

COMMUNICATION SKILLS A WORKBOOK

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Preface

Communication Skills: A Workbook is a practice book for developing communication skills of students at the graduation level. The text provides practical insights to help students face interviews, make public speeches, participate in debates, or appear for competitive examinations. It will also help them improve their grammar and vocabulary. The book can also be used by students pursuing their postgraduation or professionals aspiring to enhance their proficiency in English.

Through variegated exercises, the workbook helps students and professionals hone their Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW) skills in English. Using an integrated learner-oriented approach, the book has been designed to cater to the wide range of communication needs of a 21st century learner. The book also covers the syllabi and course content of English Communication Skills courses offered in different colleges, institutes, and universities across the country.

The text has been divided into four units:

Unit I, *Essentials of Language Learning*, after providing a brief theoretical framework offers a rich variety of exercises on Non-verbal Communication, Grammar and Usage, Vocabulary Enhancement, and Listening Skills.

Unit II, *Reading Skills*, offers tips for improving students' reading skills and also provides exercises on Reading Comprehension.

Unit III, *Writing Skills*, aims at developing the learner's writing skills by providing conceptual discussions and exercises in different forms of written communication such as Emails; Blogs; Business Letters; CV and Job Application Letters; Reports; and Book, Movie, and Match Reviews.

Unit IV, *Speaking Skills*, offers discussion and extensive exercises in different forms of oral communication such as Role Play and Dialogues, Professional Presentations, Speeches, Debates, Group Discussions, and Job Interviews.

While writing the workbook, we have made sincere efforts in keeping the language reader-friendly. We have focused on providing learners multiple, innovatively-designed exercises to enhance their clarity of concepts. The workbook will help the users face all communication skills-related tasks with confidence, clarity, accuracy, and precision.

In order to optimally utilize this workbook as well as the companion resources, the learner is advised to first make an honest attempt at solving the exercises given, and then refer to the accompanying resources for verifying the answers. Though the chapters in the book are intended to follow a logical sequence, yet any section(s) of the book can be used in any order that suits the learner.

Online Resources

To aid the readers using this text, the following resources are made available on the companion website at india.oup.com/orcs/9780199488803.

For Faculty

- Additional exercises for class assessments
- Answer key

For Students

- Answer key

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In addition, we thank all our seniors, well-wishers, family members, and friends whose silent but invaluable support we might have failed in appreciating.

Finally, we are grateful to you, our reader—your interest in our book gives us great motivation and satisfaction. Being teachers, we are aware of the fact that in all learning tasks, the learner's participation is of utmost importance. You can ensure your participation and learning by attempting all the exercises in the book conscientiously. We would be delighted to receive your comments, queries, and suggestions for future editions. You can reach us at drarorasanjay@gmail.com.

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Fundamentals of Communication

Picture the situation given below:

Dr Radhika Mathur arrives at the hotel Redhut Retreat, Gurgaon. It is 11.30 in the night. Emerging from a taxi, she first walks on the gravel part and then drags her suitcase onto the ramp and approaches the reception. The receptionist looks at Radhika but continues working on her computer. Since the receptionist does not seem like interested in welcoming the customer for a while, it is the tired and exhausted looking Radhika who had to initiate the dialogue. This is what unfolds further:

Dr Radhika: Hello, Good evening!

Receptionist (still working on PC): Good evening, Madam. Yes?

Dr Radhika: I have booked a room online.

Receptionist: Are you from Bengaluru?

Dr Radhika: Yes

Receptionist: But Madam, you were supposed to come around 9 o'clock.

Dr Radhika: Yes, but my flight got delayed due to bad weather.

The receptionist calls a boy to take her to room no. 102. The bedraggled look on the face of the boy suggests that he has been fast asleep for some time now. Meanwhile, the receptionist demands Radhika's ID proof and pushes towards the hotel register to make various entries. While Radhika does so, the receptionist returns her gaze to her computer screen.

Dr Radhika (having finished filling in the columns in the register): Can I have a cup of tea and some biscuits?

Receptionist: Sorry, Madam. All boys have gone and I cannot ask this guy to go and get tea for you. We serve tea or coffee only till 10 in the evening.

Radhika waits for a while for any better show of consideration. After a while, however, she begins to trudge towards her room. Hungry, tired, and offended, she has taken a resolve while checking into her room. The next morning, Radhika checks out of the hotel immediately after breakfast.

Two days later, she leaves a scathing review on social media.

Can you figure out the reasons behind Radhika's leaving the hotel Redhut Retreat so early?

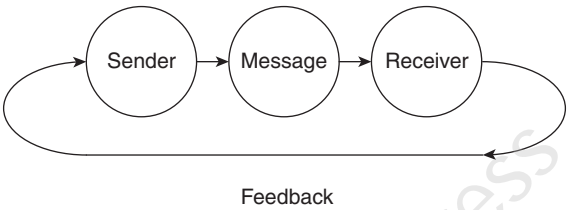
It was hurt and frustration that marked her tone as she complained about the discourteous behaviour and the indifferent attitude of the receptionist; she also highlighted the lackadaisical attitude of the attendant and the poor services at the hotel.

