

# How to Develop Good Communication Skills

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Co-authored by **Gale McCreary** ✓ and **158 contributors**

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Having good communication skills is important. They can help you with presentations in class, during job interviews, when handling arguments, and in a variety of other situations. Fortunately, there are some tricks you can use to improve your communication skills so you come across as more confident and friendly.

Part  
1

## Part 1 of 3: Understanding the Basics of Communication Skills



**1 Know what communication really is.** **Communication** is the process of transferring signals/messages between a sender and a receiver through various methods (written words, nonverbal cues, spoken words). It is also the mechanism we use to establish and modify relationships.



**2 Have courage to say what you think.** Be confident in knowing that you can make worthwhile contributions to conversation. Take time each day to be aware of your opinions and feelings so you can adequately convey them to others. Individuals who are hesitant to speak because they do not feel their input would be worthwhile need not fear. What is important or worthwhile to one person may not be to another and may be more so to someone else.



**3 Practice.** Developing advanced communication skills begins with simple interactions. Communication skills can be practiced every day in settings that range from the social to the professional. New skills take time to refine, but each time you use your communication skills, you open yourself to opportunities and future partnerships.



- 1 Make eye contact.** Whether you are speaking or listening, looking into the eyes of the person with whom you are conversing can make the interaction more successful. Eye contact conveys interest and encourages your partner to be interested in you in return.<sup>[1]</sup>
  - One technique to help with this is to consciously look into one of the listener's eyes and then move to the other eye. Going back and forth between the two makes your eyes appear to sparkle. Another trick is to imagine a letter "T" on the listener's face, with the crossbar being an imaginary line across the eye brows and the vertical line coming down the center of the nose. Keep your eyes scanning that "T" zone.





**2 Use gestures.** These include gestures with your hands and face. Make your whole body talk. Use smaller gestures for individuals and small groups. The gestures should get larger as the group that one is addressing increases in size.[2]



**3 Don't send mixed messages.** Make your words, gestures, facial expressions and tone match. Disciplining someone while smiling sends a mixed message and is therefore ineffective. If you have to deliver a negative message, make your words, facial expressions, and tone match the message.[3]



**4 Be aware of what your body is saying.** Body language can say so much more than a mouthful of words. An open stance with arms relaxed at your sides tells anyone around you that you are **approachable** and open to hearing what they have to say.<sup>[4]</sup>

- Arms crossed and shoulders hunched, on the other hand, suggest disinterest in conversation or unwillingness to communicate. Often, communication can be stopped before it starts by body language that tells people you don't want to talk.
- Appropriate **posture** and an approachable stance can make even difficult conversations flow more smoothly.



**5 Manifest constructive attitudes and beliefs.** The attitudes you bring to communication will have a huge impact on the way you compose yourself and interact with others. Choose to be **honest**, **patient**, **optimistic**, **sincere**, respectful, and accepting of others. **Be sensitive to other people's feelings**, and believe in others' competence.





**6** **Develop effective listening skills:** Not only should one be able to speak effectively, one must listen to the other person's words and engage in communication on what the other person is speaking about. Avoid the impulse to listen only for the end of their sentence so that you can blurt out the ideas or memories your mind while the other person is speaking.[5]

Part  
3

### Part 3 of 3: Using Your Words



**1** **Enunciate your words.** Speak clearly and don't mumble. If people are always asking you to repeat yourself, try to do a better job of articulating yourself in a better manner.



**2 Pronounce your words correctly.** People will judge your competency through your vocabulary. If you aren't sure of how to say a word, don't use it. Improve your vocabulary by reading new words in daily routine. Look in the dictionary to help you learn how to pronounce a new word.



**3 Use the right words.** If you're not sure of the meaning of a word, don't use it. Grab a dictionary and start a daily habit of learning one new word per day. Use it sometime in your conversations during the day.

