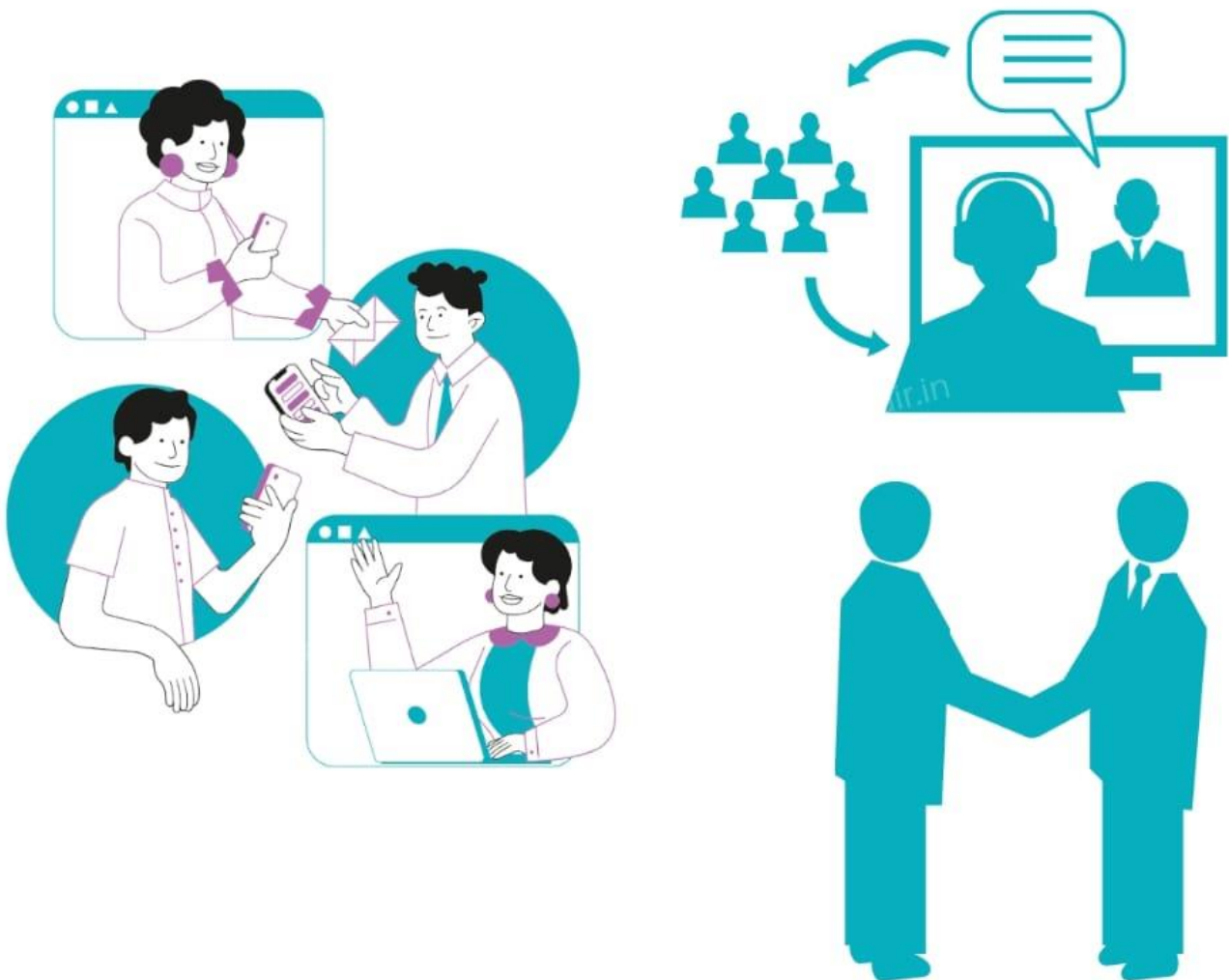


# COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT



# COMMUNICATION SKILLS & PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

COMPILED BY

*Dr. C.K. PANDA*

*Dr. S. R. SINGH*

*Dr. RAM DATT*

&

*Mr. SHRIDHAR PATIL*



DEPT. OF EXTENSION EDUCATION  
BAC, SABOUR

<b>SL. NO.</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>PAGE NO.</b>
<b>1</b>	SYLLABUS	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR	<b>4-8</b>
<b>3</b>	MEANING AND PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION	<b>8-13</b>
<b>4</b>	VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION	<b>13-16</b>
<b>5</b>	LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING	<b>16-20</b>
<b>6</b>	WRITING SKILLS	<b>20-22</b>
<b>7</b>	ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS	<b>22-23</b>
<b>8</b>	FIELD DIARY AND LAB RECORD	<b>23-26</b>
<b>9</b>	INDEXING, FOOTNOTE AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC PROCEDURES	<b>27-31</b>
<b>10</b>	READING AND COMPREHENSION OF GENERAL, TECHNICAL ARTICLES, PRECISE WRITING, SUMMARIZING, ABSTRACTING	<b>31-41</b>
<b>11</b>	INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PRESENTATIONS, IMPROMPTU PRESENTATION, PUBLIC SPEAKING	<b>41-47</b>
<b>12</b>	GROUP DISCUSSION, ORGANIZING SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES	<b>48-52</b>

## ***Syllabus***

### **A. Theory**

Communication Skills: Functional grammar; meaning and process of communication, verbal and nonverbal communication; listening and note taking, writing skills, oral presentation skills; field diary and lab record; indexing, footnote and bibliographic procedures. Reading and comprehension of general and technical articles, precise writing, summarizing, abstracting; individual and group presentations, impromptu presentation, public speaking; Group discussion. Organizing seminars and conferences.

### **B. Practical**

Listening and note taking, writing skills, oral presentation skills; field diary and lab record; indexing, footnote and bibliographic procedures. Reading and comprehension of general and technical articles, precise writing, summarizing, abstracting; individual and group presentations.

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR**

A verb must agree with its subject in number and person i.e., the verb should be of the same number and person as that of the subject.

1. Two or more singular subjects joined by 'and' take a plural verb.

Eg: Mohan and Sohan have passed.

2. But sometimes two subjects are regarded as presenting one idea and then the verb is singular as

Eg: Bread and butter is a wholesome food.

Slow and steady wins the race.

3. If two singular nouns refer to the same person or thing, the verb must be singular; as

Eg: The orator and states man has arrived (here orator and statesman refer to the same person).

4. If the article is mentioned twice then two distinct persons are intended and the verb following must be in plural number; as.

Eg: The poet and the philosopher are dead.

5. If two singular nouns joined by and preceded by each and every, the verb is singular; as

Eg: Each day and every hour brings us a fresh anxiety.

6. Two or more subjects connected by or, nor, either....or, neither....nor take singular verb;as

Eg: Neither Rama nor his brother was present.

Either Mohan or Sohan is in the wrong. Any boy or girl sees it at once.

7. When one of the nouns or pronouns joined by or, nor is the singular and the other in plural, the verb should be plural and the plural subject be placed near the verb; as

Eg: John or his brot hers are to blame.

Neither Afzal nor his friends were present

8. If two subjects joined by or, nor are different persons, the verb agrees in person with the subject nearer to it; as

Eg: Either you or he is telling a lie.

9. If two nouns are joined with or as well as, the verb, the verb agrees with the first noun, i.e., if the first noun is singular the verb must be singular, even if the second noun is plural; as

Eg: Rama as well as his friend has won the prize.

Iron as well as gold is found in India. The king with his ministers was killed.

The manager as well as the workers is responsible for the accident.

10. Collective noun is a word that refers to a group of collections of persons or things.

Collective noun takes a singular or plural verb according to the sense. If the idea collection are thought of, the verb must be plural.

Eg: The Jury = men of jury were divided in their opinions. The jury (= one body) has elected its president.

11. Indefinite pronouns: Pronouns, which do not refer to a particular person or thing, take a singular verb. Some of the commonly used pronouns are: either, neither, everyone, many must be followed by a verb in singular; as

Eg: Either of the two applicants is suitable.

Neither of the applicants is suitable. Each one of these men is reliable.

Every one of the boat's crew was drowned. Many a flower is born to blush unseen.

12. Errors due to proximity should be avoided. Often verb is made to agree in number with a noun near instead of the proper subject. This should be avoided.

Eg: The behavior of the children was excellent.

Not one of his lectures has ever been printed. The cost of all these items has been raised.

13. When the plural noun denotes some specific quantity or amount considered as a whole, the verb is generally singular.

Eg: A thousand rupees is a good sum

Two thirds of the city is in ruins.

14. It is the same with names of books and names of sciences.

Eg: Arabian Nights is an interesting book.

Mathematics is his favorite subject.

15. Relative pronouns; a relative pronoun always agrees in number and person with its antecedent; as

Eg: I am a woman who seeks my children's welfare.

He is one of those men who know everything.

16. Words that indicate part or portion: most often such words that indicate part or portion occur as part of a phrase, which acts as the subject. The complete subject determines the number of the verb in such cases.

Eg: Half of the job was completed within two days.

Half of the jobs were completed within two days.

Two thirds of the employees are in favour of this proposal. Two thirds of the pole is rotten.

All the money is spent.

All the students have gone.

18. Words that indicate numbers: When number is preceded by 'the', it takes as singular Verb and by 'a'. a plural verb. This is because 'the' number is generally considered to refer to a unit and 'a' number to individual terms of a unit.

Eg: The number of people who reported for the work this morning is small.

The number of crimes in Delhi is increasing.

A number of meetings were held to discuss the issue. A number of books are missing from the library.

19. Words that indicate amount and people. These words generally take a singular verb

Eg: Ten thousand rupees is a lot of money.

Three miles a day is a good walk.

But when such word is used to convey a general impression, it takes a plural verb.

20. Introductory 'there' and 'it' : In sentences beginning with 'there', the true subject which generally follows the verb, determines the number of verb.

Eg: There are various methods of collecting data.

There is no need for typing this report.

'It' always takes a singular verb, irrespective of whether the subject, which usually follows the verb, is singular or plural.

Eg: It is the people who matter in a democracy. It is the same draft which you showed me yesterday, isn't it?

## **FUNCTIONAL GRAMMAR EXERCISES**

### **AGREEMENT OF VERB WITH SUBJECT**

**Identify the correct verb or pronoun that agrees with subject of the following sentences:**

1. The orator and statesman has/have arrived
2. The poet and philosopher is/are dead
3. Each day and every hour brings/bring a fresh anxiety
4. Neither Rama nor his brother was/were present there
5. Neither Afzal nor his friends was/were available for comment on the developments
6. The king with all his ministers was/were killed
7. The council that met in the town Hall was/were divided
8. Every one of the boat's crew was/were drowned
9. The behavior of the children was/were excellent
10. Not one of his lectures has/have ever been printed
11. A series of lectures has/have been arranged on the subject

12. Four weeks is/are a good holiday
13. He is one of those men who know/knows every thing
14. Four kilometers is/are a good distance
15. None but the brave deserve the fair
16. Neither children nor their mother is/are admitted
17. Many a flower is/are born to blush unseen
18. A large number of women was/were present at the meeting
19. Mohan as well as his friend is/are guilty
20. Time and tide wait/waits for no man
21. A knowledge of modern languages is/are essential these days
22. The accountant and treasurer has/have absconded
23. Either Rama or his brother is/are a fault
24. Not one of these five boys is/are present in the class
25. Which one of these umbrellas belongs/belongs to you?