The event suggests how want of business etiquette, absence of professionalism, lack of cooperation and concern, and immanence of poor communication skills in an organization can be severely detrimental to its business prospects.

COMMUNICATION—DEFINITION, PROCESS, AND TYPES


Definition Communication essentially means transfer of ideas, feelings, plans, messages, or information from one person to another. Communication is considered effective only when it gets the desired action or response from the receiver.

Process All forms of communication require a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, and the feedback that effectively completes the process. The sender encodes the message and the receiver decodes the same and gives the sender his/her feedback.



General Communication and Professional Communication

All of us know that the day-to-day general-purpose communication differs from professional communication.

 **Exercise 1.1** Think of the differences between general and professional communication and complete the table given below. In the first column the parameters of differences have been provided to you:

	General Communication	Professional Communication
Content	Contains general message	Contains a formal and professional message
Nature		
Structure		
Method		
Audience		
Language		
Body Language		
Paralinguistic		

Features of Communication

Following are the most important features of successful professional communication. It essentially is

1. a two-way process by which information is transmitted between individuals and/or organizations
2. a continuous process of meaningful interactions among persons in an organization or individuals
3. a process in which the role of the receiver and the sender keeps changing through the communication process
4. inclusive of both verbal and non-verbal forms

5. a process which transmits and disseminates important ideas, thoughts, feelings, plans, etc.
6. understood to be an art or technique of persuasion through the use of oral, written, and non-verbal features



Exercise 1.2 Keeping in view the various features of communication, read the following conversation and answer the questions that follow:

Situation

Sofia works with Unitech, a US-based company. She calls up Himanshu, the Manager of one of the Unitech vendors for customer service outsourcing.

Sofia: Himanshu! We are planning to have a training programme for our new customer service representatives in the next two weeks. Can you get this done?

Himanshu: Two weeks will be tough. It seems impossible.

Sofia: If you create a well-planned programme, it is doable, isn't it?

Himanshu: It's OK. But you know Ganapati Mahotsav is around.

Sofia: Oh! Yes, yes. It's your festival. Wish you a great Ganesha Festival!

Himanshu: Thanks. It's a great festival for us.

Sofia: Good. So can I get the layout of the programme on my table by tomorrow evening?

Himanshu: I will try.mmm....OK, Madam. I'll send that to you.

After two days

Sofia: Himanshu! You have not sent me the layout.

Himanshu: Sorry. But I told you Ganapati Festival is starting. It's taking time. I will send you by tomorrow morning.

Sofia: But you should have given it a priority and done it. Anyways by tomorrow 12 noon you should send it to me. You know, I'll go through it and if everything is fine I will approve it.

Himanshu: OK, Madam. I will send it by tomorrow morning.

Sofia: Make it by all means before 12 o'clock.

Himanshu: OK, Madam.

Identify the process and flow of communication in the above situation.

Identify the problems in the given situation.

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State the causes of failure of communication between Sofia and Himanshu.

What are the possible outcomes?

Importance of Communication

Let us now see how important communication is in the business world:

1. With the emergence of multinational companies, large business houses usually operate both within and outside a country. Effective communication alone can help in maintaining a link among its various branches, offices, and sites.
2. All the departments and units of an organization have to go hand in hand to achieve its goals and for that, they need to keep communicating with one another.
3. Marketing research suggests that firms which communicate better sell better. Moreover, companies keep competing with one another through advertisements and other propagandist strategies for securing a higher position in the market which involve communication at every step. All of this necessitates effective communication skills.
4. Effective communication helps sustaining a harmonious relationship between salespersons and customers, and trade unions and employees in a company.
5. Through effective communication, employees get job satisfaction and develop a sense of belongingness which ultimately helps the organization grow well.

Different Types of Communication

Communication is generally classified into the following types:

Type of Communication	Brief Definition
Verbal communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral communication• Written communication	Both spoken and the written expressions are used in the communication process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A face-to-face interaction between the sender and the receiver who use the spoken variety of language• Sender uses the written mode to transmit his/her messages like reports, proposals, etc.
Non-verbal communication	Communication without using words through body language and paralinguistic features

(Contd)

(Contd)

Type of Communication	Brief Definition
Intrapersonal communication	Communication taking place within one's own self during self-reflection, contemplation, and meditation
Interpersonal communication	Written or oral communication that occurs between two or more persons
Extrapersonal communication	Communicating with non-human entities, such as animals and birds
Mass communication	Conveying messages to an entire populace through books, the press, cinema, television, radio, Internet, etc.
Media communication	Communicating through electronic media, such as computer, Internet, cell phones, LCD, video, television, etc.

