What is Communication?

**See also:**[**Interpersonal Communication Skills**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/interpersonal-communication.html)

**Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another.**

Every communication involves (at least) one sender, a message and a recipient. This may sound simple, but communication is actually a very complex subject.

The transmission of the message from sender to recipient can be affected by a huge range of things. These include our emotions, the cultural situation, the medium used to communicate, and even our location. The complexity is why good communication skills are considered so desirable by employers around the world: accurate, effective and unambiguous communication is actually extremely hard.

**This page explains more about what we mean by ‘*communication*’.**

Defining Communication

**communication**, *n*. The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium. …The successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings.

Oxford English Dictionary

As this definition makes clear, communication is more than simply the transmission of information. The term requires an element of success in transmitting or imparting a message, whether information, ideas, or emotions.

**A communication therefore has three parts: the sender, the message, and the recipient.**

The sender ‘encodes’ the message, usually in a mixture of words and non-verbal communication. It is transmitted in some way (for example, in speech or writing), and the recipient ‘decodes’ it.

Of course, there may be more than one recipient, and the complexity of communication means that each one may receive a slightly different message. Two people may read very different things into the choice of words and/or body language. It is also possible that neither of them will have quite the same understanding as the sender.

In face-to-face communication, the roles of the sender and recipient are not distinct. The two roles will pass back and forwards between two people talking. Both parties communicate with each other, even if in very subtle ways such as through eye-contact (or lack of) and general body language. In written communication, however, the sender and recipient are more distinct.

Categories of Communication

**There are a wide range of ways in which we communicate and more than one may be occurring at any given time.**

The different categories of communication include:

* **Spoken or**[**Verbal Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/verbal-communication.html), which includes face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media.
* [**Non-Verbal Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/nonverbal-communication.html), covering body language, gestures, how we dress or act, where we stand, and even our scent. There are many subtle ways that we communicate (perhaps even unintentionally) with others. For example, the tone of voice can give clues to mood or emotional state, whilst hand signals or gestures can add to a spoken message.
* [**Written Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/writing-skills.html): which includes letters, e-mails, social media, books, magazines, the Internet and other media. Until recent times, a relatively small number of writers and publishers were very powerful when it came to communicating the written word. Today, we can all write and publish our ideas online, which has led to an explosion of information and communication possibilities.
* **Visualizations**: [graphs and charts](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/num/graphs-charts.html), maps, logos and other visualizations can all communicate messages.

The desired outcome or goal of any communication process is mutual understanding.

The process of [**interpersonal communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/interpersonal-communication.html) cannot be regarded as a phenomena which simply 'happens'. Instead, it must be seen as a process that involves participants who negotiate their roles with each other, whether consciously or unconsciously.

**A message or communication is sent by the sender through a communication channel to one or more recipients.**

The sender must encode the message (the information being conveyed) into a form that is appropriate to the communication channel, and the recipient then decodes the message to understand its meaning and significance.

**Misunderstanding can occur at any stage of the communication process.**

Effective communication involves minimising potential misunderstanding and overcoming any barriers to communication at each stage in the communication process.

See our page: [**Barriers to Effective Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/barriers-communication.html) for more information.

**An effective communicator understands their audience**, chooses an appropriate communication channel, hones their message for this particular channel and encodes the message effectively to reduce misunderstanding by the recipient(s).

They will also seek out feedback from the recipient(s) to ensure that the message is understood and attempt to correct any misunderstanding or confusion as soon as possible.

Receivers can use techniques such as [**Clarification**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/clarification.html) and [**Reflection**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/reflecting.html) as effective ways to ensure that the message sent has been understood correctly.

The Communication Process

**A message or communication is sent by the sender through a communication channel to a receiver, or to multiple receivers.**

The sender must encode the message (the information being conveyed) into a form that is appropriate to the communication channel, and the receiver(s) then decodes the message to understand its meaning and significance.

**Misunderstanding can occur at any stage of the communication process.**

Effective communication involves minimising potential misunderstanding and overcoming any barriers to communication at each stage in the communication process.