**Identify the correct verb or pronoun that agrees with the subject of the following sentences:**

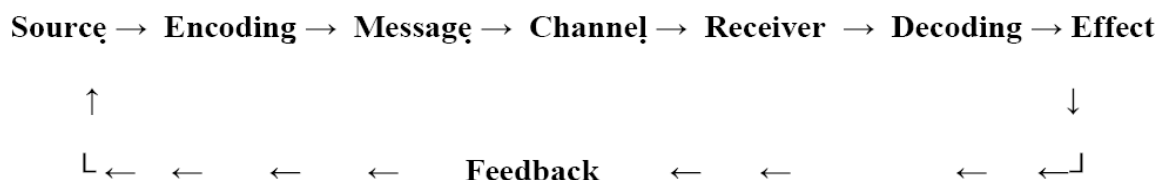
1. It is these people who instigate/instigates the workers.
2. Neither Mary nor Joseph has collected his/her admit card yet.
3. The multitude was/were frightened at the sight of the lion.
4. Any boy or girl sees/see it at once.
5. Everyman and every woman was/were terrified.
6. Each faculty member as well as most of those students know/knows the names of the miscreants.
7. More than forty boys was/were present at the meeting.
8. Bread and butter are/is a wholesome diet.
9. Mathematics seem/seems to be difficult.
10. I like every thing and everybody who/which reminds me of the greatness of God.
11. The man and the woman, the judge said, is/are guilty.
12. The managing director, not his assistants was/were responsible for the omission.

13. Advice is/are more easily given than taken.
14. The furniture your wish to buy is/are very expensive.
15. The acoustics of new auditorium is/are excellent.
16. The proceeds of this programme go/goes to local charities.
17. The people of India have/has firm faith in democracy.
18. The jury has/have given its verdict.
19. The jury is/are in complete disagreement on the issue.
20. None wants/want a change in the working hours
21. I who is/am your fiend will help you.
22. I am the person who has/have done this.
23. The number of students who reported to the class this morning is/are small.
24. A number of books are/is missing from the library.
25. Everyone is/are entitled to one month's salary

### **MEANING AND PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION:**

The word 'communication' comes from the Latin word *communis*, its meaning is common. It means that when we communicate, we are trying to establish '*commonality*' with someone through a message. 'Communication' then is a conscious attempt to establish commonality over some idea, fact, feelings and the like, with others. Consequently it is a process of getting a source and a receiver tuned together for a particular message or a series of messages.

For communicating the ideas, we use a medium. The other man has listened to your concept but before understanding the proper meaning he has done the decoding of that concept in his mind and he has made a decision in his mind for this concept, whether this concept should be used or not, this decision is called the effect of communication. As you are standing there you are observing the man's reactions and evaluating the "effectiveness of the communication." This evaluation is called "Feedback". We can explain this whole process in the following way :



#### ***Definitions of Communication:***

Communication is anything that conveys meaning that carries a message from one person to another.



- Brooker (1949).

Communication is a process by which two or more persons exchange ideas, facts, or impressions in ways that each gains a common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of message.

-- J. Paul Leagan (1961).

Communication may be defined as “a process by which an individual-the communicator, transmits (usually verbal symbols) to modify the behavior of other individuals - communicates”.

– Hovland (1964).

“Communication is the control of behavior through descriptive and reinforcing stimuli”.

– Hortman (1966)

Communication is any occurrence involving a minimum of four sequential ingredients: (i) a generator of a (ii) sign-symbol system which is (iii) projected to (iv) at least one receiver who assigns meaning.

– Robert Goyer (1967)

“Communication has as its central interest those behavioral situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with conscious intent to affect the latter’s behavior”.

– Miller (1968).

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages through channels which establishes common meanings between a source and a receiver.

-Van den Ban and Hawkins(1988).

Communication is a process by which extension workers individually, in a group or through a medium exchange attitudes and share knowledge and or skills on behalf of an organization with farmers/farm women, through such ways that each gains comprehension, understanding and use of the message.

- Sandhu(1999)

### ***Purposes of communications***

1. According to Aristotle prime goal of communication is persuasion.
2. According to faculty theory of psychology, purpose of communication is informative i.e.an appeal to the mind.
3. Schramm(1964) described the purpose of communication as immediate reward and a delayed reward.
4. According to Festinger(1957) the purpose of communication as consummatory and instrumental.

5. According to Berlo (1960) the sole purpose of communication is to influence.

On the basis of the above descriptions, it can be said that the purpose of communication is to influence – to affect with intent by creating comprehension, understanding and perceived use of the message.

### ***Functions of communication***

**1. Information function:** The basic requirement of adapting and adjusting oneself to the environment is information. There must be some information about what is going on in the environment which concerns the people. The getting or giving of information underlies all communication functions, either directly or indirectly.

**2. Command or instructive function:** Those who are hierarchically superior, in the family, society or organization, often initiate communication either for the purpose of informing their subordinates or for the purpose of telling them, what to do, how to do, when to do etc. The command and instructive functions of communication are more observable in formal organizations than in informal organizations.

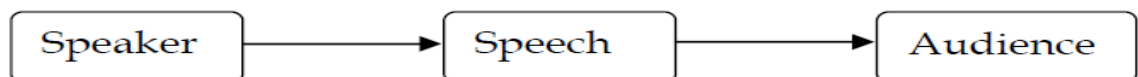
**3. Influence or persuasive function:** According to Berlo (1960), the sole purpose of communication is to influence people. Persuasive function of communication i.e. to induce people is extremely important for extension in changing their behaviour in the desirable direction.

**4 Integrative function:** A major function of communication is integration or of continuously offsetting any disintegration at the interpersonal or at the organizational level. This helps to maintain individual, societal or organizational stability and identity

### ***Models of Communication***

**ARISTOTLE MODEL:** According to Aristotle Model, communication process has three elements

1. Speaker – Person who speaks
2. Speech – The speech that the individual produces
3. Audience – The person who listens



**SHANNON-WEAVER MODEL (1949):** model is consistent with Aristotle's proposition.

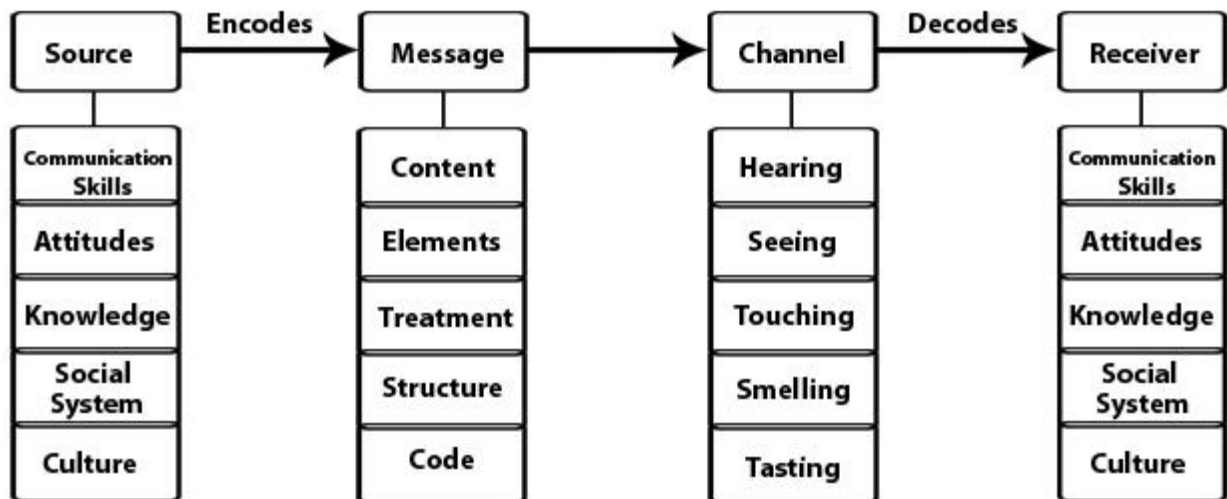
According to them, the ingredients of communication are-



Compared with the Aristotelian model, the source is the speaker, the signal is the speech and the destination is the audience, plus two added ingredients, a transmitter which sends out the source's message and a receiver which catches the message for the destination.

### BERLO'S MODEL (1960) OF COMMUNICATION PROCESS

## Berlos's SMCR Model of communication



The Berlo's model follows the smcr model this model is not specific to any particular communication.

Berlo's model lives a number of factors under each of the elements :

**Source:** The source is where the message originates.

**Communication skills** – It is the individual's skill to communicate (ability to read, write, speak, listen etc...)

**Attitudes** – The attitude towards the audience, subject and towards oneself for e.g. for the student the attitude is to learn more and for teachers wants to help teach.

**Knowledge**- The knowledge about the subject one is going to communicate for e.g. whatever the teacher communicates in the class about the subject so having knowledge in what you are communicating.

**Social system** – The Social system includes the various aspects in society like values, beliefs, culture, religion and general understanding of society. It is where the communication takes place.

**Culture:** Culture of the particular society also comes under social system.

**Encoder:** The sender of the message (message originates) is referred as encoder, so the source is encoding the message here.

### **Message**

**Content** – The beginning to the end of a message comprises its content for e.g. From beginning to end whatever the class teacher speaks in the class is the content of the message.

**Elements** – It includes various things like language, gestures, body language etc, so these are all the elements of the particular message. Content is accompanied by some elements.

**Treatment** – It refers to the packing of the message. The way in which the message is conveyed or the way in which the message is passed on or deliver it.

**Structure-** The structure of the message how it is arranged, the way you structure the message into various parts.

**Code-** The code of the message means how it is sent in what form it could be e.g. language, body language, gestures, music and even culture is a code. Through this you get/give the message or through which the communication takes place or being reached.

**Channel-** It is nothing but the five senses through this only we do. The following are the five senses which we use

- Hearing
- Seeing
- Touching
- Smelling
- Tasting

Whatever communication we do it is there either of these channels.

**Hearing:** The use of ears to get the message for e.g. oral messages, interpersonal etc.

**Seeing:** Visual channels for e.g. TV can be seen and the message is delivered.

**Touching:** The sense of touch can be used as a channel to communicate for e.g. we touch and buy food, hugging etc.

**Smelling:** Smell also can be a channel to communicate for e.g. perfumes, food, charred smell communicates something is burning, we can find out about which food is being cooked etc.

**Tasting :** The tongue also can be used to decipher e.g. Food can be tasted and communication can happen.

**Decoder** : Who receives the message and decodes it is referred to as decoder.

**Receiver**: The receiver needs to have all the things like the source.

## **VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION:**

### **Verbal Communication**

All forms of communication can be categorized as either verbal or nonverbal. In turn, both verbal and nonverbal communication can be subdivided into either vocal or non-vocal.

Much of the communication that takes place between people is verbal; that is, it is based on language.

- Verbal communication of the vocal category includes spoken language.
- Non-vocal verbal communication involves written communication as well as communication that is transmitted through sign language, finger spelling, Braille, or other similar alternatives to verbal language.

Communication has been called the transfer of meaning from one mind to another. Because meanings exist in the human mind, they cannot be shared or communicated except through some external vehicle. The human body is capable of making sounds and movements which in turn can create a system of vehicles for sharing inner meanings and ideas with others. In general terms, such elements that codify meaning are called signs. The study of such signs is called semiotics.

