Effective Professional Communication: A Rhetorical Approach

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Contents

Rhetorical Theory

Technical Writing Essentials

Technical Correspondence

Applying for a job

Writing a Report

Public Speaking

Appendices

Land Acknowledgment

Photo #1: Saskatchewan Prairie

The authors of *Effective Professional Communication* wish to begin this text by paying our respects to the land and place where this text was created and starting with a traditional Land Acknowledgment.

This text was a collaborative effort by many people working at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. The University of Saskatchewan campus is located on Treaty Six Territory–home of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, and Dene Peoples–and the homeland of the Métis Peoples. We pay our respects to the Indigenous Peoples that are on this land and acknowledge our responsibility to seek out and learn from them. Together, we will engage in truth telling and building reconciliation as well as the need to engage in the ongoing work of decolonizing our campus community both inside and outside the classroom.

In acknowledging that we are seeking "all" truths, we recognize that the content of this textbook is firmly rooted in Western traditions of knowledge, which risks re-enforcing it as the "standard" and alienating other cultural approaches to knowledge.

As a result, we have striven to include appendices that address these different styles in order to provide students with a broader view of the world and how their own approaches to knowledge fall within it. As this text is a living document, we plan to add more of this content when possible to approximate a stronger truth for all.

Photo #2: The Treaty Six Territory Flag

Photo #

Attributions

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Introduction

Welcome to *Effective Professional Communication*, your text book for the RCM 200 course at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

As you already know, this course focuses on communicating in professional environments. Even if you haven't held a job before, you know–at least on a basic level–that how you communicate changes depending on the context of your situation; specifically, you talk differently when you speak to customers/clients versus your co-workers versus your supervisors.

Our goal in this text is to break down the communication process in professional environments so you can maximize your chance to get hired and retain your job once you graduate from university. We will do this by looking at communication through political, rhetorical, ethical, and interpersonal lenses and applying this knowledge to your future career.

This text has seven main sections:

1. **Introduction to Communication**: What is communication? Is it as a simple as one person transferring information to another? This section will provide a comprehensive overview of the communication process and give us some definitions to work from.
2. **Rhetorical Theory**: How do you connect with an audience and make them care about your message? What are some common challenges that communicators encounter in professional spaces? Rhetorical theory will answer these questions and give you a framework for any messages you craft in the future, whether in written or spoken form.
3. **Technical Writing Essentials:** We all have blind spots in our writing. What are yours? This self-guided collection of

chapters will help you identify and improve any weaknesses you have in your writing.

4. **Technical Correspondence**: You are going to write *many* memos and emails in your professional career. Do you know how to format and organize them in a way that is both professional and concise? We will cover that here.
5. **Applying for a Job**: You may think that you still have time until you need to apply for jobs, but it will come sooner than you expect. This section will walk you through how to develop a stellar job application package to improve your chances of getting a job right out of university.
6. **Writing a Report**: Many students falsely assume that they can write a report because they have written essays before. That is not necessarily true. A written report is a much larger undertaking that takes meticulous planning, organization, and research. We will break down this complex process here.
7. **Public Speaking**: Have you ever been in a presentation or class where you feel lost or like the material is not relevant to you at all? Odds are that's because the presenter has not done a good job building a relationship with their audience or making the content relevant. We will walk you through how to do this very thing in this final section.

Hopefully you can begin to see how this content will help you in your professional career. If at any point you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your instructor.

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

Chapter 1: What is Communication?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe at least three examples of technical communication and explain how they are transactional in nature.
- Explain why miscommunication sometimes occurs in communication and how your own perceptual filters can be the cause.
- Identify and apply two active listening strategies you can use in this course.

Key Terms and Concepts

- Communication
- Technical communication
- Transactional communication
- Active listening

Think about communication in your daily life. When you make a phone call, send a text message, or like something on social media, what is the purpose of that activity? Have you ever felt confused by what someone is telling you or argued over a misunderstood email? The underlying issue may very well be a communication deficiency.

Communication can be defined as “*the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another by means of a message* (McCroskey, 2016, pp. 20-21).

There are many current models and theories that explain, plan, and predict communication processes and their successes or failures. In the workplace, we might be more concerned about practical knowledge and skills than theory. However, good practice is built on a solid foundation of understanding and skill. For this reason this textbook will help you develop foundational skills in key areas of communication, with a focus on applying theory and providing opportunities for practice.