See our page: [**Barriers to Effective Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/barriers-communication.html) for more information.

**An effective communicator understands their audience**, chooses an appropriate communication channel, hones their message to this channel and encodes the message to reduce misunderstanding by the receiver(s).

They will also seek out **feedback** from the receiver(s) as to how the message is understood and attempt to correct any misunderstanding or confusion as soon as possible.

Receivers can use techniques such as [**Clarification**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/clarification.html) and [**Reflection**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/reflecting.html) as effective ways to ensure that the message sent has been understood correctly.



Communication Channels

Communication channels is the term given to the way in which we communicate. It is therefore the method used to transmit our message to a recipient, or to receive a message from someone else.

There are multiple communication channels available to us today. These include face-to-face conversations, telephone calls, text messages, email, the Internet (including social media such as Facebook and Twitter), radio and TV, written letters, brochures and reports.

**Choosing an appropriate communication channel is vital for effective communication. Each communication channel has different strengths and weaknesses.**

For example, broadcasting news of an upcoming event via a written letter might convey the message clearly to one or two individuals. It will not, however, be a time- or cost-effective way to broadcast the message to a large number of people.  On the other hand, conveying complex, technical information is easier via a printed document than a spoken message. The recipients are able to assimilate the information at their own pace and revisit anything that they do not fully understand.

Written communication is also useful as a way of recording what has been said, for example by taking minutes in a meeting.

See our pages: [**Note Taking**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/notes-verbal.html) and [**How to Conduct a Meeting**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/conduct-meeting.html) for more.

Encoding Messages

**All messages must be encoded into a form that can be conveyed by the communication channel chosen for the message.**

We all do this every day when transferring abstract thoughts into spoken words or a written form. However, other communication channels require different forms of encoding, e.g. text written for a report will not work well if broadcast via a radio programme, and the short, abbreviated text used in text messages would be inappropriate in a letter or in speech.

Complex data may be best communicated using a graph, chart or other visualisation.

Effective communicators encode their messages so that they fit both the channel and the intended audience. They  use appropriate language, conveying the information simply and clearly. They also anticipate and eliminate likely causes of confusion and misunderstanding. They are generally aware of the recipients’ experience in decoding similar communications.

**Successful encoding of messages for the audience and channel is a vital skill in effective communication.**

You may find our page [**The Importance of Plain English**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/plain-english.html) helpful.

Decoding Messages

**Once received, the recipient needs to decode the message. Successful decoding is also a vital communication skill.**

People will decode and understand messages in different ways.

This will depend on their experience and understanding of the context of the message, how well they know the sender, their psychological state and how they feel, and the time and place of receipt. They may also be affected by any [**Barriers to Communication**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/barriers-communication.html) which might be present.

**There are therefore a wide range of factors that will affect decoding and understanding.**

Successful communicators understand how the message will be decoded, and anticipate and remove as many as possible of the potential sources of misunderstanding.

Feedback

**The final part of a communication is feedback: the recipient lets the sender know that they have received and understood the message.**

Recipients of messages are likely to provide feedback on how they have understood the messages through both verbal and non-verbal reactions. Effective communicators pay close attention to this feedback as it is the only way to assess whether the message has been understood as intended, and it allows any confusion to be corrected.

Bear in mind that the extent and form of feedback will vary with the communication channel. Feedback during a face-to-face or telephone conversation will be immediate and direct, whilst feedback to messages conveyed via TV or radio will be indirect and may be delayed, or even conveyed through other media such as the Internet.

Effective communicators pay close attention to this feedback as it is the only way to assess whether the message has been understood as intended, and it allows any confusion to be corrected.

You can always ask!

You may be unsure if a message has been successfully received and decoded, especially if you do not get much feedback from the recipient. If so, you can always ask!