### **Semiotics**

Semiotics (sometimes called semiosis or semiology):

- Theory or study of signs, specifically the theoretical relationship between language and signs or symbols used in the transmission of language
- An application of linguistic principals to objects other than natural language, such as facial expression or religious ritual
- Academic study focusing on both the signification of language (assigning and deriving meaning from signs ) as well as its codification (attachment of rules and procedures for correct use)

As mentioned earlier, the foundation of human communication is speech, a natural capability but one that requires learning in a cultural context to make it mutually understandable with others. During the course of human social interaction, people have found it useful to add to their inventory of vehicles to communicate. Particularly, they have tried to extend the possibility of communication beyond the limits of speech (which is restricted to words uttered and heard in the here and now; that is, with the hearer and listener in the same

place at the same time). The way to communicate beyond speech is to communicate through signs. Signs are nonverbal units of expression. A natural sign is a physical indicator, such as smoke as an indication of the presence of fire. Signs also are called signals or cues. Semiotics identifies three types of signs: symbols, indices and icons.

- A symbol stands in place of an object. It may be a physical object such as a flag standing for patriotism and national pride, a cross with strong religious meaning for Christians, even the Nike swoosh or the McDonald's arches. Or it may be a word or phrase, such as the "Allaho Akbar" printed in Arabic on flags or head bands. Symbols often have a metaphorical quality, such as the symbol of water as a sign of life or purity, as in the ritual washing in religious ceremonies. Likewise, people sometimes serve as symbolic signs, such as Adolph Hitler being considered as a face of hatred, Mother Teresa as a face of compassion, or Nelson Mandela or Malcolm X as faces of human struggle for dignity.
- An index points to something beyond itself. It is an indicator, such as words like "big" and arrows. An index also is sometimes called a natural sign because the relationship between the word and what it signifies is natural, such as smoke being an indexical sign of fire.
- An icon is a representation of an object that produces a mental image of the object represented. For example, the word tree, arbre and ki evoke a mental image only if you understand English, French and Japanese respectively. But the picture of a tree conjures up "tree" in the brain regardless of language ability.

### ► **Nonverbal Communication**

While verbal communication is much studied and is the focus of much applied attention in areas ranging from journalism to governance to entertainment, the fact is that human beings communicate more through nonverbal means. Some estimates are that so-called body language accounts for 65, 70, even 90 per cent of human communication. Using the 70-percent figure for body language, the voice accounts for another 20 percent or so, and specific words only about 10 percent. Research conclusions may vary a bit, but the consensus is clear: Nonverbal communication is hugely important in human interaction. Nonverbal communication also is bound to culture. In particular, there are differences among cultures and nationalities about the relative value of speech versus silence, the relative value of talk versus action, the social role of small talk or gossip, and the role of animation, rhyme and exaggeration in speech. Because of these differences, the study of verbal and nonverbal

communication always must be done within a social or cultural context. As noted above, nonverbal communication may be vocal (focusing on vocal characteristics such as pitch, rate, and so on) or non-vocal (focusing on body language, environment, attire and the like). Some linguists identify an aspect of nonverbal communication called paralanguage. This refers to a range of non-linguistic elements of speech, such as facial expressions, gestures, the use of time and space, and so on. However, most linguists adhere to stricter categorization. Commonly, the study of nonverbal communication is divided into several specific categories.

✚ **Kinesics (simplistically called body language)** deals with physical movement, sometimes called affective displays. This study applies traditional linguistic principles to the body as a whole or to specific parts, particularly the face, hands and arms. It also deals with posture in standing and sitting, as well as with eye and facial expressions, such as the arching of eyebrows or rolling of the eyes. Kinesics varies culturally. For example, a person of Mediterranean culture may use extensive hand movements and body gestures as an expression of anger, whereas a Japanese person may be apparently less excited, but perhaps no less angry. Kinesics also includes the use of smiling, frowning, giggling and so on, which also differs by culture. While universally, smiling reveals happiness, in some cultures it also is used to mask sadness or to hide embarrassment.

✚ **Occulesics** is closely related to kinesics. Occulesics deals with eye behavior as an element of communication. Some aspects of occulesics deal with a static or fixed gaze versus dynamic eye movement. This so-called eye contact is the subject of much interpretation by the observer, making it difficult to predict its exact communication impact.

✚ **Proxemics** involves the social use of space in a communication situation. One aspect of this is the closeness between and among people when they speak, and the significant role that culture plays in this. Distance is generally described on a continuum from intimate space (0-18 inches) to personal space or informal distance (18 inches to 4 feet) to social space or formal distance (4-12 feet), and public space or distance (beyond 12 feet). Proxemics also deals with the effective use of space in social settings, such as businesses and homes, ranging and the arrangement of space to encourage or inhibit communication. Haptics focuses on touching as an element of communication, indicating both the type of touch as well as its frequency and intensity. Like many other elements of nonverbal communication, haptics is very much a function of culture.

✚ **Chronemics** deals with the use of time as an element of communication. Formal time is measured in minutes, hours, days, and so on. Informal time is measured relative to seasons,

social customs, lunar cycles, etc. Chronemics involves specifics such as punctuality (which can be monochronic or M-time and polychronic or P-time) along with patterns of dominance or deference within a communication situation.

- ✚ **Vocalics (also called paralanguage)** deals with vocal cues, more accurately referred to as the nonphonemic qualities of language. These include accent, loudness, tempo, pitch, rate of speech, nasality and tone, insofar as these convey meaning.

### **Uses of Nonverbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication provides individuals and groups with many options for presenting their messages. Here are some of the uses of nonverbal communication.

- To create impressions beyond the verbal element of communication (kinesics, chronemics, vocalics, environment)
- To repeat and reinforce what is said verbally (kinesics)
- To manage and regulate the interaction among participants in the communication exchange (kinesics, ooculesics, proxemics, synchrony)
- To express emotion beyond the verbal element (kinesics, ooculesics, haptics, vocalics, proxemics)
- To convey relational messages of affection, power, dominance, respect, and so on (proxemics, ooculesics, haptics)
- To promote honest communication by detecting deception or conveying suspicion (kinesics, ooculesics, vocalics)
- To provide group or social leadership by sending messages of power and persuasion (kinesics, vocalics, chronemics)

## **LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING**

**Anything done well is the result of persistency, consistency, and practice!**

### **Listening To Take Good Notes:**

Hearing is a spontaneous act. Listening, by contrast, is something you choose to do. Listening requires you not only to hear what has been said but to understand as well. Understanding requires three activities:

- dynamic listening;
- paying attention;
- concentration;



The best way to concentrate is to start with anticipation. Review your notes from the last lecture and make sure you go to class having read the assigned material. Use this method to cultivate a mind-set that is needed for 100% concentration during a lecture.

Be a comprehensive listener! Comprehensive listening has to do with the feedback between speaker and listener. The speaker has an obligation to make his/her words comprehensible to the listener. The listener, in turn, must let the speaker know when he/she does not understand. Both parties must make a conscious effort to accept their individual responsibilities. You may think this is a 50/50 proposition, which in part it is; however, both parties must be willing to give a 100% for effective listening comprehension to be achieved.

The best way for you to let the speaker know that you don't understand is to ask questions. A surprising number of students are too embarrassed to ask questions. The only dumb question is the one that goes unasked.

### **Twelve Guidelines to Effective Listening:**

- Sit where the instructor will always see you, preferably in the front.
- Pay attention to content, not the lecturer's appearance or distracting habits. Judge the material, not the delivery.
- Put aside emotional concerns. If you disagree with what is being said, hold your judgement or fire until after class, then see the instructor.
- Find areas of interest; listen for ideas, not just facts, and words; put new ideas to work during the lecture by using your imagination.
- Intend to get down a good written record of the lecture material; be a flexible note taker.
- Listen for new rods and watch for signals of important information; listen for examples the instructor provides to define or illustrate main ideas. Note these examples with "EX" in your notes or textbook.
- Read in advance about the topics to be discussed in class and relate them to something you care about.
- Exercise your mind with challenging material; keep your mind open even if you hear emotional words.
- Be prepared to ask questions in class. Use facial expressions to let the instructor know that you don't understand an idea completely or you would like the information repeated.
- Don't stop listening or taking notes during discussion periods or toward the end of the lecture until the instructor concludes.

- Work at listening instead of pretending to listen.
- Resist external distractions such as someone coming in late to class, maintenance mowing the grass, other students talking etc.

### **Taking Good Notes:**

Learning to take notes effectively will help you improve your study and work habits and to remember important information. Often, students are deceived into thinking that because they understand everything that is said in class, they will therefore remember it.

As you take lecture notes and make notes from your textbook, you will develop the skills of selecting important material and discarding unimportant material. The main secret to developing these skills is practice. Check your results constantly. Strive to improve. Notes help you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of recording and arranging necessary information.

### **Here are some hints on note making:**

- Don't write down everything you read or hear. Be alert and attentive to the main points. Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
- Notes should consist of key words or very short sentences. As a speaker gets side-tracked, it is often possible to go back and add further information.
- Take accurate notes. You should use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote directly from the author, quote correctly.
- Think a minute about the material before you start making notes. Don't take notes just to be taking notes! Take notes that will be of real value to you when you review them at a later date.
- Have a uniform system for punctuation and abbreviation that will make sense to you. Use a skeleton outline that shows importance by indenting. Leave lots of white space for later additions.
- Omit descriptions and full explanations. Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your materials so you can grasp the main points rapidly.
- Don't worry about missing a point. Leave space and pick up the material you missed at a later date, either through reading, questioning, common sense, or looking at a classmate's notes.
- Don't keep notes on oddly shaped pieces of paper. Keep notes in order and in one place. A three-ringed or spiral notebook is preferred.

- Shortly after taking your lecture notes or making textbook notes, go back and edit (not copy) your notes by adding extra points, spelling out unclear items, etc. Remember, we forget rapidly. Budget time for this vital step just as you do for the class itself.
- Review your notes periodically; three types of review are daily, weekly, and a major review just before a test. This is the only way to achieve lasting memory.

### **Lecture Notes:**

There are many note-taking techniques available to help you become a more efficient note-taker. The following are two very good examples. The first example deals with taking good lecture notes and the second with textbook notes.

The notes you take in class are really a hand written textbook. In many instances, your lecture notes are more practical, meaningful and more current than a textbook. If you keep them neat, complete, and well organized they'll serve you splendidly. The Cornell System of taking lecture notes is a prime example. The keystone of this system is a two-column note sheet. Use 8 1/2 by 11 paper to create the note sheet. Down the left side, draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches from the edge of the paper. End this line 2 inches above the bottom of the paper. Draw a horizontal line across the bottom of the paper 2 inches above the paper's edge. In the narrow (2 1/2") column on the left side, you will write cue words or questions. In the wide (6") column on the right, you will write the lecture notes. In the space at the bottom of the sheet, you will summarize your notes. NOTE: You can use this system if you use lined notebook paper too. Disregard the red vertical line and make your own line 2 1/2" from the left edge of the paper.

### **Textbook Notes:**

The second example of efficient note taking deals specifically with taking textbook notes and preparing for exams. It usually involves six steps for accomplishing this.

- Read your textbook paragraph by paragraph without a pen or highlighter in hand.
- After you finish a paragraph, decide if any information in that paragraph is worth highlighting or underlining. Ask yourself, "Is this really important? Does it support and define the main topic?"
- Pick up your highlighter or pen and highlight or underline the most important key words or phrases of that information, or write "key words" notes in the margins.
- Then put a number in the margin of the text next to the highlighted or underlined material. Use numbers in ascending order to note the importance of the highlighted or underlined material.

- Put the same number and page on a separate sheet of paper in your notebook. Then write out a question based on the information you have just highlighted or underlined in the textbook. Essentially the information you have just highlighted or underlined in the text should answer your questions.
- Proceed with your study/reading of the text. Every time you decide to highlight or underline text material, assign it a number in the margin of the textbook next to the highlighted information. Put the same number in your notes and create a question about the information you have just highlighted or underlined.

