

communication SKILLS

SKILLS FOR LIFE



Communication is a vital part of success in education and work. Use the scale below to rate yourself on your communication skills.

0- no ability 1- enough ability to get by with help from others 2-some ability 3-strong ability

___ 1. Speaking effectively

___ 8. Perceiving nonverbal messages

___ 2. Writing concisely

___ 9. Persuading

___ 3. Listening attentively

___ 10. Reporting information

___ 4. Expressing ideas

___ 11. Describing feelings

___ 5. Facilitating group discussion

___ 12. Interviewing

___ 6. Providing appropriate feedback

___ 13. Editing

___ 7. Negotiating

___ Total Points

Points

32-39 You have great confidence in your communication skills.

21-31 You have good communication abilities with room to grow.

13-20 You are getting started on the right track to effective communication.

0-12 Get started building those communication skills.

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Speaking

How many times have you had to listen to a dry lecture, a boring story, or someone repeating the same thing over and over again? Speaking comprises 30% of our communication time. Below are guidelines and practice exercises to make you a better speaker

1. Focus on the purpose. Write two summary sentences for each topic below.

Example Topic: The class trip to Mexico.

Purpose: To persuade the school to allow the class to go on the trip.

My talk will give 5 examples of how the trip will benefit students by exposing them to a foreign language and different culture.

2. My favorite school subject or class.

Purpose:

3. My favorite sport or hobby.

Purpose:

4. A person who is a positive role model to you.

Purpose:

5. My future career goals.

Purpose:

6. Skills I need to improve.

Purpose:

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Speaking

Use the outline below to construct a clear outline of a speech, talk, or presentation. Select one of the topics from the previous page.



1. Topic:

a. Summary sentence : Purpose:

b. Summary sentence: How you will achieve that purpose:

2. Three main points about your topic (Body of the Speech)

a.

b.

c.

3. Support the points with examples or facts and figures.

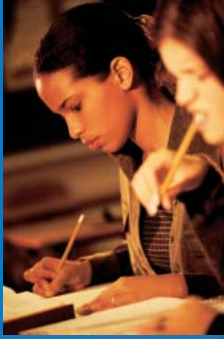
a.

b.

c.

4. Create a conclusion that emphasizes the purpose of your presentation.

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Writing Skills

Writing is almost 10% of communication time. In a world of emails, faxes, instant messaging and more, writing skills are a major focus in education and work. Complete the exercises below to sharpen your writing skills.

1. What is the purpose? Unscramble the words below to discover 3 purposes of writing.

a. A E S E P _____ R _____ U _____ D _____

b. X N I P E _____ L A _____

c. R D C E B I E _____ S _____

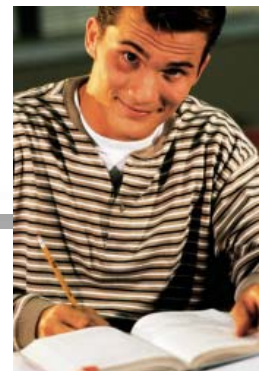
2. Keep it short. Good writing focuses on the purpose. Before you begin writing state 2 summary sentences. These sentences give an overview of your purpose and how it will be achieved. Write two summary sentences for each of the topics below.

a. Explain how to get into college.

b. Persuade someone to consider sponsoring you for a fund-raiser.

c. Describe an important time in your life.

3. Use descriptive and action words. Who wants to read a boring essay, memo, or cover letter? Add life to your writing by using action words and descriptive phrases. Write 3 statements below about goals you have achieved. Use action words and descriptive phrases.



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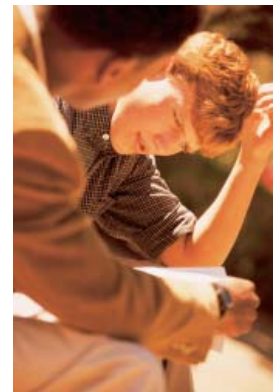
Listening

Forty-five percent of communication time is spent listening. You listen in class, on the phone, in conversations, to the radio, to the TV and more. When talking with someone, being a good listener is as important as being a good speaker. Check out the questions below to see if you are a good listener.

Use the scale below to rate yourself on your listening skills.

0-never 1-not very often 2-sometimes 3-frequently

- ___ 1. I interrupt others because it is hard to wait for them to stop talking.
- ___ 2. I draw conclusions right away when someone starts talking, then I tune them out.
- ___ 3. I look around the room and avoid eye contact when someone is talking to me.
- ___ 4. If I disagree with someone, I let them know right away before I forget.
- ___ 5. I think a lot of the speaker's message is conveyed by the way they look.
- ___ 6. People continuously say, "Did you hear me?" when they are talking to me.
- ___ 7. As long as I get the beginning and the end of a conversation, I can usually figure out the whole story.
- ___ 8. When someone is talking to me, I focus in on the meaningless statements they are saying.
- ___ 9. My lecture notes or class notes have doodles all over them.
- ___ 10. I never shake my head or respond to the speaker's questions or statements. I mean, they are the one in the spotlight, not me.



20-30 points: Sit back and let someone else do the talking. You need to develop some major listening skills.

10-19 points: You are probably more focused on your friends than others. Take more time to listen to people you don't normally want to listen to.

0-9: People probably come to you with their thoughts, feelings, and problems, and consider you a good friend.

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Virginia Standards of Learning met by completing this activity series:

Career Development Grades: 9-12

English

Grade 10

10.1, 10.2, 10.4, 10.8, 10.10, 10.11

English

Grade 11

11.1, 11.4, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 11.10

English

Grade 12

12.1, 12.2, 12.4, 12.7,

Academic Development: Grades 9-12:

Students will:

HA3. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a successful transition from high school to post-secondary options, and

HA4. Demonstrate the skills needed for independent learning.

Career Development Grades 9-12:

Students will:

HC1. Understand the value of ethical standards and behaviors in education and the workplace,

HC3. Understand how work and leisure interests can help to achieve personal success and satisfaction,

HC4. Understand how the changing workplace requires lifelong learning, flexibility and the acquisition of new employment skills,

HC5. Understand that behaviors such as punctuality, courtesy, proper dress and language, and hard work are essential to success in the job market,

HC7. Demonstrate employability skills such as individual initiative, teamwork, problem solving, organization, and communication,

HC8. Demonstrate skills involved in locating, using, and interpreting a variety of career and educational resources, including the Internet,

HC9. Develop and utilize time and task management skills,

Personal/ Social Development Grades 9-12:

Students will:

HP1. Understand the relationship among, and importance of respecting rules, laws, safety, and the protection of individual rights,

HP3. Use appropriate communication and conflict resolution skills with peers and adults.

Learn More!

-Use peer ratings to evaluate speeches made by students in class.

-Create an oral presentation for the class on a subject related topic.

-Discuss what fears and skills you have regarding public speaking in a small group.

-Participate in school plays, assemblies, announcements, and student clubs and government to sharpen your communication skills.

-Create a card for someone special with only two phrases in the card.

-Write a letter to a friend or relative that you have not communicated with in a long time.

-Write about your feelings when you are angry, sad, happy, proud, or frustrated.

-Keep a daily journal.

-Write a poem or a song.