A quick question is a good start, for example:

“*Is that OK?*” or “*Are you clear about that?*”

If you want more detailed feedback or to check that the recipient has really understood, you might say something like:

“*So, let’s just run over that one more time. I think I am going to do x, and you are going to do y. Is that your understanding too?*”

Bear in mind that the extent and form of feedback will vary with the communication channel. Feedback during a face-to-face or telephone conversation will be immediate and direct, whilst feedback to messages conveyed via TV or radio will be indirect and may be delayed, or even conveyed through other media such as the Internet.

More on feedback: see our pages on [**Reflection**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/reflecting.html), [**Clarification**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/clarification.html) and [**Giving and Receiving Feedback**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/feedback.html)



Further Reading from Skills You Need

[**Our Communication Skills eBooks**](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/shop/interpersonal-skills-guide.html)

Learn more about the key communication skills you need to be an effective communicator.

Our eBooks are ideal for anyone who wants to learn about or develop their communication skills, and are full of easy-to-follow practical information and exercises.

Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills.

Understanding is the first step to improvement

**Understanding more about communication and how it works is the first step to improving your communication skills. A good understanding of the process, and how it operates, will help you to ensure that you become better at encoding and decoding messages.**

# Communication

Communications is fundamental to the existence and survival of humans as well as to an organization. It is a process of creating and sharing ideas, information, views, facts, feelings, etc. among the people to reach a common understanding.

**FIVE TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

Posted on July 12, 2018



In preparing for my Fall course: *Communications for Professionals*, I’ve been thinking more and more about the different types of communication. In previous years, I have outlined four types of communication, but I believe there are actually five types of communication: verbal, non-verbal, written, listening, and visual.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

Verbal communication occurs when we engage in speaking with others. It can be face-to-face, over the telephone, via Skype or Zoom, etc. Some verbal engagements are informal, such as chatting with a friend over coffee or in the office kitchen, while others are more formal, such as a scheduled meeting. Regardless of the type, it is not just about the words, it is also about the caliber and complexity of those words, how we string those words together to create an overarching message, as well as the intonation (pitch, tone, cadence, etc.) used while speaking. And when occurring face-to-face, while the words are important, they cannot be separated from non-verbal communication.

**NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

What we do while we speak often says more than the actual words. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, posture, eye contact, hand movements, and touch. For example, if you’re engaged in a conversation with your boss about your cost-saving idea, it is important to pay attention to both the their words and their non-verbal communication. Your boss might be in agreement with your idea verbally, but their nonverbal cues: avoiding eye contact, sighing, scrunched up face, etc. indicate something different.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Whether it is an email, a memo, a report, a Facebook post, a Tweet, a contract, etc. all forms of written communication have the same goal to disseminate information in a clear and concise manner – though that objective is often not achieved. In fact, poor writing skills often lead to confusion and embarrassment, and even potential legal jeopardy. One important thing to remember about written communication, especially in the digital age, is the message lives on, perhaps in perpetuity. Thus, there are two things to remember: first, write well – poorly constructed sentences and careless errors make you look bad; and second, ensure the content of the message is something you want to promote or be associated with for the long haul.

**LISTENING**

The [act of listening](https://drexel.edu/goodwin/professional-studies-blog/overview/2019/August/tips-for-better-active-listening/) does not often make its way onto the list of types of communication. Active listening, however, is perhaps one of the most important types of communication because if we cannot listen to the person sitting across from us, we cannot effectively engage with them. Think about a negotiation – part of the process is to assess what the opposition wants and needs. Without listening, it is impossible to assess that, which makes it difficult to achieve a win/win outcome.

**VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

We are a visual society. Think about it, televisions are running 24/7, Facebook is visual with memes, videos, images, etc., Instagram is an image-only platform, and advertisers use imagery to sell products and ideas. Think about from a personal perspective – the images we post on social media are meant to convey meaning – to communicate a message. In some cases that message might be, look at me, I’m in Italy or I just won an award. Others are carefully curated to tug on our heartstrings – injured animals, crying children, etc.

## Types of Communication

Have you considered your most practiced activity, one that you voluntarily exercise almost as often as your breathing?