### **WRITING SKILLS:**

Be active instead of passive. One of the most common manifestations of bad writing is overuse of the passive voice. The passive voice makes the object of an action into the subject of the sentence with verb forms like "X had been attacked by Y" instead of simply "Y attacked X." Learn to avoid these constructions as much as you can. "The novel had been written by Frank while he was in college" is passive. "Frank wrote the novel while he was in college" is active. Using the passive voice isn't always bad. Sometimes there is no clear way to make a statement active, or sometimes you want the lighter touch a passive construction allows. But learn to follow this rule before you start making exceptions.

**Use strong words:** Good writing is precise, evocative and spiced with the unexpected. Finding the right verb or adjective can turn an uninspired sentence into one people will remember and quote for years to come. Look for words that are as specific as possible. Try not to repeat the same word over and over unless you are trying to build a rhythm with it. One exception to this is the words used to describe dialogue. Bad writing is filled with "he commented" and "she responded." A well-placed "sputtered" can work wonders, but most of the time a simple "said" will do. It may feel awkward to use the word "said" over and over, but changing it up unnecessarily makes it harder for your readers to get into the back-and-forth flow of the conversation. When writing dialogue, you want readers to hear your characters' voices, not your own. Strong doesn't mean obscure, or more complicated. Don't say "utilize" when you could say "use." "He sprinted" is not necessarily better than "he ran." If you have a really good opportunity to use "ameliorate," go for it—unless "ease" is just as good there.

**Cut the chaff:** Good writing is simple, clear and direct. You don't get points for saying in 50 words what could be said in 20. Good writing is about using the right words, not filling up the page. It might feel good at first to pack a lot of ideas and details into a single

sentence, but chances are that sentence is just going to be hard to read. If a phrase doesn't add anything valuable, just cut it. Adverbs are the classic crutch of mediocre writing. A well-placed adverb can be delightful, but much of the time the adverbs we use are already implied by the verb or adjective—or would be if we had chosen a more evocative word. Don't write "screamed fearfully"; "scream" already suggests fear. If you notice that your writing is filled with "-ly" words, it might be time to take a deep breath and give your writing more focus. Sometimes cutting the chaff is best done at the editing stage. You don't have to obsess about finding the most concise way to phrase every sentence; get your ideas down on paper however you can and then go through to edit out unnecessary verbiage. Your writing doesn't just exist in a vacuum—it's experienced in conjunction with the reader's imagination. You don't need to describe every detail if a few good ones can spur the reader's mind to fill in the rest. Lay down well-placed dots and let the reader connect them.

**Show don't tell:** Instead of just sitting your readers down for a long exposition explaining a character's background or a plot-point's significance, try to let the readers discover the same ideas through the words, feelings and actions of your characters. Especially in fiction, putting this classic piece of writerly advice into practice is one of the most powerful lessons a writer can learn.

**Avoid clichés:** Clichés are phrases, ideas or situations which are patently unoriginal. They may have been powerful at one point, but now they have been overused to the point of having little value unless remained in some creative way. It's hard to say exactly what makes a cliché, other than that, as with pornography, you'll know it when you see it.

- "It was a dark and stormy night" is a classic example of a clichéd phrase—even now a clichéd concept. Compare these similar weather-related opening lines
- "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen."—*1984*, by George Orwell. It's not dark, nor stormy, nor night. But you can tell right from the start something's not quite right in 1984.
- "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel."—*Neuromancer*, by William Gibson, in the same book that gave us the word "cyberspace." This not only gives you the weather report, it does so in such a way that you are immediately placed into his dystopian world.
- "It was the day my grandmother exploded."—*The Crow Road*, by Iain Banks.

- It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”—*A Tale of Two Cities*, by Charles Dickens. Weather, emotion, damnation, and despair—Dickens covered it all with an opening line that leaves the reader ready for anything.

**Break the rules:** The best writers don't just follow the rules—they know when and how to break them. Everything from traditional grammar to the writing advice above is up for grabs if you know a transgression will improve your piece. The key is that you have to write well enough the rest of the time that it's clear you are breaking the rule knowingly and on purpose.

- Edit, edit, edit. Don't believe your English teachers: there is no such thing as a "perfect" masterpiece in writing. Every author could have found something to change in even their greatest works if they had given it another once over. Editing is one of the most essential parts of writing. Once you finish a piece of writing, let it sit for a day and then read it over with fresh eyes, catching typos or scrapping whole paragraphs—anything to make your piece better. Then when you are done, give it another read, and another.

## ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS

### 1. Oral Presentation Skills

The necessary skills required while presenting singly is mentioned below:

- **Tell stories.** Seriously. Put a screenshot of your project up, tell people what you learned while doing it, then give them a slide that reiterates those ideas in easy to digest bullets. That's *do not* go from bullet-point slide to bullet-point slide trying to tell people what to think.
- **Show pictures.** Got a good metaphor? Use it. "The Web is like a school of fish." But go to [images.google.com](https://images.google.com) and type in "sardines" or "school of fish" or whatever. Make it a slide. Then *say* the Web is like that. Much more powerful and memorable.

- **Don't apologize.** Ever. If something is out of order, or if something occurs to you as a mistake during the presentation, keep it to yourself. They'll never know. Besides, nobody cares about the presentation itself. This is really hard, because *you* know the whole back story, and you'll be tempted to explain why something isn't quite perfect. Skip it. Also, you don't need to apologize about the color on the projector, or the fact that your mic just popped off, or that a staff person spilled a pitcher of water.
- **Start strong.** I can't believe how many presenters forget this. Do not get up there and say, "Um, well, I guess we should probably get started." Instead, say, "Hi, I'm Jeff. It's really great to be here, and thank you so much for coming to my session. Today, we're going to talk about...." Make sure those are the absolute first words you say out loud. No need for a joke or an opening or any of that. Just start strong and confident.
- **End strong too.** "...so that's why I like social software. I appreciate your attention today. Thank you." Then stand there and wait. Everyone will clap, because you just told them you were done. When they've finished, ask them if they have any questions. If nobody asks anything, break the uncomfortable silence with "Well, I guess I told you everything you need to know then. I'll be around after if you think of anything. Thanks again!" and start packing up your stuff.
- **Stand.** Away from the podium. Out from behind the presenter table. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Take off your conference badge (the lights will catch it and be distracting). I pace a little bit around the stage, timed with my points, saying one thing from over here, and another from over there. But don't move too much.
- **Pause.** When you say something important, leave a gap after it. Let it hang there for a few seconds. Try it when talking to your friends. "You know what I think? (pause...two...three...four...) I think Bush is bankrupting this country for the next twenty years. (pause...two...three...four...) Here's why..."

## **FIELD DIARY AND LAB RECORD**

### **Preparation for the laboratory**

1. Read the instructions before coming to lab. If you have not received instructions at least one week before the lab period, ask your instructor to supply them.
2. Read the relevant background material in your textbook, or in library references.
3. Come to laboratory with a plan in mind, and at least a preliminary derivation of the error propagation equations.

## **The Laboratory Record**

Scientists and engineers record laboratory data in bound notebooks with pre-numbered pages. These books serve as a permanent record of the work, and can serve as legal evidence in priority disputes. Some instructors insist that students in science laboratories keep such notebooks. Whether required or not, the use of a notebook helps you to develop good laboratory habits that will serve you well in your future career. Your laboratory notebook reflects your personal style, but you should write it so that a co-worker familiar with the subject of your research could understand it. Such a person may need to obtain information from your notebook. You may need to refer to the notebook at a later date, therefore do not omit any information necessary to understand what you did, or to repeat it. Use a bound (not a loose leaf) notebook for the laboratory record. Make notebook entries as the experiment progresses, as a running record of the work. The notebook includes a complete history of all experiments performed, and their results. Quadrille-ruled pages with 1/4 inch squares facilitate making data tables and rough graphs. Don't erase anything in a laboratory notebook, and never remove pages from it. Line out, and annotate, mistakes. Use permanent ink, for better readability. You may abbreviate, but make all entries clear, organized and "complete" and neat enough for you, or someone else, to read. Here's a check list of items which you should record in the notebook:

1. The date and time of each new record.
2. The initials of the person making the record.
3. Descriptive headings, titles, and subtitles.
4. Lists of the equipment used (name, manufacturer, model and serial numbers), with relevant specifications.
5. Sketches of the experimental layout, circuit diagrams, etc., with all components labeled.
6. Observed data. Record data in the notebook immediately; do not recopy it from scraps of paper. Organize the data in neat tabular form, with ample space for corrections and auxiliary notes. Symbols and notation of each column heading should match that used in the equipment diagram, equations, and other references in the discussion. When possible, identify the exact instrument used. Neatly line-out incorrect data. A large amount of incorrect data may require you to line-out (or overlay with a large X) an entire table. If you feel that an 'X' across a whole page looks unsightly, use a footnote to label it as "deleted." Always record the reason for such altered entries.
7. Calculated results, prominently displayed.



8. Sample calculations. Don't include every calculation, but do include a sample of each type. If you need to do this same sort of calculation later, the sample may save you time.

9. Curves. Plot tabular data as curves whenever possible. We use the term "curve" to represent data points plotted with a smooth line drawn through them. The term "curve" applies even to straight lines. The term "plot" refers to roughly sketched curves, perhaps done on the quadrille paper of the lab notebook. The term "graph" refers to the more neatly produced and annotated curves done on genuine graph paper, or in a form suitable for publication. Important data may deserve a graph made on genuine graph paper, permanently attached to the notebook page. Avoid using tape, for it deteriorates with age. Use a thin line of glue to "tip in" such added material. Attach charts, diagrams and photographs in the same manner.

10. Graphs: All graphs (and plots) must have a descriptive title, each axis labelled with quantity, symbol, and units. Choose a scale size such that one may read values from the curves with at least the same accuracy as the accuracy of the data. Make the data points very small (some use pinpricks) and emphasize them with small, neat circles. When you show several curves on the same graph, group related data points in some way using distinctive symbols, such as circles, triangles, and squares (use a symbol template, for uniformity). Provide a key, on the graph page, to the meanings of the symbols.

11. Notes or explanations essential to proper performance of the experiment or interpretation of the results. This might include your explanation of how you overcame any difficulties encountered in the experiment.

12. A restatement of the questions posed, and your answers. The reader won't expect the lab notebook to contain a condensed and polished report of the experiment, but will expect to find enough evidence to determine what you did, how you did it, and what results you obtained.

### **The Laboratory Report**

The laboratory notebook provides a personal record documenting the progress of the experiment. The laboratory report serves a quite different purpose. It communicates your experimental work to other persons. This demands a different style and approach. All "real" scientific work of any value (and some that isn't) eventually finds expression in a written report. In industrial research and development, reports communicate to supervisors and directors, may circulate internally within the company, and may even reach other scientists in the same field around the world. Some reports get published in technical and scientific journals. Even technicians sometimes write reports. Many a

scientist or engineer discovers the hard way that people judge the quality of experimental work by the quality of the reports. Ineffective reports may cause people to ignore the research itself, and, on a very practical level, may jeopardize the funding of that research.

**Style and appearance of reports:**

1. Use good quality standard size 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper: plain, unlined, and with no holes or ragged edges. (Some instructors may accept handwritten reports on lined paper, a practice considered unprofessional in a real work situation.)
2. Leave at least a 3/4 inch margin on the top, bottom and sides of the sheets.
3. Organize the report for easy reading. The structure and organization of the report should impress itself on the reader even with a casual skim. Use headings and subheadings to make the structure clear.

