) Why is it important to take responsibility for your mistakes?

05-03: DEVELOPING DIPLOMACY SKILLS

Diplomacy is the skill of dealing with people and getting them to agree. You may think about diplomacy as being connected to politics. Politicians need diplomacy skills, for example. This is very true. Mr. Narendra Modi and Mr. Barack Obama need good diplomacy skills. However, you also need diplomacy skills at work. It is important to

learn how to interact with others in order to build good relationships and have less conflict. Let us explore how to develop your diplomacy skills.

The first suggestion is to listen to understand. Remember that you have two ears and one mouth. That means you should listen more than you speak. When a person is speaking to you, you should not listen to respond. You should listen to understand. Understanding is something that many people do not know. If you ask a person to summarize what you just said, he/she may fail. Always listen to understand. What was the person really saying? What was the message? If you can really listen to someone, he/she will feel respected. So, you have done a good job of developing diplomacy skills. Only after you have listened to the person and he/she has finished, should you begin to talk.



Second, whenever you have a disagreement with someone, think about how both of you can win. Many times, people think that you can only have one winner and one loser. This is the old way of thinking. The new way of thinking is that you can have two winners. For example, if person #1 wants option A and person #2 wants option B, then maybe you can both decide for option C. Win-win means both people can get what they want, but it may require flexible thinking.



Ask the other person what they want or need. For example, if you are working with someone in your team, you can ask: “What do you need to feel good about this solution?” Or, “What ideas do you have?”

Third, in order to achieve diplomacy skills, you should focus on your relationship with the other person. When you focus on the other person, you make the person feel very

good about himself / herself. People who feel good about themselves work harder. Here are some suggestions on how to make other people feel great:

- ❖ Give someone a compliment. Say something nice about them like: ‘You look refreshed!’ Or, ‘Nice shirt.’
- ❖ Recognize other people for their efforts. Say something like: ‘Good job!’ Or, ‘I really appreciate what you did for the project.’
- ❖ Ask people how they are feeling. For example: ‘How are you feeling today?’ Or, ‘How is your day going for you?’



Fourth, in diplomacy, it is OK if you disagree. How do you disagree while respecting the other person? You can agree to disagree. For example, you can say something like: ‘You have a valid point, but I have a different opinion. Let us agree to disagree.’ Or, ‘You have a good idea, but because we cannot agree right now, let us agree to disagree.’

LEARNING ACTIVITIES 03

38) **Reflection:** Do you think you are a diplomatic person? Why or why not? Give an example of why you are a diplomatic person or why you are not a diplomatic person.

SELF-TEST 03

42) Why is diplomacy important?

- a. Because maintaining work relationships is important
- b. Because diplomacy helps intense conversations/arguments become smoother
- c. Because diplomacy helps your communication skills
- d. All of the above

43) How can you make a win-win solution in a conflict?

- a. Ask the people to stop competing (trying to win)
- b. Separate the people physically into different locations
- d. Ask people to choose sides (separate into different groups)
- d. Ask the people what they want and how they can get what they want

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS 03

- 40) What is the definition of diplomacy?
- 41) Give two reasons explaining why diplomacy is important in business.

SUMMARY

This section focused on how to relate to people. Relating to people is called interpersonal skills. We explored how to be nice at work, which social protocols to follow, and how to be diplomatic. Relationships are the central part of any business and mastering these skills is essential to your success in any company. Interpersonal skills are as important as technical skills. Take time to develop your interpersonal skills.

KEY WORDS

- ❖ **Etiquette** = rules for proper behavior
- ❖ **Protocol** = a system of rules that explain the correct conduct/behavior
- ❖ **Deadline** = the last day to finish something
- ❖ **Small talk** = the discussion about neutral topics such as weather, sports, pop culture
- ❖ **Replenish** = to fill again or replace something

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- 1) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplomacy>
- 2) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette>
- 3) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interpersonal_relationship

OER

<http://www.gcflearnfree.org/jobsuccess/business-etiquette/1/>

BOOKS

“People Smart: Developing Your Interpersonal Social Intelligence” by Mel Silberman, Phd.

COURSE COMPANION WEBSITE

Visit Here for Course Companion website for this course:

ANSWERS TO SELF-TESTS