Technical and Transactional Communication

Photo: Communicating complex ideas

What comes to mind when you hear the term **technical communication**? Perhaps you think of scientific reports, specifications, instructions, software documentation, or technical manuals. And you would be correct.

However, technical communication is so much more than that. Technical Writing is a genre of non-fiction writing that certainly encompasses all of the above examples, but it also includes writing produced in day-to-day business operations such as correspondence, proposals, internal communications, media releases, and many kinds of reports. It includes the communication of specialized technical information, whether relating to computers and scientific instruments or the intricacies of meditation. And because oral and visual presentations are such an important part of professional life, technical communication also encompasses these as well.

These are just some of the *many* types of technical communication you will encounter in your career. With that in mind, how much time do you predict you will devote to communicative tasks as a technical professional? Do you think it is more or less than problem solving?

In a recent presentation on the topic of Co-op Work Term Reports, the Engineering co-op coordinator for the University of Victoria presented the following statistics regarding the importance of communication skills in the professional world of engineering:

The Reality: Technical Writing and Communication

- How graduate engineers spend their time:
  - 25-50% Problem solving of some kind
  - 50-75% Communicating (Writing and reading reports, letters, memos, proposals, presentations, discussions w/ colleagues, managers, clients)

- Performance evaluations and job advancement usually depend more on communications skills than on technical skills

(McConkey, 2017)

This data shows that engineers are spending at least half–if not more–of their time on communicative tasks instead of the technical problem solving that is more commonly associated with the field. The research also found that professionals who are more advanced in their careers, such as those in management positions, spend only 5-10% of their time engaged in problem solving of some kind and 90-95% of their time engaging in related communications tasks.

Similarly, in a recent survey of over 1000 professionals from various professions, over 70% of engineers and almost 50% of programmers rated the quality of their writing as either "very important" or "extremely important" to the performance of their jobs (Swarts et al., 2018). Clearly, as Hyman (2002) asserts in *Fundamentals of Engineering Design*, "the stereotype that engineering is for inarticulate nerds is way off base" (p. 42).

Transactional model of communication is the exchange of messages between sender and receiver where each take turns to send or receive messages (Businesstopia, 2018)

So how are these technical professionals communicating? Is it one-sided where they just share the information they have with a client or colleague and then walk away?

No, of course not. In reality technical communication is **transactional** in nature: it entails a purposeful transaction between sender and receiver that provides specific information for practical and specific purposes (informing, instructing, persuading) and is usually geared towards the needs of a specific audience. Technical communicators produce a wide variety of documents and other products, such as:

- Proposals and requests for proposals (RFPs)
- Technical or research reports
- Documentation records and product specifications
- User guides (step-by-step instructions, procedures, manuals)
- Online help, technical support
- Reference information (encylopedia-style information)
- Consumer literature (information for the public about regulations, safety issues, *etc.*)
- Marketing literature (product specifications, brochures, promotional literature)
- Technical journalism (found in trade magazines, media releases, *etc.*)

Thus, technical communication is a highly "designed" form of communication that requires practitioners to have a heightened awareness of the conventions (rules and expectations) and rhetorical situations (audience, purpose, context) in which they are communicating.

This textbook aims to provide you with that heightened awareness–that is, to introduce you to the basic conventions of technical communications, and to train you to take a rhetorical approach to communication tasks, to find the tools and methods that will work best to communicate your ideas to your target audience, and to achieve the desired results.

Communication Can Be Complicated

Clearly, getting your point across requires more than simply speaking in front of a crowd or writing words on a page. How we are understood is due to the context of the communication, along with the relational qualities of who we are communicating with. That context, however, will be different from situation to situation and– most importantly–from person to person.

Exercise: Interactive Video

In the TED Talk below, Hampsten (2016) describes why miscommunication occurs so frequently, and how we can minimize frustration while expressing ourselves better.

This video is the first of many interactive activities that you will encounter through out this textbook. It will stop at different points and give you questions to check your understanding through out. The activities are also bookmarked if you want to go back and try them again.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=331#h5p-17

If the above activity does not work, here is a link to the original video: tinyurl.com/whatiscomm

Now that you've watched the video, answer the following questions:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=331#h5p-11

Finally, reflect on the following questions:

1. What are the perceptual filters that affect how you communicate? Can you identify at least three?
2. How do these filters help or harm how you interpret communication?

Effective Listening Strategies in the Classroom

How will you navigate how you use communication in our course?