If you haven’t guessed it already, it’s “**Communicating**”. We’re constantly communicating every moment, through various forms, channels, gestures and expressions, all as a natural reflection of our self. But while it is completely voluntary, our [communication](https://www.educba.com/communication-skills-benefits/) is not always conscious. We sometimes communicate without our clear awareness, leading to misleading or even conflicting expressions of our self.

And there lies the key to superlative communication: **awareness.** If we can stay constantly aware of the subtle communication signals we send out every moment, we can align this to reflect what we want to express. Our communication is then no longer accidental, it’s thoroughly incidental!

So let us take a step back and ask you:

* Are you aware that you’re communicating every moment? With yourself, with others, with nature?
* Are you aware of the various expressions of your communication?
* And finally, are you constantly communicating what you want to communicate, in the way you want to do it?

Often, the answers we receive to these thought-provoking questions is mixed, tending towards an unsure, “No”. Through this post, we address this dilemma. We throw light on the [various types of communication](https://www.educba.com/different-methods-of-communication/) and their multi-dimensional expressions, so you can develop super-keen awareness around your communication.

### Various Types of Communication Strategies

Okay, so this one is especially for you if you’ve been vaguely surprised by the initial section of this post.

Related Courses

[Job Interview Training (12 Courses, 2 Case Studies)](https://www.educba.com/personal-development/courses/job-interview-training/?btnz=edu-blg-inline-banner1)

“Communicating every moment? How is that even possible? It’s not like I have my mouth open every minute,” we hear you ask. Ah, but you see, we communicate not just verbally, but also non-verbally, and even informally. The entire gamut of the various types of communication channels and expressions we enjoy is outlined in this chart.



As you can see, there are at least 6 distinct types of communication: non-verbal, [verbal-oral-face-to-face](https://www.educba.com/effective-oral-communication-in-business/), verbal-oral-distance, [verbal-written](https://www.educba.com/how-to-improve-written-communication-skills/), formal and informal types of communication. Add to this the boundless opportunities the internet superhighway offers, and you have an absolute goldmine of communication possibilities!

In successive sections of this post, we highlight the finer nuances of these distinct expressions so your communication is conscious, focused and mighty effective.

### Formal Types of Communication Skills

This types of communication is also referred to as “official communication” and covers the gamut of verbal expressions that address a formal need.

It is:

* Conducted through a pre-determined channel. For instance, a large number of your interactions within your profession, financial communication (from and to your bank, creditors, debtors, etc.) and legal expressions are examples of formal communication.
* More time-consuming that non-formal communication, as it follows a particular communication protocol.
* Even in cases of oral expressions ([in meetings](https://www.educba.com/how-to-have-effective-meetings/), seminars, etc.), it is often backed by written communication that can provide documentation evidence of the oral conversation. (This written communication could be as simple as a minutes-of-meeting, to as complex as a detailed recording.)
* Considered a reliable source of information. (So when you receive a legal notice from your bank, you better take notice of it!)

Formal communication forms the core of our professional lives (though not all professional communication is formal). Hence becoming an expert in this type of communication is central to professional advancement and success. Below, we provide you simple tips to excel in your expression and profession.

* Begin by **clarifying the purpose** of your communication.
* Whether you use an oral or written expression, always follow a **well-defined structure** that can be easily understood by your audience.
* Keep your tone**open**, professional and friendly.
* End by**re-iterating what you expect to cause**through this communication: clarification on your stance, answers to questions, a call to action, etc. Also clarify any constraints that apply to this communication (like confidentiality, time-limit for response, etc.)
* Finally, **thank your audience**for their listening. (This works well for written communication too.)

#### Informal Communication

Informal communication is surprisingly popular, and also referred to as “the (unofficial) grapevine”. This is often by word-of-mouth information. In fact, it is this type of communication that opens you up to unofficial yet provocative information.