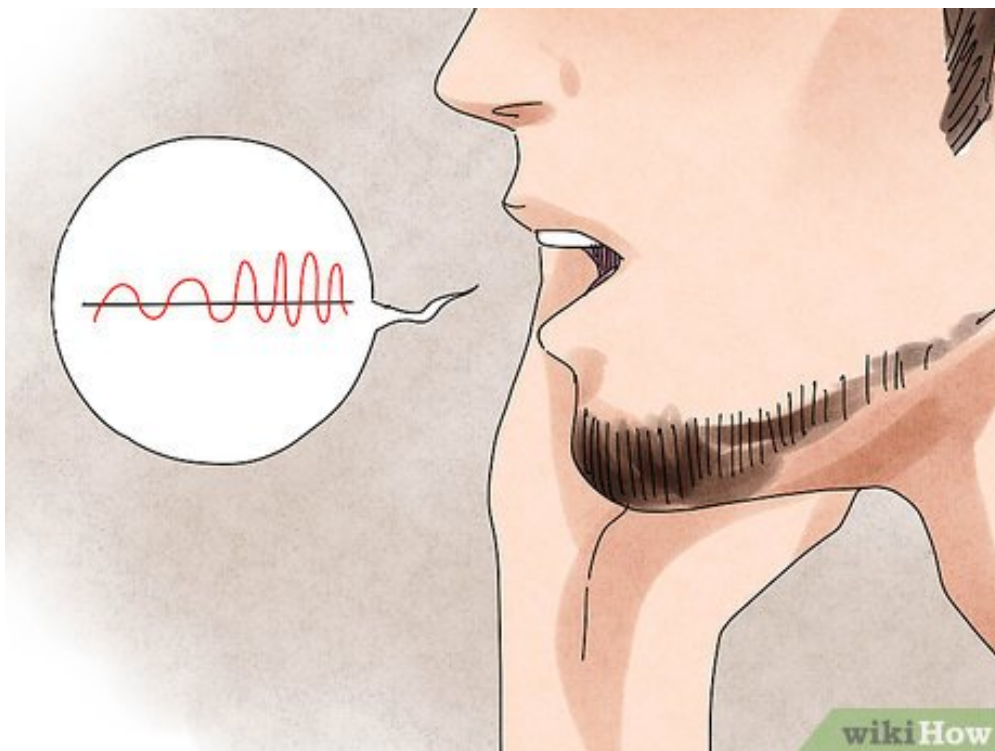


**4 Slow your speech down.** People will perceive you as nervous and unsure of yourself if you talk fast. However, be careful not to slow down to the point where people begin to finish your sentences just to help you finish.<sup>[6]</sup>



**5 Develop your voice.** A high or whiny voice is not perceived to be one of authority. In fact, a high and soft voice can make you sound like prey to an aggressive co-worker or make others not take you seriously. Begin doing exercises to lower the pitch of your voice. Try singing, but do it an octave lower on all your favorite songs. Practice this and, after a period of time, your voice will begin to lower.





- 6 Animate your voice.** Avoid a monotone and use dynamics. Your pitch should raise and lower periodically. Radio DJ's are usually a good example of this.<sup>[7]</sup>



- 7 Use appropriate volume.** Use a volume that is appropriate for the setting. Speak more softly when you are alone and close. Speak louder when you are speaking to larger groups or across larger spaces.<sup>[8]</sup>



## Community Q&A

#### Question

### How can I gain confidence and stop mumbling?



Community Answer

Go out of your way to speak to people as frequently as possible, on whatever topic. Speak clearly and make eye contact. The more you practice, the easier it will become.

Helpful 359 Not Helpful 26

#### Question

### Why is developing communication skills so important?



Community Answer

Communication is important for everyday life. You will need it in order to get a job and buy the things you need. You will also need it to establish new relationships and to resolve conflicts, be they between friends, family members, or romantic partners.

Helpful 426 Not Helpful 40

#### Question

### How do I avoid fear when I am speaking to group of people?



Community Answer

Be confident in what you are saying. Believe in yourself. Take deep breaths and speak slowly.

Helpful 330 Not Helpful 28

#### Question

### How can I speak fluently in English?



Community Answer

Practice as much as possible. Speak in English with others whenever you get the opportunity. Watch English language television shows and movies, read books, magazines, and newspapers in English, etc. Immerse yourself in the language, and the fluency will come.

Helpful 385 Not Helpful 31

#### Question

### How can I get over my fear of speaking?



Community Answer

Practice speaking to yourself in the mirror for an extended period of time. Actually say the words aloud and act as if you are speaking to another individual or an audience. It might feel silly, but it will help you carry on a conversation.

Helpful 598 Not Helpful 62

#### Question

**How can I improve my topic content and vocabulary?**



Community Answer

Collect as much information as possible about the topic for your speech to give you a good understanding of the subject. Look up unknown words in the dictionary and then record your voice to make sure your pronunciation of new vocabulary is correct.

Helpful 319 Not Helpful 31

#### Question

**What are the advantages if we know the right words?**



Community Answer

You can express yourself better and communicate more clearly to others, which can save a lot of misunderstanding and frustration, help you connect better with people, make you better at influencing people, and generally make it easier to get what you want in life.

Helpful 263 Not Helpful 25

#### Question

**How do I improve my communication skills without knowing the language?**



Community Answer

You could focus on body language and expression, but aside from that, it's pretty hard to improve communication in a language you don't know.

Helpful 64 Not Helpful 2

#### Question

**Can I improve my communication skills without joining any institute?**



Community Answer

Sure. You can read articles like this or watch videos, and you can apply the guidelines by talking/communicating with the people in your life.

Helpful 257 Not Helpful 25

#### Question

**How do I make a good impression on people that I communicate with?**



Community Answer

Smile and maintain eye contact and be a good listener. If you've just met someone for the first time, give them a firm handshake and tell them it's nice to meet them.

Helpful 118 Not Helpful 12





## Tips

- To improve your body language, practice in front of a mirror.
- Edit your speech beforehand. It will get better.
- A good speaker is a good listener.
- Be practical and be socially strong. This will give you the idea about how to talk with different people.
- Use appropriate volume for your conversation setting.
- Try to speak fluently and make you sound right to your own ears.
- Do not interrupt or talk over the other person--it breaks the flow of conversation. Timing is important.
- Make sure you're using proper grammar.
- Have confidence when talking, it doesn't matter what other people think.
- Make eye contact when speaking and listening.
- If you stammer in front of people, practice pausing . Listen more and respond fewer words. Try socializing more with people.
- Get feedback and ask questions from your receiver to ensure you were properly understood during your conversation.

## References

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## About This Article



Co-authored by:  
**Gale McCreary**  
Communications  
Coach

This article was co-authored by **Gale McCreary**. Gale McCreary is the Founder and Chief Coordinator of SpeechStory, a nonprofit organization focused on improving communication skills in youth. She was previously a Silicon Valley CEO and President of a Toastmasters International chapter. She has been recognized as Santa Barbara Entrepreneurial Woman of the Year and received Congressional recognition for providing a Family-Friendly work environment. She has a BS in Biology from Stanford University. This article has been viewed 3,664,750 times.

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216 votes - 92%

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