**Essential parts of the report:**

Here's a list of the usual parts of a complete report. The nature of the experiment will determine which ones are necessary, and the appropriate heading for each.

**ABSTRACT:**A brief (one paragraph) summary of the purpose, method, and significant results of the experiment.

**PURPOSE (OR OBJECTIVES) OF THE EXPERIMENT** (Don't include this if your report has an abstract.)

**EQUIPMENT LIST:** Including any identifying model and serial numbers.

**BACKGROUND:** A review/summary to acquaint the reader with facts, theory, or research specifically relating to what you did in this experiment.) Material readily available in any textbook needn't be included.

**MATERIALS, METHODS AND PROCEDURES:** This tells the reader what specific experimental methods were used. Apparatus or procedures unique to this experiment must be described and explained. Standard procedures needn't be elaborated, but should be referenced.

**RESULTS,** including graphs, and tables of results, as appropriate.

**DISCUSSION OF RESULTS,** and of their uncertainties.

**CONCLUSIONS** (You may prefer to include this in the discussion of results.)

Avoid unnecessary duplication. Don't include data and procedure in the results section. Don't include minor details of procedure, theory and results in the abstract. Include only material directly related to what you did in the experiment. Omit idle speculation.

## **INDEXING, FOOTNOTE AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC PROCEDURES**

### **A. Guide to Writing Footnotes and Bibliographies**

When social science/ sociology students work on assignments for their classes, they usually have to consult books, articles, and other materials. Eventually, they will write papers about their research and draw on the material they encountered in these resources.

When any writer quotes directly from another work or paraphrases, that is, puts ideas from another author into his/her own words; the writer must cite that source. Such citations acknowledge that an idea was first put forth by someone else, and they direct interested readers to the place where more information about the topic may be found.

Learning how to compose citations is thus an important part of the writing process and should not be neglected. Students also commonly add to their papers a list of the resources that they have consulted, i.e. a bibliography. This guide provides instructions for creating both citations and bibliographies.

#### **Citations/Footnotes**

Social science/sociology students should put their citations in footnote or endnote form (both are equally correct) and follow the guidelines set out in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Some other disciplines employ parenthetical references to indicate dependence on source material, but historians prefer footnotes and endnotes. Unfortunately, many students find the thought of writing footnotes or endnotes daunting and simply do not include them in their papers. Such students usually receive lower marks on their essays. In order to teach our students how to avoid that fate, the UWO History Department has drawn up this style sheet.

Here is a step-by-step guide to writing footnotes and endnotes. It is divided into two parts:

1. Part One explains how to create a footnote or endnote within a paper. The directions assume that most students will at least type up their papers on a Microsoft word format, and thus explains how to create footnotes within that program.
2. Part Two explains the correct format in which to write up the citation once the student has learned how to create a footnote.

#### **Part One: How to Create a Footnote or Endnote within Microsoft Word**

Footnotes and endnotes are notes added to the main body of a paper, in which the author directs readers to outside sources or adds extra comments of his or her own. Footnotes are placed at the bottom of the page to which they refer, while endnotes are placed at the end of the paper. [If your professor expresses no preference, it is usually better to use footnotes, as they are easier for the reader to consult].

A superscript number at the end of the sentence signals the reader to look for a footnote or endnote. The same number is placed at the foot of the page for a footnote or at the end of the paper for an endnote. Footnotes or endnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper, starting from “1.” Each citation requires a new footnote or endnote; under no circumstances should a student “reuse” footnotes. Creating a footnote is quite simple on a word processor.

When you reach a spot in the main text of your paper that requires a footnote, follow these directions:

1. Go to the Insert Menu in Microsoft Word, and click on “Footnote.” A dialogue box will appear: choose “Footnote,” choose “AutoNumber,” and hit “OK.”
2. The cursor will then appear within the footnote at the bottom of the page. Microsoft Word will automatically add a superscript number both to the main body of the text and to the note itself. There is no need for you to add any numbering of your own.
3. Type in the citation according to the directions in Part II.
4. Move the cursor back to the main body of the text and continue typing. You are finished. Follow the same directions for any subsequent footnotes.

## **Part Two: How to Format a Footnote or Endnote According to Chicago Style**

Once you have learned how to create a footnote within Microsoft Word, it is necessary to know what to write. A citation to an outside source must include specific information in a certain order; scholars are not free to create their own style! Follow these directions for each kind of source that you may use.

Each example explains how to set up the first reference to a work. It is not necessary to repeat all of the information in each reference. Use a shortened version of the citation for the second and subsequent references to a source.

### **Books**

Books are probably the most common sources used by history students in their papers. Citations should include the author’s name (first name first), the title of the book (underlined or in italics; use the same system throughout the paper), publishing information (in parentheses), and the pages consulted, all separated by commas.

Here are a few examples of books by a single author:

<sup>1</sup>Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 45.

Second reference:

<sup>2</sup>Baxandall, 34.

<sup>4</sup>M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Medieval Life* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997), 45-46.

If you have cited more than one work by the same author, include a short title in the second reference:

<sup>3</sup>Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 34.

<sup>5</sup>Clanchy, *Abelard*, 67.

Here are some examples of books by more than one author:

<sup>1</sup>Lina Bolzoni and Pietro Corsi, *The Culture of Memory* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1992), 45.

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Lerner et al., *Western Civilizations: Their History and Culture*, 13th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), 1: 87-88.

[Here "1" stands for the volume number and "88-89" stands for the page numbers cited.]

Second reference:

<sup>2</sup>Lerner, 1:76.

or

<sup>2</sup>Lerner, *Western Civilizations*, 1:76.

<sup>2</sup>Bolzoni, *The Culture of Memory*, 78.

Book in a Series

<sup>2</sup>Marianne G. Briscoe and Barbara H. Jage, *Artes Praedicandi and Artes Orandi*, *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*, 61 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), 45.

(Here, *Artes Praedicandi* is the name of the book, and *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental*, 61 represents the name of the series and the book's number in that series).

<sup>4</sup>Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna, *The Fathers of the Church*, 18 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 56.

Journal Articles

<sup>3</sup>Peter Brown, "Society and the Supernatural: A Medieval Change," *Daedalus* 104, no. 2 (1975): 133-151.

[Here "104" is the volume number, "no. 2" is the issue number, and 133-151 are the page numbers.]

Second reference:

<sup>4</sup>Brown, "Society and the Supernatural," 136.

or

<sup>4</sup>Brown, 136.

Items in an anthology

Primary sources are often included in collections of many sources. They should be cited as in the examples below:

<sup>1</sup>Fulcher of Chartres, "The First Crusade," in *A Cloud of Witnesses: Readings in the History of Western Christianity*, ed. Joel F. Harrington (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 138-44.

[Here Fulcher of Chartres is the author of the source, "The First Crusade" is the title of the primary source," and "A Cloud of Witnesses" is the title of the book in which the primary source was found.]

<sup>2</sup>John Pecham, "The Ignorance of Pastors," in *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England*, edited by John Shinnors and William J. Dohar (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 130.

#### Internet Sites

Basic citation components and punctuation

Author's Last Name, First Name, [author's internet address, if available] "Title of Work" or "title line of message," In "Title of Complete Work" or title of list/site as appropriate, [internet address] Date, if available.

Article by a modern historian on a Web Site

<sup>1</sup>Peter Limb, "Relationships between Labour & African Nationalist/Liberation Movements in Southern Africa," [[http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world\\_history/archives/limb\\_html](http://neal.ctstateu.edu/history/world_history/archives/limb_html)], May 1992.

#### Primary Source on a Web Site

<sup>2</sup>Vasco da Gama, "Round Africa to India, 1497\_1498 CE," in "Modern History Sourcebook," [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1497degama.html>], 6 September 2002.

<sup>3</sup>Salvian. "Romans and Barbarians, c. 440," in "Medieval Sourcebook," [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/salvian1.html>], 6 September 2002.

#### **Books**

Books by modern authors are probably the most common sources used by history students in their papers. Citations should include the author's name (last name first), the title of the book (underlined or in italics), and the publishing information, all separated by periods. Here are a few examples of books:

Book by a single author:

Aston, Margaret. *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1984.

Clanchy, M. T. *Abelard: A Medieval Life*. Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997.

Wenzel, Siegfried. *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems*. Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1978.

Book by more than one author:

Briscoe, Marianne G. and Barbara H. Jage. *Artes Praedicandi and Artes Orandi*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental, 61. Turnhout: Brepols, 1992.

NB: Note that the first author's name should begin with the last name first, while the second author's name is listed with the first name first.

Book edited by one or more editors:

Alexander, J. J. G., and M.T. Gibson, eds. *Medieval Language and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976.

Chance, Jane, ed. *The Mythographic Art: Classical Fable and the Rise of the Vernacular in Early France and England*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1990.

## **READING AND COMPREHENSION OF GENERAL AND TECHNICAL ARTICLES, PRECISE WRITING, SUMMARIZING, ABSTRACTING**

**Reading comprehension** is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside **the** text/message.

Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read.

Many educators in the USA believe that students need to learn to analyse text (comprehend it) even before they can read it on their own, and comprehension instruction generally begins in pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten. But other US educators consider this reading approach to be completely backward for very young children, arguing that the children must learn how to decode the words in a story through phonics before they can analyze the story itself.

During the last century comprehension lessons usually consisted of students answering teachers' questions, writing responses to questions on their own, or both. The whole group version of this practice also often included "Round-robin reading", wherein teachers called on individual students to read a portion of the text (and sometimes following a set order). In the last quarter of the 20th century, evidence accumulated that the read-test methods assessed comprehension more than they taught it. The associated practice of "round robin" reading has also been questioned and eliminated by many educators.

Instead of using the prior read-test method, research studies have concluded that there are much more effective ways to teach comprehension. Much work has been done in the area of teaching novice readers a bank of "reading strategies," or tools to interpret and analyze text. There is not a definitive set of strategies, but common ones include summarizing what you have read, monitoring your reading to make sure it is still making sense, and analyzing the structure of the text (e.g., the use of headings in science text). Some programs teach students how to self-monitor whether they are understanding and provide students with tools for fixing comprehension problems.

Instruction in comprehension strategy use often involves the gradual release of responsibility, wherein teachers initially explain and model strategies. Over time, they give students more and more responsibility for using the strategies until they can use them independently. This technique is generally associated with the idea of self-regulation and reflects social cognitive theory, originally conceptualized by Albert Bandura.

## **Contents**

### 1 Teaching reading comprehension

#### 1.1 Vocabulary

#### 1.2 Reading strategies

#### 1.3 Reading Comprehension Imaging

#### 1.4 Levels of Reading Comprehension

#### 1.5 Professional development for students and small children

### 2 Reading difficult texts

#### Teaching reading comprehension

---

There was a period between 1969 to about 2000 that a number of "strategies" were devised for teaching students to employ self-guided methods for improving reading comprehension. In 1969 Anthony Manzo designed and found **empirical support for the ReQuest, or Reciprocal Questioning Procedure**, it was the first method to convert emerging theories of social and imitation learning into teaching methods that employed these powerful factors in learning through a very clever use of a talk rotation between students and teacher that has come to be called cognitive modelling. Prior to this breakthrough most all comprehension teaching were based on imparting selected techniques that when taken together would allow students to be strategic readers however in 40 years of testing these methods never seemed to win support in empirical research. One such strategy for improving reading comprehension is the technique called **SQ3R. This stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review.**



In order to get an understanding of the text, you should survey the chapters. This consists of quickly looking at the title, headings and any subheadings. Look at any end of chapter questions as well. While surveying, you ask questions about the topics you have scanned, such as, "What did my teacher say about this chapter?"