Informal communication is

* Spontaneous and free-flowing, without any formal protocol or structure. Hence this type of information is also less reliable or accurate.
* A communication channel that spreads like wildfire, as there are no formal rules to follow.
* Mostly oral, with no documentation evidence. Due to this, many undermine the value of informal communication, terming it mere “gossip”.

Despite its drawbacks, informal communication is considered “user-friendly” and hence offers huge advantages when used wisely. For instance, consider this example where a company is served by 3 different caterers. Employees may become aware of the timings of service, rules and regulations through a formal communication sent out by company management. But they will become aware of the preferred caterer of the day through informal communication from friends and colleagues. This type of communication hence serves well when you want to control or encourage positive opinions, ideas and expressions, without making them seem like they’ve been “thrust upon” by senior management.

Note: In modern times, social networks from “unofficial” sources (like your personal Facebook and Twitter feeds, LinkedIn, etc.) are powerful sources of informal communication and are often used to shape public opinion.

#### Oral Communication (Face-to-face)

Face-to-face oral communication is the most recognized type of communication. Here, what you express comes directly from what you speak. Again, this can be formal or informal: with your friends and family, in a formal meeting or seminar, at work with your colleagues and boss, within your community, during [professional presentations](https://www.educba.com/presentation-skills-training/), etc.

This types of communication

* Gets better with practice. The more you practice with awareness, the more control you will have on your oral expressions.
* Is vibrantly a-live! This means that despite all past rehearsals, oral communication offers you a present-moment opportunity to tune, revise, revoke and fix what you express. It is hence the most powerful type of communication and can work for or against you with every expression.
* Engages your audience more than other types of communication. The listener (or an audience) often expects to speak-back to you with oral communication, enabling two-way communication more than any other channel.

For superior face-to-face communication,

* Always meet the **eyes** of your audience with confidence, conviction and openness.
* Practice before a mirror to perfect your tone and expressions, so they suit the message you want to convey. They two facets often convey more than your words do.
* Practice using**role-play**. This means that even when you rehearse before a mirror, candidly ask yourself, “**Am I ready to receive this message with this tone and expression?**” If you aren’t convinced, your audience won’t be either. So practice again until you get it right.
* Consciously **engage**your audience’s participation. This is the strength of this type of communication, so never let your oral expression be a one-way rant to yourself. You can do this by asking questions, getting their opinion and encouraging expression of new ideas.
* Finally, [become an active **listener**](https://www.educba.com/effective-listening-skills/). An effective oral communicator not only speaks, but also actively listens to his audience.

#### Oral Communication (Distance)

Distance (oral) communication has made the world a smaller and more accessible place. Mobile phones, VOIP, video-conferencing, 2-way webinars, etc. are all modern expansions of distance communication, taking its expression to the next subtle level. And in this type of communication, your tone of voice and pace of delivery take priority over other expressions.

For effective oral communication over distance,

* Give higher priority to your **listening**. When you fail to listen, you will find that multiple people attempt to speak at the same time, undermining the value of this form of communication.
* Speak slightly **slower** than you would in face-to-face communication. This will make sure that you remain aware of the subtle nuances of your tone, and the receiver has time to grasp what you convey.
* Always **re-iterate** what you understand when you listen. This type of communication misses the non-verbal signals that you would receive in face-to-face communication (that can indicate subtle expressions like anger, friendliness, receptivity, sarcasm, etc.) So paraphrase what understand and confirm that this is indeed what the other party also meant to convey.
* Where appropriate, wear your **friendly face**with a smile on your lips and eyes. Feel this friendly face. Your tone will automatically convey your openness and receptivity to the other person. (This may not be appropriate if you expect to convey a warning on the phone, so ensure that your face suits your message.)
* Finally, back this up with **written communication** where possible. The intent is to confirm the take-away from the communication so all parties are on the same page. This makes sense even for an informal call with your friend – perhaps you can send a quick text message to re-iterate how pleasurable it was to speak to him, and then confirm the final call-for-action.

#### Written Communication

A few decades ago, written communication depended on the trusty old mailman as we wrote to people who were far away. On rare occasions, this also included the formal note or legal notice from the bank, landlord, business client, etc. What a surprise then that this type of communication has now taken over every aspect of our world!

Think about it, if you club the total written communication you engage with in a day – the text messages you send over your fancy mobile, your Facebook and Twitter updates, personal and [professional emails](https://www.educba.com/professional-email/), heck, even the blogs you write – it would far surpass any other verbal communication you enjoy. Correct? It makes sense then to be an absolute pro at this type of communication. Listed below are 3 rules that can help you get there.

* Follow a clear structure so your communication is not all over the place. This can include a brief introduction, agenda, message body and conclusion. The cleverness and effectiveness of your communication lies in how you’re able to capture this structure in your mode of communication (email, text message, quick status update on social media, etc.).
* Clarify the context of your communication where possible. This might seem like overkill for a harmless text message. But you’d be amazed at the amount of seemingly-harmless (written) communication that reaches the wrong eyes and ears. So take care to ensure that your context is reasonably clear, no matter who the recipient.
* Always err on the right side of caution. There are very few instances when written communication is purely formal (addressed to professional peers and seniors or third-parties), or purely informal (addressed only to your immediate friend/family circle). More often, if falls between these two modes. Hence, play safe by adapting a semi-formal tone, keeping your communication clean (in language and expression) and open (without offending any group). Believe us when we say that it’s far better to have your friends think of you as a “stiff” communicator, rather than have your boss view as an “offensive” communicator!

#### Non-verbal Types of Communication

This type of communication is more subtle, yet far more powerful. It includes the entire gamut of physical postures and gestures, tone and pace of voice, and [the attitude](https://www.educba.com/personal-development/courses/personal-development-course/) with which you communicate.

In the past few decades, [body language](https://www.educba.com/10-powerful-body-language-tips/) experts have revealed how the posture you adopt, the hand gestures you endorse and other facets of your physical personality affect your communication. It is worthwhile to spend a few hours coming up to speed on basic body-language gestures, so you don’t inadvertently send mixed messages with your gestures and speech. You can also use this to support your message, making it more impactful.

But despite what these experts tell you, there will be times when the body language you are meant to adapt is in complete contrast with how you feel (like using a “friendly” posture when you internally feel threatened or intimidated). Hence, non-verbal communication is most effective when these 3 facets are consistent in your communication.

1. What you say with your words.
2. What you share with your postures and gestures. (However, these can be learnt to express the right message).
3. What you feel inside you, and hence impacts the subtle message you feel compelled to share outside you.

As you can see, (1) and (2) can be learnt with a little bit of practice. But (3) has to be consciously built so you constantly **align yourself to what you want to express.**

For instance,

* When you want your peers to think of you as a friendly person, it is because you genuinely like and care for people.
* When you want your team to think of you as a strong Leader, it is because you genuinely take responsibility for yourself and the team.
* When you want your peers, seniors and others to listen to you, it is because they are convinced that you will genuinely listen to them and factor their thoughts and opinions.

You get the drift.

Communication is a powerful activity that comes to us as naturally as breathing. With a little bit of awareness, our communication can be flawless so the other person not only receives our message, but is also open to it. We leave you with this powerful quote from Enlightened Master Paramahamsa Nithyananda, revealing a tip so potent that it shows its power in any type of communication (formal, informal, verbal, non-verbal, etc.).

***“Communication begins with Listening!”***

# 7 Major Elements of Communication Process

Seven major elements of communication process are: (1) sender (2) ideas (3) encoding (4) communication channel (5) receiver (6) decoding and (7) feedback.

Communication may be defined as a process concerning exchange of facts or ideas between persons holding different positions in an organisation to achieve mutual harmony. The communication process is dynamic in nature rather than a static phenomenon.

Communication process as such must be considered a continuous and dynamic inter-action, both affecting and being affected by many variables.

