



Unit 3 – Communication Skills

Soft Skills Background:

- **Definition-** the transferable skills needed by an individual to make them “employable”
- Employers are not only looking for good technical understanding and subject knowledge; they are often looking for the development of an expertise, knowledge base or mindset that makes you more attractive as an employee. They often improve your performance, minimize errors and promote collaboration with your coworkers, enabling you to perform your role more effectively.
- Other names: employment skills, work-readiness skills or foundational skills
- Why are they useful- another job candidate may have the same qualifications and experience as you but your advantage may come from a broader set of employability skills that are conveyed concisely and are particularly useful for that role.

Communication Skills Background: This unit covers three different aspects of communication. Starting with active listening then working through verbal then non-verbal communication and wrapping up with written communication. The listed four aspects of communication are used regularly in the workplace as well as in everyday life.

These lessons can take anywhere from 10-30 minutes. Use these outlines to fit your classroom style!

Communication overview additional resource: [4 Types of Communication and How To Improve Them](#) (Indeed.com)

Journal or Self-Reflection Entry: Think of a time when you didn’t understand someone. Were they too quiet? Did their words not make sense together? Did they talk away from you? How could they have communicated better?

While thinking of this experience, write down how it made you feel and also how you responded.

Teaching Guide

- **Definitions** – Have students fold a piece of paper down the middle to create two columns (hotdog style). On the left hand side have students write: active listening, communication, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, and written communication. Students should leave 5-7 spaces between each vocabulary word. After students have written the vocabulary words ask them to take 3-5 minutes to brainstorm and write on the right hand side of their paper their own definition and/or example for each word. Afterwards, use the PowerPoint to go through each definition. Before sharing the definition that is on the PowerPoint have 1-3 students share what they wrote. These vocabulary words can be used throughout the lesson as a guide and extra resource.



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Active listening



Materials

- Knowledge Center Active listening PowerPoint
- [11 Active Listening Skills To Practice \(With Examples\)](#) (Indeed.com)
- Pencil
- Paper

Procedure

1. Begin by using the Knowledge Center Active listening PowerPoint. Slide two says “What is active listening” The description will come up after a second click. This allows for group discussion with students to see prior knowledge before sharing the description. As you go through the PowerPoint students should be encouraged to take notes on how to become an active listener.
2. At the end of the PowerPoint there is an activity for students to practice their skills. Students should pick a partner and have a conversation for at least ten minutes about what they did yesterday using at least 5 new active listening skills.
 - ★ To incorporate a writing/reflection portion to this activity when the time is up have students write a minimum of two paragraphs about their conversation. Paragraph one should discuss what it was like using active listening skills and paragraph two should be about what it was like speaking to someone and them using active listening skills.

Additional Resources

- [Passive vs. Active Listening: What's the Difference?](#) (Indeed.com)

Verbal



Materials

- [Verbal Communication Skills: Examples and Tips To Improve Yours](#) (Indeed.com)
- Post-it notes
- Writing
- Paper
- Knowledge Center Description words

Procedure

1. Write interpersonal, group conversation, and public speaking on the board. Then allow students to use post-it notes to write down an example of where they would use each type of verbal communication and place it under the corresponding word.
 - ★ Example – under group conversation one sticky note may say “lunch with friends”
2. Read off a few of the examples students put on the board. This allows students to see where and how they would be using verbal communication in the workplace. For more examples you can refer to [Verbal Communication Skills: Examples and Tips To Improve Yours](#)
 - ★ Students can also use the article by breaking into groups and each group reading the nine skills to improve verbal communication. Each group can read one skill then report it back to the rest of the class.
3. Have students pair up. Give each group a stack of description words. One student will look at the cards and come up with descriptive words until the other student guesses the correct correlated word. No body language or gestures should be used, just words. There are 32 pre-worded cards and 32 blank cards for students to come up with their own words
 - ★ Ex: if the word is Cow then the partner may say “calf, bull, heifer, bovine, etc” until the partner says cow.

Additional resources

- [10 Effective Ways To Improve Verbal Communication Skills](#) (Indeed.com)

Cow	Tree	Teacher	Agriculture
Forestry	Garden	Corn	Plant
Soil	Cat	Dog	Farm
Chicken	Crop	Erosion	Horse
Water	Weather	Fish	Barn
Communication	Confidence	Body Language	Tone
Listening	Eye Contact	Conversation	Words
Email	Public Speaking	Speak	Practice



Nonverbal



Materials

- Knowledge Center “nonverbal communication” PowerPoint
- Communication cards
- Writing utensil
- Paper
- [Nonverbal Communication: 9 Types and How To Read and Use It](#) (Indeed.com)

Procedure

1. Begin by using the Knowledge Center “Nonverbal communication” PowerPoint. Students can take notes. There is a reflection question and additional nonverbal communication information.
2. Give each student a communication card. All students will read the same sentence, but all with different nonverbal cues to demonstrate different emotions. This allows students to see it’s not what you say, but how you say it.

Additional resources

- [Examples of Nonverbal Communication in the Workplace](#) (Indeed.com)

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Happy

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Excited

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Hostile

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Uncomfortable

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Boastful

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Sad

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Scared

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Mad

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Shy

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Nervous

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Dramatic

One U.S. farm feeds 166
people annually in the U.S. and
abroad

Surprised

Written



Materials


- [A Complete Guide to Effective Written Communication](#) (Indeed.com)
- How to format an email PowerPoint
- Email template
- Writing utensil

Procedure

1. Begin by asking students when they believe written communication is used
 - ★ Some answers may be: text messages, emails, newsletters, newspapers, blogs, mail, job descriptions, or advertisements.
2. Have student's popcorn and read the section *Ways to communicate clearly with written communication*. There are nine different tips.
3. After reading about how to be an effective written communicator, go through the Knowledge Center "how to format an email" PowerPoint.
4. After reviewing "How to format and email" Have students pair up and use the email template to practice emailing back and forth. This requires them to come up with a subject, message, and signature.

Additional resources


- [How To Write Professional Emails \(With Templates\)](#) (Indeed.com)



Use the following email template to send an email to your partner. Your partner's email address should just be their first and last name for this scenario. You should CC your instructor on the email. CC stands for Carbon Copy. The person that receives the copy can still respond, but it serves more as a "stay in the loop" method. You should create a subject title and a message then hand the paper to your partner for them to respond. After they respond you should respond one more time.

Scenario 2: Your boss scheduled you to work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the meats lab. However, it happens to be the same day as your dentist appointment. Kindly email your coworker and explain the situation and ask if they would be willing to switch with you.

To...
CC...
Subject
Reply:
Reply:



Use the following email template to send an email to your partner. Your partner's email address should just be their first and last name for this scenario. You should CC your instructor on the email. CC stands for Carbon Copy. The person that receives the copy can still respond, but it serves more as a “stay in the loop” method. You should create a subject title and a message then hand the paper to your partner for them to respond. After they respond you should respond one more time.

Scenario 3: You are thinking of starting a bee hive and want to obtain more information. Email your local extension agent to obtain more resources and information.

To...
CC...
Subject
Reply:
Reply: