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U3C4L1

# The Communication Process

## Key Words:

Audience Analysis

Channel

Feedback

Mixed Messages

Noise

Nonverbal

Receiver

Setting

Verbal

## What You Will Learn to Do

Demonstrate how the communication process affects interaction between individuals

## Linked Core Abilities

- Communicate using verbal, non-verbal, visual and written techniques
- Treat self and others with respect

## Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Describe the communication model for interpersonal interactions
- Compare verbal and nonverbal means of communication
- Explain how to avoid mixed messages
- Evaluate your communication style

## Introduction

Every day, one of your main activities is communicating with others. You communicate at home, at school, with your friends, and in the community. Some of you might also communicate in a job environment. For adults, communication at work can be the difference between success and failure. This lesson shows you the importance of good communication, and how you can communicate more effectively.

## The Need for Communication

You fulfill many different needs through communication, including enjoyment! It's usually a good feeling to engage in conversation with a friend; participate in a group discussion that leads to a solution; and receive a letter in response to one you sent confirming the recipient took you said seriously. Sometimes, however, communication does not work, and you end up feeling frustrated.

You might feel frustrated when you have a disagreement with a friend and do not know what to say to resolve the disagreement; if your parents don't talk with you about certain issues you feel are important; or if you write a letter or email to someone who completely misunderstands your intent or message.

This happens all the time! Despite communicating since birth, you may not always be effective. The reality is that effective communication isn't as easy as it may seem.



All communication depends on understanding others and having them understand you. Much of your communication is intended to influence what people think and feel. Most of the time, you want someone to take some action as the result of your communication. You want a friend to spend vacation time with you; you want your friends to like each other; you want your parents to give you permission to go somewhere; or you want your employer to more clearly answer a question you have ...

Perhaps your most important need is to maintain and improve your relationships with others. You use communication to discover other people's needs and share your own needs.

Our need for communication is important in all areas of our lives. To live is to communicate.



## A Definition of Communication

Communication is a process in which people are able to transfer meaning between themselves. The communication process allows people to share information, ideas, and feelings. This is the transfer of meaning. When no meaning is transferred, no communication has taken place.

## Seven Communication Skills





There are many ways to communicate. The Seven Communication Skills include your ability to:

- Read
- Listen
- Think
- Write
- Remember
- Speak
- Study

These communication skills help you express your feelings, knowledge, and ideas. Communication is innate within everybody – from the cries of a baby, to the smile of a friend, and to the handshake of your doctor. Everybody uses communication skills differently. In JROTC, as in your other high school courses, you will have many opportunities to improve these skills.

## Elements of Communication

The communication process is made up of various elements. These elements are communicators (senders), messages, receivers, **channels** (written words, sound, sight, radio, and television), **feedback**, **noise**, and **setting**.

- The communicator is the originator of the message. Speakers, writers, artists, and architects can all be considered communicators.
- The message is made up of ideas, data, and feelings the communicator wants to share. The medium may be a speech, essay, painting, or building.
- The channel is the route traveled by the message as it goes between the communicator and the receivers.
- The **receiver** is the audience for whom the message is intended. The communicator must gain the receiver's attention to have effective communication.
- Feedback allows communicators to find out whether they are "getting through" to the receivers. You get feedback from your instructors, your parents, and your friends.
- Noise is interference that keeps a message from being understood. Physical noise keeps a message from being heard. For example, the physical noise of a loud television program may interfere with reading a letter. Psychological noise occurs when the communicators and the receivers are distracted by something. For example, the psychological noise caused by hunger can prevent concentration.
- Setting is the time, place, and circumstances in which communication takes place. It can also be considered the context and environment in which a situation is set.

## Communicating Effectively

After you understand the process of communication, you can begin to understand why communication does or does not work.

In an ideal situation, the message is perceived in the way it was intended. For example, you write an apology to your friend for a mistake that you made. If the friend accepts the apology, the communication worked. If the friend was offended by your message and the apology was not accepted, the communication did not work.