**(1) Sender:**

The person who intends to convey the message with the intention of passing information and ideas to others is known as sender or communicator.

#### (2) Ideas:

ADVERTISEMENTS:

This is the subject matter of the communication. This may be an opinion, attitude, feelings, views, orders, or suggestions.

#### (3) Encoding:

Since the subject matter of communication is theoretical and intangible, its further passing requires use of certain symbols such as words, actions or pictures etc. Conversion of subject matter into these symbols is the process of encoding.

#### (4) Communication Channel:

The person who is interested in communicating has to choose the channel for sending the required information, ideas etc. This information is transmitted to the receiver through certain channels which may be either formal or informal.

#### (5) Receiver:

Receiver is the person who receives the message or for whom the message is meant for. It is the receiver who tries to understand the message in the best possible manner in achieving the desired objectives.

#### (6) Decoding:

The person who receives the message or symbol from the communicator tries to convert the same in such a way so that he may extract its meaning to his complete understanding.

#### (7) Feedback:

Feedback is the process of ensuring that the receiver has received the message and understood in the same sense as sender meant it.

# *Basic Model of Communication*

[Share](https://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.learnistan.com%2Fbasic-model-of-communication%2F)[Tweet](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Basic%20Model%20of%20Communication&url=https://www.learnistan.com/basic-model-of-communication/)

Over the several years, the basic model of communications has evolved that represents the various elements of the communications process.

The elements of the model include:

**1. Source/Encoding**—the sender or **source**of a communication is the person or organization that has information to share with another person or group.

The receivers’ perception of the source influences the manner in which the communication is received, interpreted and responded to.

**Encoding** is the process of putting together thoughts, ideas, and information in a symbolic form to communicate a message.

The sender’s goal is to encode the message in such a manner so as to ensure that it will be understood by the receiver.

Forms of Encoding

* Graphics
	+ Pictures
	+ Drawings
	+ Charts
* Musical
	+ Arrangements
	+ Instrumentation
	+ Voice or chorus
* Verbal
	+ Spoken Words
	+ Written Words
	+ Song Lyrics
* Animation
	+ Action/Motion
	+ Pace/Speed
	+ Shape/Form

**2. Message**—the encoding process leads to the creation of a message that contains the information or meaning the source or sender hopes to convey.

Messages can take multiple forms and may include symbolic forms or signs. The message must be put into a communicable form that is suitable for the channel of communication being used.

Read: [IMC Planning Process](https://www.learnistan.com/imc-planning-process/)

**3. Channel**—the channel is the method/medium by which the communication travels from source or sender to receiver.

Broadly, channels of communication are of two types:

**Personal Channels** which involve direct interpersonal contact with target individuals or groups. For example, a salesperson serves as a personal channel of communication when delivering a sales presentation.

It is important to note that **word-of-mouth** can be a very powerful form of communication and has been used by markets for many years.

**Non-personal channels** are those which carry a message without involving interpersonal contact between sender and receiver.

These channels are often referred to as the **mass media** as messages transmitted through them are sent to many individuals at one time.

The two major categories of non-personal channels are print and broadcast media.

**5. Receiver/Decoding**—the receiver is the person(s) with whom the sender shares thoughts or information.

Receivers are generally viewed as the consumers in the target audience targeted by the firm’s marketing and promotional program.

**Decoding** is the process of transforming and interpreting the sender’s message back into thought and is heavily influenced by the receiver’s frame of reference or field of experience.

Effective communication is more likely when **common ground** or shared meaning or understanding exists or has been established between the sender and receiver.

**5. Noise**—throughout the communications process the message is subject to **noise** which refers to factors that can distort or interfere with adequate reception or comprehension.

Noise can occur during the encoding, transmission, or decoding of a message. Noise can also occur because of a lack of common ground or understanding between the sender and receiver.

Read: [The Promotional Mix](https://www.learnistan.com/the-promotional-mix-the-tools-for-imc/)

**6. Response/Feedback**—response refers to the reaction the receiver has after seeing, hearing and/or reading the message.