The next thing is to begin reading. In a chapter book, you would read the majority of the words. In a textbook, just read quickly for the key words. These are words seen in the chapter questions, teacher made questions and in the titles or subtitles of the chapter.

After reading a portion or section of the book, recite what you have read out loud. By orally summarizing what you just read it helps to cement the content in your memory.

The last technique is to review what you have read again. By writing down key facts from the chapter and reviewing it, you will better understand the information.

Reading comprehension and vocabulary are inextricably linked. The ability to decode or identify and pronounce words is self-evidently important, but knowing what the words mean has a major and direct effect on knowing what any specific passage means. Students with a smaller vocabulary than other students comprehend less of what they read and it has been suggested that the most impactful way to improve comprehension is to improve vocabulary.

### **Vocabulary**

Several theories of vocabulary instruction exist, namely, one focused on intensive instruction of a few high value words, one focused on broad instruction of many useful words, and a third focused on strategies for learning new words.

The idea of focusing intensely on a few words was popularized by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, and Linda Kucan. They argued that words occur in three "tiers," the lowest (tier 1) being common words such as *eat* and *fish*, the top (tier 3) being very content-specific words such as *photosynthesis* and *geopolitical*. The tier 2 words were what they considered general academic vocabulary, words with many uses in academic contexts, such as *analyze* and *frequent*. Beck et al. suggested that teachers focus on tier 2 words and that they should teach fewer of these words with greater intensity. They suggested that teachers offer multiple examples and develop activities to help students practice these words in increasingly independent ways.

The method of focusing of broad instruction on many words was developed by Andrew Biemiller. He argued, contra Beck et al., that more words would benefit students more, even if the instruction was short and teacher-directed. He suggested that teachers teach a large number of words before reading a book to students, by merely giving short definitions, such as synonyms, and then pointing out the words and their meaning while reading the book to

students. The method contrasts with the Beck et al. approach by emphasizing quantity versus quality. There is no evidence to suggest the primacy of either approach.

The final vocabulary technique, strategies for learning new words, can be further subdivided into instruction on using context and instruction on using morphemes, or meaningful units within words to learn their meaning. Morphemic instruction has been shown to produce positive outcomes for students reading and vocabulary knowledge, but context has proved unreliable as a strategy and it is no longer considered a useful strategy to teach students. This conclusion does not disqualify the value in "learning" morphemic analysis" - prefixes, suffixes and roots - but rather suggests that it be imparted incidentally and in context. Accordingly, there are methods designed to achieve this, such as Incidental Morpheme Analysis.

### **Reading strategies**

Before the 1980s, little comprehension instruction occurred in the United States (National Reading Panel, 2000). Palinscar and Brown (1984) developed a technique called reciprocal teaching that taught students to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for sections of a text. The technique had positive outcomes. Since then, the use of strategies like summarizing after each paragraph have come to be seen as effective strategies for building students' comprehension. The idea is that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text.

There are a wide range of reading strategies suggested by reading programs and educators. The National Reading Panel identified positive effects only for a subset, particularly summarizing, asking questions, answering questions, comprehension monitoring, graphic organizers, and cooperative learning. The Panel also emphasized that a combination of strategies, as used in Reciprocal Teaching, can be effective.

The use of effective comprehension strategies is highly important when learning to improve reading comprehension. These strategies provide specific instructions for developing and retaining comprehension skills. Implementing the following instructions with intermittent feedback has been found to improve reading comprehension across all ages, specifically those affected by mental disabilities.

- Setting a Goal
- Previewing Sentence and Text Structures
- Activating Background Knowledge
- Self-Questioning

- Summarizing
- Feedback and Monitoring

Today, most reading comprehension programs teach students these reading strategies using teacher direct instruction with additional student practice.

Comprehension through discussion involves lessons that are "instructional conversations" that create higher-level thinking opportunities for students. The purpose of the discussions is to promote critical and aesthetic thinking about text and encourage full classroom involvement. According to Vivian Thayer, class discussions help students to generate ideas and new questions.

Making a connection is when a student can relate a passage to an experience, another book, or other facts about the world. Making connections will help students understand what the author's purpose is and what the story is about. You can use connections with any fiction or non-fiction text that you read. Questioning is another strategy that will greatly benefit a student. Dr. Neil Postman has said, "All our knowledge results from questions, which is another way of saying that question-asking is our most important intellectual tool" (Response to Intervention). There are several types of questions that a teacher should focus on: remembering; testing understanding; application or solving; invite synthesis or creating; and evaluation and judging. Teachers should model these types of questions through "think-alouds" before, during, and after reading a text.

Visualization is when a student can create a picture or movie in their mind while reading text. Use terms like "mental image" and asking sensory questions will help students become better visualizers. Another way of looking at visualization, is to think about bringing words to life.

Reading different types of texts requires the use of different reading strategies and approaches. Making reading an active, observable process can be very beneficial to struggling readers. A good reader interacts with the text in order to develop an understanding of the information before them. Some good reader strategies are predicting, connecting, inferring, summarizing, analyzing and critiquing. There are many resources and activities educators and instructors of reading can use to help with reading strategies in specific content areas and disciplines. Some examples are graphic organizers, talking to the text, anticipation guides, double entry journals, interactive reading and note taking guides, chunking, and summarizing.

## **Levels of Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension involves two levels of processing, shallow (low-level) processing and deep (high-level) processing. Deep processing involves semantic processing, which happens when we encode the meaning of a word and relate it to similar words. Shallow processing involves structural and phonemic recognition, the processing of sentence and word structure and their associated sounds. This theory was first identified by Fergus I. M. Craik and Robert S. Lockhart.

## **Professional development for students and small children**

The National Reading Panel noted that comprehension strategy instruction is difficult for many teachers as well as for students, particularly because they were not taught this way and because it is a very cognitively demanding task. They suggested that professional development can increase teachers/students willingness to use reading strategies but admitted that much remains to be done in this area. The directed listening and thinking activity is a technique available to teachers to aid students in learning how to un-read and reading comprehension. It is also difficult for students that are new. There is often some debate when considering the relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension. There is evidence of a direct correlation that fluency and comprehension lead to better understanding of the written material, across all ages. However, it is unclear if fluency is a result of the comprehension or if this a separate learned task.

The use of effective comprehension strategies is highly important when learning to improve reading comprehension. These strategies provide specific instructions for developing and retaining comprehension skills. Implementing the following instructions with intermittent feedback has been found to improve reading comprehension across all ages, specifically those affected by mental disabilities.

## **Reading difficult texts**

---

Some texts, like in philosophy, literature or scientific research, may appear more difficult to read because of the prior knowledge they assume; they may assume the tradition from which they come, or assume having read a text which the author is criticizing or parodizing. Such knowledge is assumed rather than restated, for economic reasons, for saving time and space.

Philosopher Jacques Derrida, whose texts are considered difficult even by fellow scholars, explained that "In order to unfold what is implicit in so many discourses, one would have each time to make a pedagogical outlay that is just not reasonable to expect from every book.

Here the responsibility has to be shared out, mediated; the reading has to do its work and the work has to make its reader."

Other philosophers, however, believe that if you have something to say, you should be able to translate that message without inundating a reader with pompous jargon.

## **PRECISE WRITING, SUMMARIZING, ABSTRACTING**

### **A. WRITING A PRECIS**

A well-written précis should be a serviceable substitute for the original work. The goal is to preserve the core essence of the work in a manner that is both clear and concise. At a minimum, the précis should include the topic or main thesis, the purpose of the research, what was studied, what methods were used, what results (or insight) were gained, and a conclusion. This guide provides tips and includes links to two sample papers, one on fetal protection policies and the other on James L. Sundquist and constitutional reform.

#### **Goals of the Précis**

Compress and clarify a lengthy passage, article, or book, while retaining important concepts, key words, and important data.

Remove what is superfluous and retain the core essence of the work.

Give a brief description of key terms

Give a brief description of methods – an idea of the general approach used by the researchers.

State the purpose of the research or piece of writing (why was it important to conduct this research or write on this topic?)

When finished, the précis should clearly state:

This is what was studied (argued, discussed).

This is how it was done (this was the focus).

This is what was learned.

This is what it means (why it is important).

#### **Indexing and abstracting service**

---

An **abstracting service** is a service that provides abstracts of publications, often on a subject or group of related subjects, usually on a subscription basis. An **indexing service** is a service that assigns descriptors and other kinds of access points to documents. The word indexing service is today mostly used for computer programs, but may also cover services providing back-of-the-book indexes, journal indexes, and related kinds of indexes. An **indexing and abstracting service** is a service that provides shortening or summarizing of documents and assigning of descriptors for referencing documents.

The product is often an **abstract journal** or a bibliographic index, which may be a subject bibliography or a bibliographic database.

## **5 quality precis writing samples**

### **Sample 1**

It is physically impossible for a well-educated, intellectual, or brave man to make money the chief object of his thoughts just as it is for him to make his dinner the principal object of them. All healthy people like their dinners, but their dinner is not the main object of their lives. So all healthy minded people like making money ought to like it and enjoy the sensation of winning it; it is something better than money.

A good soldier, for instance, mainly wishes to do his fighting well. He is glad of his pay—very properly so and justly grumbles when you keep him ten years without it—till, his main mission of life is to win battles, not to be paid for winning them. So of clergymen. The clergyman's object is essentially baptize and preach not to be paid for preaching. So of doctors. They like fees no doubt—ought to like them; yet if they are brave and well-educated the entire object to their lives is not fees. They on the whole, desire to cure the sick; and if they are good doctors and the choice were fairly to them, would rather cure their patient and lose their fee than kill him and get it. And so with all the other brave and rightly trained men: their work is first, their fee second—very important always; but still second.

#### **The Main Points:**

1. Money making is a common attraction in life.
2. But it cannot be the principal aim of well-educated, intellectual brave persons.

#### **Precis Summary:**

Money-making is a common attraction in life. But it cannot be the principal aim of well educated, cultured and brave man. A brave soldier prizes honour and victory more than his pay. A good clergyman is more interested in the moral welfare of his people than his returns. A doctor (good) values the care of his patient far more than his fees. Thus with all the well-educated, intellectual persons, their work is first, money next.

### **Sample 2**

Home is the young, who know "nothing of the world and who would be forlorn and sad, if thrown upon it. It is providential, shelter of the weak and inexperienced, who have to learn as yet to cope with the temptations which lie outside of it. It is the place of training of those who are not only ignorant, but have not yet learnt how to learn, and who have to be taught by careful individual trial, how to set about profiting by the lessons of teacher. And it is the school of elementary studies—not of advances, for such studies alone can make master

minds. Moreover, it is the shrine of our best affections, the bosom of our fondest recollections, at spell upon our after life, a stay for world weary mind and soul; wherever we are, till the end comes. Such are attributes or offices of home, and like to these, in one or other sense or measure, are the attributes and offices of a college in a university.

### **Precis Summary**

Home shelters the young who are weak and unexperienced and unable to face the temptations in life. It is a centre of their elementary education and a nursery of sweet affections and pleasant memories. Its magic lasts for ever. A weary mind turn to it for rest. Such is the function of a home and in some measure of the university.

### **Sample 3**

Teaching is the noblest of professions. A teacher has a sacred duty to perform. It is he on whom rests the responsibility of moulding the character of young children. Apart from developing their intellect, he can inculcate in them qualities of good citizenship, remaining neat and clean, talking decently and sitting properly. These virtues are not easy to be imbibed. Only he who himself leads a life of simplicity, purity and rigid discipline can successfully cultivate these habits in his pupils.