COMMUNICATION FLOW IN AN ORGANIZATION

Communication in a professional organization flows at different layers and levels which regulate, guide, and propel its flow. It is both formal and informal in nature. The different types of communication flow in an organization are as follows:

Formal Flow of Communication

Horizontal Takes place among people of the same rank in an organization

Vertical Occurs between hierarchically positioned persons and can involve both downward and upward communication

Upward Happens when information is sent to people of higher rank—from bottom to top levels in the hierarchy

Downward Exists when information moves from higher authority to subordinates—from top to bottom

Crosswise Takes place between managers and workers located in different functional divisions/units

Radial Moves in all directions. For instance, the management circulates a copy of new bonus and incentive scheme among all the employees

Informal Flow of Communication

Grapevine Informal communication is known as 'grapevine'. Such communication is often shorn of all sorts of formalities. For instance, rumours running ripe about the company's expansion, promotion of an employee, discord between top officials, illicit relations between two colleagues, etc. are some of the examples of grapevine. A communication of this variety flows in all directions. Grapevine may create both negative and positive impacts on the environment of that organization.



Exercise 1.3 Identify the type of communication flow that occurs/exists in the following situations:

- i. Feedback given to a student by a teacher about his/her performance in the assignment _____
- ii. Proposals prepared for submission to the boss _____
- iii. Communication between managers of various units regarding setting the production target for the next three months _____
- iv. General Manager issuing instructions to subordinates _____
- v. A subordinate informing the manager about a work-related problem _____

- vi. Announcement of change of the Eid holiday _____
- vii. Letter from the CEO _____
- viii. Chats, conversations, informal talks and the like _____
- ix. Counselling and training _____
- x. Salesman briefing the Sales Manager about the sales of the month _____

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. Here are a few of the most commonly-found barriers to communication in an organization.

Perceptual barriers Different people have different perceptions about the same reality. For instance, one room could be big enough for one teacher but the same room could be small for another as he/she has more number of students to teach. This kind of difference in perception leads to miscommunication.

Listening barriers Poor listening often results in incomplete, incorrect, and inconsistent responses. Sometimes people do not listen to others properly and patiently, and frequently interrupt the conversation.

Language barriers When two communicators do not share the same language, they encounter difficulty in understanding each other. This problem further aggravates when second language learners do not use the language with accuracy in a given context. For instance, what is called *sidewalk* in the US is called *pavement* in Britain, whereas in India, it is called *platform*. Similarly, it is *apartment* in the US, *flat* in Britain, and *house* in India.

Cultural barriers People across the globe belong to different cultures. A cultural barrier arises when two individuals in an organization belong to different religions, states, or countries. Diverse cultures have different positive and negative meanings associated with colours, signs, designs, shapes, symbols, gestures, and posture.

Physical barriers Research shows that most offices have closed doors and cabins for those at higher levels of the organizational ladder, and the working areas are physically placed far apart. This kind of barrier prevents team members from maintaining effective interaction among themselves and authorities.

Psychological barriers Such barriers to communication distort or prevent effective communication within an organization. Subordinates usually have fear and they distrust their seniors owing to the latter's dominance, arrogance, or lack of concern for them. Even if they have genuine reasons or plans or suggestions for the working of the organization, they do not feel free to articulate their thoughts due to the authoritarian attitude of their seniors.

Physiological barriers Due to headache, fatigue, or other health reasons, at times people involved in the communication process are not able to send or receive the messages properly. This leads to either complete breakdown of communication or miscommunication between them.



Exercise 1.4 Choose the correct option from those given in each of the sentences below:

- i. Oral communication is different from written communication as it is
 - (a) Spoken and structured
 - (b) Spoken and transitory
 - (c) Spoken and permanent
 - (d) Spoken and time consuming
- ii. Out of the following, which element is the medium through which messages are sent?
 - (a) Sender
 - (b) Channel
 - (c) Context
 - (d) Noise

- iii. In an organization, when a colleague shares official information with the other of an equal hierarchical level, this kind of communication taking place is _____.
- (a) Horizontal (b) Vertical
(c) Radial (d) Informal
- iv. The Sales Manager providing tips to its team for boosting the sales of electronic items during festive season is _____ kind of communication.
- (a) Informational (b) Horizontal
(c) Radial (d) Vertically downward
- v. Which of the following statements is correct regarding written communication?
- (a) Written communication enjoys legal status.
(b) Written communication is more suitable for the immediate needs of organizations.
(c) Written communication offers immediate feedback.
(d) Written communication is relatively informal.
- vi. In communication, the observation of a receiver's response is called
- (a) Feedback (b) Survey
(c) Channel (d) Message
- vii. Writing diary every day is an example of _____ communication.
- (a) Extrapersonal (b) Intrapersonal
(c) Organizational (d) Interpersonal
- viii. Sales Manager, Monte Carlo, Jaipur speaks to Sales Manager, Monte Carlo, Delhi regarding the sales strategy during Christmas and New Year season this year. This is an example of
- (a) Grapevine communication (b) Horizontal communication
(c) Upward communication (d) Diagonal communication
- ix. Which of the following is desired for effective communication?
- (a) Redundancy (b) Clarity
(c) Clichés (d) Circumlocution
- x. Which one of the following is NOT true about effective professional communication?
- (a) It projects and promotes a company's image, practices, and goals.
(b) It includes a company's manuals, training materials, reports, letters, etc.
(c) It is informal in nature.
(d) It differs from general communication in its emphasis on clarity, conciseness, accuracy, and usability.