**Feedback** is the part of the receiver’s response that is communicated back to the sender and takes a variety of forms.

**Communication Models (With Diagram)**

**This article provides an overview on the Communication Models.**

A model is a visual and symbolic representation of the concept or the theory. A communication model presents before us a visual picture of the relationship of various elements of the process of communication.

As a map of the world can illustrate the mountains, rivers, plateaus, seas, oceans, continents, countries, etc. and can create an idea of the actual things, a communication model helps us to conceptualize the relationship of the various elements involved in the process of communication.

Different writers have different models to describe the process of communication. Some of them are described below.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle presented a systematic model of communication about 2,300 years ago.

**It contains five elements:**

* 1. The speaker,

 (ii) The message,

(iii) The audience,

(iv) The occasion; and

(v) The effect.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

He advised the speaker to prepare the message keeping in view the audience, the occasion and the effect of it.

****

In 1948 Harold Laswell presented his model of communication in a different way.

**He asked the following question to describe communication:**

ADVERTISEMENTS:

Who

Says What

In What Channel

To Whom

ADVERTISEMENTS:

With What Effect?

He has tried to analyse the speaker, the speech, the media, the audience, and the effect. Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver made a communication model in 1947. It was published in 1949. They named it ‘The Mathematical Theory of Communication’. The Shannon-Weaver model analyses the process of transmission of a message and puts emphasis on the accurate transmission of it. It is the most popular model of communication.

**It has four elements:**

(i) Source of information,

ADVERTISEMENTS:

(ii) Transmitter or Sender who sends a message through a signal,

(iii) Receiver who receives and decodes the signal, and

(iv) Destination which is the ultimate goal of a message.

A new concept, the concept of noise, is introduced in the model. In transmitting message, distortions may take place owing to the interference of noise.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

**The model is presented as under:**

****

Various components in the communication process have got importance in the communication model of David Berlo.

**There are four basic components in the model:**

(i) Source,

(ii) Message,

ADVERTISEMENTS:

(iii) Channel, and

(iv) Receiver (SMCR).

Each component has five elements which influence the communication. Five personal factors (Communication Skills, Attitudes, Knowledge, Social System, and Culture) of the Sender (source) and the Receiver are similar.

**David Berlo’s SMCR model of communication is produced as under:**

****

**Fig. 1.12: David Berlo’s SMCR Model.**

ADVERTISEMENTS:

The Westley and Maclean’s model of communication is applicable to both inter-personal and mass communication, B. H. Westley and M. S. Maclean wanted to show in their model that—in face-to-face communication between two persons—the feedback is immediate but, in mass communication, the feedback is delayed and reduced to the smallest degree.

**There are five elements in the model:**

(i) object or event in the environment (denoted by X), (ii) a message (X’), (iii) a source (A), (iv) a receiver (B), and (v) feedback (f). In mass communication another element, the gatekeeper or opinion leader (denoted by C) is added.

In the case of inter-personal communication the source (A) creates a message (X’) about object or event in his/her environment (X1, X2, X3, . . . Xn). The message is transmitted to the receiver (B) who sends feedback (f BA or feedback by B to A) to the source (A).

****

In condition of mass communication this model brings the concept of a filter or a gate  ­keeper or an opinion leader (C) who selects information from many sources of mass media (As) Or from objects in his/her environment (X1, X2, X3, … Xn). He/She then creates a message (X”) and sends it to other people (Bs) who may send feedback to the gatekeeper (C) or direct to the source (A).

****

None of the models described above are absolutely perfect or complete. There are some sorts of deficiencies in each model. While one is too simplified to ignore some of the elements, the other lacking feedback process, the third one not applicable to mass communication, and so on. But it has been noticed that a newly introduced model has always tried to eliminate the difficulties in the previous one.

In other words, a gradual improvement may be traced in the newer models. In general these models attempt to illustrate the process of communication describing the relation of the elements in the process. The study of these models will help us to understand the communication process more clearly.