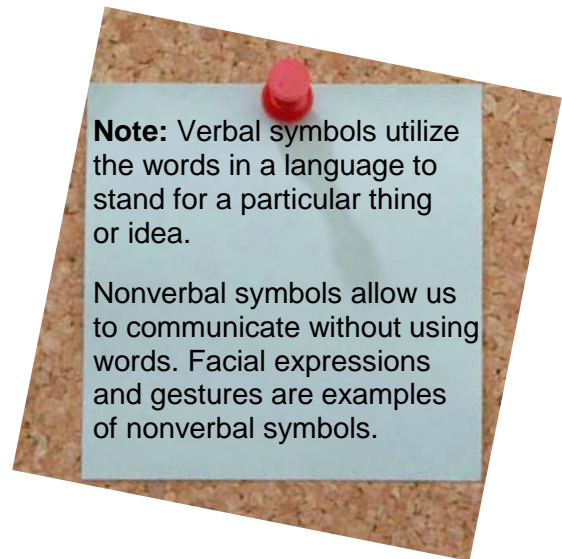
Your communication may not have worked due to a problem with the message (not written or spoken clearly), the channel used may not have been the best choice (writing a note rather than speaking in person), or psychological noise may have interfered (the recipient couldn't hear over loud noise in the room). Asking the right questions about why communication did not work is the best way to improve communication skills.

Most of us already have considerable communication skills. We have been sending and receiving **verbal** and **nonverbal** symbols all our lives.

Nevertheless, we have all had times when we have not communicated as effectively as we should. You may have received a lower grade on a paper than you expected. You may have unintentionally hurt someone's feelings. An instructor may not have understood a question when you asked it in class.

You can work to increase the likelihood of effective communication. There are certain basic steps to follow when preparing any oral or written communication.

The following six steps for effective communication are not always used in sequence, nor are they exclusive of each other. Tailor them to your own style and approach; you will not use all these steps each time you communicate. These steps will help you focus your attention on how to increase your effectiveness as a communicator.



**Note:** Verbal symbols utilize the words in a language to stand for a particular thing or idea.

Nonverbal symbols allow us to communicate without using words. Facial expressions and gestures are examples of nonverbal symbols.

## Six Steps for Effective Communication

1. Analyze your purpose and your audience.  
Make sure you know why you are communicating and to whom you are addressing your ideas. Knowing about the receivers of your communication is called an **audience analysis**.
2. Conduct the research. Use a variety of resources.
3. Support your ideas.  
Find facts, figures, data, statistics, and explanations that give credibility to your ideas. The more you can back up your ideas, the more your audience will understand what you are communicating.
4. Get organized.  
Use an outline or notes to organize your ideas into a logical sequence. A logical sequence helps your audience follow along with you.
5. Draft and edit.  
Use language to your best advantage. There may be many ways to express the same idea. Look for the best way. If you are unclear about what you are saying, you may be sending **mixed messages**.
6. Get feedback.  
Test your work with one or more people. Testing your communication with others will ensure that you are not the only one that can make sense out of what you are saying.

## Conclusion

Communication is how you transfer ideas to other people. Because communication does not always work as you intend, you must ensure that your message is delivered so you get your point across without any misunderstanding.

It's important to understand your audience and your purpose. You should conduct research and support your ideas. Decide on an organization for your information and outline your ideas.

Follow the Six Steps to Effective Communication and people will pay attention to your ideas, be impressed by your ability to express yourself, and clearly understand your message.

Part of being a good communicator is learning to listen more effectively. The following lesson deals with the topic of becoming a good listener.



better communicator?

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## Lesson Check-up

1. Compare and contrast verbal and nonverbal communication.
2. Describe how the elements of communication impact your own communication style, either positively or negatively.
3. How does getting organized help you become a