Besides a teacher always remain young. He may grow old in age, but not in spite. Perpetual contact with budding youths keeps him happy and cheerful. There are moments when domestic worries weigh heavily on his mind, but the delightful company of innocent children makes him overcome his transient moods of despair.

### **Precis Summary**

Teaching is the noblest profession. A teacher himself leading a simple, pure and disciplined life can mould the character of the young children and make them neat and good mannered citizens. Besides he remains every young forgetting his own domestic worries in the constant company of the young.

### **Sample 4**

English education and English language have done immense goods to India, inspite of their glaring drawbacks. The notions of democracy and self-government are the born of English education. Those who fought and died for mother India's freedom were nursed in the cradle of English thought and culture. The West has made contribution to the East. The history of Europe has fired the hearts of our leaders. Our struggle for freedom has been inspired by the struggles for freedom in England, America and France. If our leaders were ignorant of English and if they had not studied this language, how could they have been inspired by these

heroic struggles for freedom in other lands? English, therefore, did us great good in the past and if properly studied will do immense good in future.

English is spoken throughout the world. For international contact our commerce and trade, for the development of our practical ideas, for the scientific studies, English-is indispensable "English is very rich in literature," our own literature has been made richer by this foreign language. It will really be a fatal day if we altogether forget Shakespeare, Milton, Keats and Shaw.

### **Precis Summary**

Notwithstanding its various defects English education has done great good to India. The ideas of democracy and self-government are its gifts. Nursed on English education the Indian leaders were inspired by the Western thought, culture and freedom struggles. They fought for and won their motherland's freedom. Being spoken thought-out the world English is necessary for international contact, trade, commerce and science. English is rich in literature; its master mind cannot be neglected.

### **Sample 5**

When we survey our lives and efforts we soon observe that almost the whole of our actions and desires are bound up with the existence of other human beings. We notice that whole nature resembles that of the social animals. We eat food that others have produced, wear clothes that others have made, live in houses that others have built. The greater part of our knowledge and beliefs has been passed on to us by other people though the medium of a language which others have created. Without language and mental capacities, we would have been poor indeed comparable to higher animals.

We have, therefore, to admit that we owe our principal knowledge over the least to the fact of living in human society. The individual if left alone from birth would remain primitive and beast like in his thoughts and feelings to a degree that we can hardly imagine. The individual is what he is and has the significance that he has, not much in virtue of the individuality, but rather as a member of a great human community, which directs his material and spiritual existence from the cradle to grave.

### **Precis Summary**

Being social animals, human beings have their actions and desires bound up with society. In matter of food, clothes, knowledge and belief they are interdependent. They use language created by others. Without language their mental power would not grow. They are superior to beast, because they live in human society. An individual life left alone from birth would grow



utterly beast like. So human society and not individuality guides man's material and spiritual existence.

## **INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PRESENTATIONS, IMPROMPTU PRESENTATION, PUBLIC SPEAKING**

### **Individual and Group Presentations**

#### PREPARING YOUR ORAL PRESENTATION (INDIVIDUAL)

First of all, think...

*Think about what you want to achieve:*

Do you want to inform your audience, inspire them to think about your topic, or convince them of a particular point of view?

*Think about your audience:*

What background knowledge do they have about your topic? Do they have any particular interests?

How are you going to involve them in your presentation?

Then...

Brainstorm your topic and write a rough outline.

Research your topic. Don't get carried away—remember you have a limited time for your presentation.

Organise your material and write a draft—think about the length of time you have to talk.

Summarise your draft into points to write on overheads and/or cards.

Plan and prepare your visual aids.

Rehearse your presentation and get its length right. Ask a friend to listen and time you.

#### ***Organising the Content***

Introduction (may be written last)

*Capture your listeners' attention:* Begin with a question, a funny story, a startling comment, or anything that will make them think.

*State your purpose;* for example:

'I'm going to talk about...'

'This morning I want to explain...'

*Present an outline of your talk ;* for example:

'I will concentrate on the following points: First of all...Then...

This will lead to... And finally...'

The Body

Present your main points one by one in logical order.

Pause at the end of each point (give people time to take notes, or time to think about what you are saying).

Make it absolutely clear when you move to another point. For example:

‘The next point is that ...’

‘OK, now I am going to talk about ...’

‘Right. Now I'd like to explain ... ’

‘Of course, we must not forget that ...’

‘However, it's important to realise that...’

Use clear examples to illustrate your points.

Use visual aids to make your presentation more interesting.

The Conclusion

It is very important to leave your audience with a clear summary of everything you have covered. It is also important not to let the talk just fizzle out. Make it obvious that you have reached the end of the presentation.

Summarise the main points again, using phrases like:

‘To sum up...’

‘So, in conclusion...’

‘OK, to recap the main points...’

Restate the purpose of your talk, and say that you have achieved your aim:

‘I think you can now see that...’

‘My intention was ..., and it should now be clear that ...’

Thank the audience, and invite questions:

‘Thank you. Are there any questions?’

*Delivering Your Presentation*

*Talk to your audience, don't read to them!*

A presentation is not the same as an essay. If you read out your presentation as if it were an essay, your audience will probably understand very little and will lose concentration quickly.

So use notes, cue cards or overheads as prompts, and speak to the audience. Include everyone by looking at them and maintaining eye-contact (but don't stare or glare at people).

Watch your language!

Keep it simple. The aim is to communicate, not to show off your vocabulary. Emphasise the key points—and make sure people realise which are the key points. Repeat them using different phrasing.

Check the pronunciation of difficult, unusual, or foreign words beforehand.

Use your voice to communicate clearly

Speak loudly enough for everyone in the room to hear you. This may feel uncomfortably loud at first, but if people can't hear you, they won't listen.

Speak slowly and clearly.

Don't rush! Speaking fast doesn't make you seem smarter; it will only make it harder for other people to understand you.

Key words are important. Speak them out slowly and loudly.

Vary your voice quality. If you always use the same volume and pitch (for example, all loud, or all soft, or in a monotone) your audience will switch off. When you begin a new point, use a higher pitch and volume. Slow down for key points.

Use pauses—don't be afraid of short periods of silence. (They give you a chance to gather your thoughts, and your audience a chance to think.)

Use your body to communicate, too!

Stand straight and comfortably. Do not slouch or shuffle about.

Hold your head up. Look around and make eye-contact with people in the audience. Do not just address the lecturer! Do not stare at a point on the carpet or the wall. If you don't include the audience, they won't listen to you. When you are talking to your friends, you naturally use your hands, your facial expression, and your body to add to your communication. Do it in your presentation as well. It will make things far more interesting for the audience.

Don't turn your back on the audience! Interact with the audience. Be aware of how your audience is reacting. Are they interested or bored? If they look confused, ask them why.

Stop if necessary and explain a point again. Check if the audience is still with you.

'Does that make sense?'

'Is that clear?'

Be open to questions.

If someone raises a hand, or asks a question in the middle of your talk, answer it. If you can't

answer it, turn the question back out to the audience and let someone else answer it!

Questions are good. They show that the audience is listening with interest. They should not be regarded as an attack on you, but as a collaborative search for deeper understanding.

Be ready to get the discussion going after your presentation. Just in case nobody has anything to say, have some provocative questions or points for discussion ready to ask the group.

### *Dealing with Nervousness*

The first few times you make a presentation, you will be nervous. That's quite a good thing—a bit of adrenaline often helps you to perform well. However, to make sure that your nervousness does not become a problem, here are some things to consider:

*Smile!* Your audience will react warmly to you if you smile and at least look relaxed.

*Treat your audience like friends.* Confess that you are nervous! Your audience will be very sympathetic—they know how you are feeling.

*Breathe deeply.* It will calm you down and help to control the slight shaking that you might get in your hands and your voice. Be well-prepared. Practice giving your talk. Slow down! When people are nervous, they tend to get confused easily. So your mind may start to race, and you may feel panicky. Make use of pauses: force yourself to stop at the end of a sentence, take a breath, and think before you continue.

Remember: *The way you perform is the way your audience will feel.* Giving an oral presentation is a performance—you have to be like an actor. If you act the part of someone enjoying themselves and feeling confident, you will not only communicate these positive feelings to the audience, you will feel much better, too. Accomplished public speakers feel nervous before and even during a talk. The skill comes in not communicating your nervousness, and in not letting it take over from the presentation. Over time, you will feel less nervous, and will be able to control your nervousness.

## **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

Group presentations present tremendous opportunities to create something much greater than an individual can normally do. It is always easier and quicker to do things on your own, but most of us will be more effective as part of a team that combines the knowledge and talents of several people.

**Matching Players with Positions:** There are several factors to consider when deciding who will do what in the presentation:

- **Strengths and weaknesses** of individual team members will suggest speaking order, and who will deal with which content
- **Styles and skills** of your team are important to determine who should lead off, conclude or deliver each section.
- **The audience** itself is important; will they be technically-oriented.
- **The purpose** of the presentation. If it is to persuade, your best salesperson should have a leading role. If it relies heavily on involvement, a freewheeling approach works well.

Typically, we want the quick thinker to handle the questions, the detail person doing the technical comments and the dynamo for the opening and closing. When matching people with different parts of the project, take the time to realistically assess all these elements. Count on a couple of meetings to build the task list that will lead to your lineup.

### **Towards Effective Group Presentations**

Some of the golden rules to follow in order to make group presentations effective is mentioned below:

- Recognize that a group presentation is a team presentation; take the time to build the team.
- Use such tools as formal meetings, contracts and plans to set out what the group hopes to accomplish through the presentation.
- Never have each person “do one section” unless there is tight coordination before they go research it, when they present their key findings and when it is integrated into the overall themes of the presentation.
- Recognize the difference between a group presentation (talk #1, talk #2 ... last speaker) and a team presentation (introduction, components, conclusion).
- Rehearse. Videotape your entire show. Have a friend sit in and observe your trial run. Do a complete run-through of your entire presentation exactly as you would hope to do it.
- Provide one another with candid (frank) feedback, particularly on ways to improve.
- Maintain an unwavering (firm) commitment to improve your communication and teamwork skills.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

Public speaking is anytime you have to speak in public! Speaking in public scares more people than going to the dentist, falling, or death! This write-up will give you public

speaking basics and help you realize some good multimedia presentation skills at the same time.

## **Fears**

While most people fear public speaking there are some very simple ways to get around it...

- Practice
- Practice
- Practice

By practicing you get around the reason for the fear: saying something stupid or messing up in front of people.

## **Before the presentation**

Preparation is key!

Figure out a thesis for your paper. Write down the structure for your presentation.

Introduction, body, and conclusion. Read it out loud. Edit your writing. Read it out loud again. Put it into your presentation. Practice again.

## **Basics of Public Speaking**

- **Know your topic:** You are the expert of the topic you have chosen. Nobody in the room knows more than you so make sure that you know it thoroughly so you can teach others.
- **Know your audience:**What do they find funny? What are they interested in? What would they like to hear about your topic?
- **Find a hook:**A hook is an interesting, funny, or creative beginning to your presentation. The first 30 seconds of a presentation are very important, so a good hook will keep your audience focused.
- **Be yourself:**If you try to do what your friends would do, you will mess up. Just be yourself and you will feel the most comfortable!
- **Stay on point:**Do not discuss topics that are not important to your presentation. They will distract your audience and you will lose your focus.
- **Do not repeat yourself:** Do not repeat yourself. Repeating a point more than a few times sounds as if you do not have anything else to say. So avoid repetition.

## **Confidence**

Project a calm, confident tone while speaking. You are the expert on the topic, so you have nothing to worry about! Audience members can tell when you are nervous or do not know what you are talking about. Confidence can be gained through good preparation and

effective practicing. Confidence comes with practice. Refer to sources correctly. You will need to have outside sources for your information in the presentation. Make sure to know how to pronounce names and the author's main idea correctly.

- **First 30 seconds are the most important!**

This is the hook. If you have a creative, witty, or interesting introduction, you can hold the audience's attention for the rest of the presentation.

- **Strong conclusion**

Just like the introduction, have a strong message the audience can take away from your presentation. Avoid just repeating your introduction and your thesis statement. Action statements make good conclusions.

### **Presentation basics**

Tips to construct a multimedia presentation!

The six tips to be followed in making a PowerPoint presentation is:

1. **Have consistent slide backgrounds:** Having a consistent background adds to your presentation. An easy way to distract your audience is by having your slide background constantly change. You are in charge of your presentation, so keep the design simple and consistent.
2. **Contrast helps people see your presentation:** An effective contrast would help the audience to view the slides without posing any unnecessary stress on the eyes.
3. **Animation adds some flavor:** Animations can substitute for too many words. Animation can assist in a given situation, but too much can distract. Animation can be for an image or letters in a slide or between slides. Use animation to give some flavor to a slide that is a little flat.
4. **Make it large!**  
Notice that in this slide everything is large and easy to see. Making your words and pictures large is very important when working with power point!
5. **Too many words turns your audience off.**  
One of the golden rules is to use not more than six words in a line and the total number of lines in a slide should not exceed seven.
6. **Images are important to retain attention!**  
Images are important to a multimedia presentation, so do not shy away from clip art, images, or artistic designs to show off your text. The overall effect of using images related to the text is that it is very professional and pleasing to the eye.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

### About Group Discussion

Group Discussion is a process where exchange of ideas and opinions are debated upon. This process is mostly used for selecting candidates for admission to management schools basically for MBA. A typical GD comprises of a small group of candidates. Each group is then given a topic for discussion. The topic can be general or specific.

Example: Kashmir Conflict or

just a phrase saying "Where there's a will there's a way".

Remember to take a stand during the discussion. It is not necessary that you conclude by a positive or a negative viewpoint, but to summarize the discussion well and being neutral gives you an edge over others. The candidates are given a time limit for discussing this topic. Each participant has to give his or her views about this topic. The panelists are there to judge the discussion. After the time limit is over, the best candidate from the group is selected. The same process is followed for other groups.

### Tips on Group Discussion

The following list of points should be kept in mind while in a group discussion

**1) Adequate matter/ Subject matter is essential:** You should have subject knowledge and be well aware of the latest happenings around you, not just in India but around the world as well. To be in a better position, make sure that you have in-depth knowledge on the subject. Subject knowledge is a pre-requisite while you are preparing for a group discussion because you will then have the power to steer the conversation to whichever direction you want to. If you can memorize some relevant data, it will be an added advantage.

**2) Make sure you Read Widely:** Being an avid reader will help you in group discussions. Last minute preparations should be a strictly a no, while you are preparing for group discussions. You should read over a period of time. Reading not only adds to your knowledge database, but enhances your vocabulary skills as well. Plus reading over a period of time, helps in your understanding of a particular subject/ topic better.

**3) Choose Magazines that are Rich in Content:** Always opt for magazines that are content rich and not just full of advertisements. Often magazines have columns which are promoting a particular institute etc. Avoid such magazines, do some research and buy the best that will be beneficial for you in the long run.

**4) Be Aware of topics that are repeated:** Often, there are topics which re-appear with minute changes and minor variations. Be aware of such topics well in advance so that you have ample time to prepare for the same. For example the issues of terrorism, gender



inequality, poverty, Ayodhya conflict, liberalization and privatization, reservations in educational institutions etc. often appear as GD topics. Make sure you know these topics well and can come up with some unique, insightful points along with dates, stating facts.

**5) Work on your Communication Skills:** You should be well versed in your communication skills. You should have a good vocabulary and a decent command over English. Much before your actual group discussion, rehearse well. You can sit with a group of friends and choose a topic and indulge in a friendly way. Not only will this increase your knowledge, you will be a better speaker by the time it is time for your GD.

**6) Listen to the topic given during GD carefully:** Listen to the topic carefully and understand it. Be alert and vigilant. Sometimes, the topic may be really simple but the manner in which it is presented to you, can be baffling/confusing. The first thing that you should do after hearing the topic is by structuring it on the sheet that is given to you to make notes. Make a rough sketch of the points that you would like to speak aloud. You will be at an advantage if you open the discussion, but then beware of what you speak. Deviating from the main topic or passing strong statements like ‘I agree/ or disagree ...’ should be avoided. Your strategy should be to test the waters and make a generic statement relevant to the topic. If you can, back it up by relevant data.

**7) Try and Maintain a Balance in your Tone:** Besides what you are saying, remember that the panelists are observing your body language as well. If you do not agree with the other student’s point of view, do not raise your tone in objection. Listen to his point of view and instead of dismissing it upfront, try and draw a common ground.

**8) Listening Skills are Essential:** Carefully listen to what others have to say. Just speaking throughout the discussion doesn’t make you smart; you should also give others a chance to speak. Try and listen to him/her, respect their view point too. If the speaker is making an eye-contact with you remember to acknowledge him by saying “yes, you agree” or just by nodding your head, so that the speaker is aware that his listeners are listening to him and paying full attention. This will also show that you are vigilant and are an active participant in the discussion.

**9) Body Gestures are very important:** The panelists observe the way you sit and react in the course of the discussion. Body gestures are very important, because your body language says a lot about you. In a GD, sit straight; avoid leaning back on to the chair or knocking the table with pen or your fingers. Also, do not get distracted easily. For example, if the door in room you are sitting in open, do not look back to see who it is, this will show how distracted you are.

**10) Be the first and also the Last to Speak:** As mentioned earlier, initiating a GD is an advantage. Closing it too also adds brownie points. If you can grab the opportunity to close the discussion, then you should summarize it. If the group has not reached a conclusion try concluding it. Imagine you are driving and you have the power to accelerate or brake according to the situation on the road and avoid any accidents. Try to be that conscientious driver in a GD. Take the initiative, know when to apply your brakes and when to seize the opportunity and accelerate the conversation to reach to a desired destination; conclusion in your case.

## **ORGANIZING SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES**

### **Background**

Organising a seminar or conference can be an important way of raising the profile of your work or engaging with key stakeholders. It can be an opportunity to share and exchange with other experts in your field. An event is a good opportunity to present the results of your work or to attract media attention to your project.

### **Objectives**

It is very important to pick a clear topic for your event and to know what you want it to achieve. Organising an event is a lot of work – like your normal activities, it has to be for a reason, or else it will be a waste of resources. Is your seminar or conference aimed more at raising awareness of your project or a particular issue, generating support for future work or in support of a particular law or policy? You might want to use the event as an opportunity to meet and network with possible partners for future work. Being clear on this question will help to focus your efforts and enable others to see why they should participate.

### **Targets**

Once you know what you want to achieve, think about who you want to invite to participate – this may include leading professionals in your field of work, politicians, the media, interest groups and officials.

### **Tip 1: Plan Early**

A large event or conference will need around 4 months planning time. A smaller seminar may require less, but even a small event will require many weeks planning to be successful. This is both to give you the time to put in place all the practical arrangements as well as making sure you are able to disseminate information about the event to potential participants in sufficient time for them to be there. Set out a draft agenda early so people can see clearly what kind of event it is you are planning and decide whether you will be offering

interpretation into different languages to attract international participants. It is a good idea to write down everything that needs to be done and tick them off as they are organised to guarantee you are on course.

**Tip 2: Get your timings right**

When to host an event can be crucial. Do your best to ensure your event does not clash with another major event (or bank holiday!) which would mean large numbers of significant people not being able to attend. Do not make your event longer than it needs to be. A seminar of just a few hours can get across key results from your project and be easier for people to attend. If the event is short, do not allow it to be overly dominated by one speaker. Keep things moving and interesting and always ensure there is time in the agenda for questions. A good Chairperson is crucial in guaranteeing that everyone has a chance to participate fully in the time available.

**Tip 3: Focus on your key objectives**

Whether you have decided to aim for a debate with key stakeholders or an event designed to grab political or media attention around your project, don't take your eyes off your objectives. Make sure the theme of the event is clear with a self-explanatory title and give adequate time to the most important elements. If you want to receive media coverage, make sure that any media contacts you have are well informed about the event in advance—you can target the local and national press and/or specialised publications. It is important to set out to the media why they should be interested in your event – what's the story? If you want to raise awareness around your project, you should prepare some information documents such as leaflets for the media and other participants to take away with them.

**Tip 4: Choose appropriate speakers**

It is important that anybody who is speaking is comfortable standing up and presenting to people, knows what is expected of them and how long they have to speak. As the organiser you should have a very good idea of what each speaker will talk about and how their input will contribute to the flow of the event. Try to decide how you want the event to be structured and then identify the best people to speak for each element. Invite your speakers in lots of time and keep in contact with them in the run up to the event – you will be thinking of little else, but they will have lots of other people and issues calling for their attention.

**Tip 5: Get your invitations right!**

The key to a good seminar is having the right people at the event and a good number of them. You should invite more people than you plan to actually attend as many will be unable to make it. People will be more likely to attend if they can see what is in it for them. Set out in

the invitation what they have to gain, whether it be hearing from a prominent politician or official, learning about your ground breaking project or having the chance to express their views to important stakeholders. Follow up written invitations to key people with a phone call to make sure they have noticed your event.

**Tip 6: Don't forget the practical details on the day**

It can be easy to do a lot of work on the agenda and forget to take care of all the many practical details that need taking care of on the day. These ranges from ensuring there are enough chairs and that speakers have visible name cards, to making sure the meeting room is easy to find and that people are welcomed, typically with a registration desk to provide a record of who attended. Make sure that someone is taking notes or that the event is being recorded to allow for a written record of the proceedings. If there is a coffee break or food, it is important that there is enough for everyone Remember that keeping your participants happy on the day is a good basis for working with them again in the future.

**Tip 7: Anticipate Problems**

As the organiser you need to be prepared should anything go wrong? Some things are unpredictable, but problems with technology and late unavailability of speakers should not be allowed to throw an event off course. Test all the technology before the event and try to make sure that any PowerPoint presentations are sent in advance and are pre-loaded onto the right computer ready to go when required. Have back-up speakers or know how you will change the agenda in the event that any speaker drops out.

**Tip 8: Follow up your seminar or conference**

You should be able to build on what happened at the event to pursue your objectives – that is why you organised the event in the first place! This will depend on what you want to achieve, but could mean sending the report to the press or politicians or following up important contacts made at the event.

**Tip 9: Keep relevant documentation**

Last but not least, do not forget to keep all the documentation - list of participants, receipts, invoices etc. - which will serve as the relevant supporting evidence for the expenditure claimed when preparing your financial report.



Visit for Other Agriculture books,  
News, Recruitment, Information,  
Agriculture dictionary, Quiz/MCQ and  
Events at

[WWW.AGRIFAIR.IN](http://WWW.AGRIFAIR.IN)

Give FeedBack & Suggestion at  
[info@Agrifair.in](mailto:info@Agrifair.in)

**DISCLAIMER:**

The information on this website does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness or usefulness of the courseware contents.

The contents are provided free for noncommercial purpose such as teaching, training, research, extension and self learning.