Getting the most out of class time involves **active listening**, which means more than simply hearing what your instructors say. It involves engaging with the speaker and the material you hear in an active way. To maximize the benefit you get from attending class, try to use the following active listening skills:

- focus your full attention on the speaker
- ask questions, either out loud or internally, in response to what is being said
- paraphrase ideas in notes
- listen without judgment
- show empathy for the speaker

Restating what you hear is a powerful strategy for being an active listener, but it's obviously impractical in a roomful of other students. That's why taking notes is so important. Think of it as a "silent" way to restate what you're taking in. Focus on capturing the key ideas and on paraphrasing what you hear (rather than writing things down verbatim). Putting ideas into your own words will deepen your understanding and strengthen your ability to recall the information later.

Preparing ahead of time will also make listening more useful and engaging. Do any assigned reading before coming to class, using effective reading strategies discussed elsewhere in this course.

Key Takeaways

- **Technical communication** is more than just a written report or technical manual: it includes any communication on a specialized, technical topic.
- Professionals in technical professions spend half, if not a majority, of their work time on communicative tasks such as writing reports and memos, giving presentations, and speaking with clients.
- These communicative tasks are **transactional** in nature, in that they are highly designed to create a purposeful exchange between the sender and receiver of a message.
- Using **active listening** strategies will help you understand and get the most out of the content in this course.

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Attributions

Chapter 2: McCroskey and the Types of Communication

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the three types of communication discussed by McCroskey: accidental, expressive, and rhetorical.
- Reflect on how the three types of communication have occurred in your own personal experience.
- Analyze how the three types of communication impact the message in a student e-mail.

Key Terms and Concepts

- accidental communication
- expressive communication

- rhetorical communication
- non-verbal communication
- tone
- audience

What is Communication?

Humans, like many other animals, are social creatures: we like to live in groups and work together. Because of this, humans are almost always communicating, sometimes without even knowing it.

In the previous chapter, we provided a general definition of **communication**, but let's take a step back and look at some others.

In *The Nature of Rhetorical Communication,* McCroskey (2016) divides **communication** into three categories:

Communication is	"a substitute for the word *message*"
Communications are	"the process of transferring messages from one place to another"
Communication is	"the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another by means of a message"

(McCroskey, 2016, p. 20)

In RCM 200 we are concerned with the third definition. As you will see, the material in this course focuses on the meaning of messages and not on the media efforts/tools of communications. Specifically, our goal is to help you develop your communicative judgement as you create various messages to be used in technical communication.

With that in mind, let's break down that third definition even more. McCroskey (2016) identifies three types of communication that can fall under the third definition:

- **accidental**,
- **expressive**,
- and **rhetorical communication**.

How do these three types of communication impact our messages? How have they occurred in your own life? The followings sections will answer these two questions.

Accidental Communication

Has your communication ever gotten you in trouble by mistake? Do you sometimes feel like your communication is misunderstood (or misinterpreted) by your audience? Your communication may have some traits of what McCroskey identifies as **accidental communication**. Accidental communication occurs "when one person stimulates meaning in the mind of another without having any intention of doing so and without necessarily knowing that he or she has done so" (McCroskey, 2016, p. 21).

“People communicate their interests, their needs, their backgrounds, and sometimes their weaknesses without having the slightest desire to do so, and often in spite of a definite desire *not* to communicate these things” (McCroskey, 2016, p. 21)

Two words to associate with accidental communication are: *unaware* and *unintended*. Whenever a speaker uses this type of communication, they often do not realize the impact of the messages they are sending to their audience.

Think about the times when your words were taken to be more negative than you intended—perhaps there was a non-verbal element in your message’s **tone** that caused your audience to perceive you differently than what you intended.

Non-verbal communication can play a large role in accidental communication. For example, McCroskey (2016) discusses the impact of how some North Americans inadvertently expressed unfriendliness in a Latin American context, due to the cultural differences of what constitutes as personal space.

Characteristics of Accidental Communication:

- the speaker is <u>unaware</u> of the message being sent
- the speaker may be <u>unintentionally</u> sending messages for the audience to interpret
- can be a result of a cultural “blindspot”

Reflection Questions: Accidental Communication

Reflect on the following questions regarding your own personal experience with **accidental communication**. Identify at least two examples of each.

1. What ways have you accidentally communicated in your **personal life**?
2. What ways have you accidentally communicated in **the classroom**?
3. What ways have you accidentally communicated at **work**?

As you can see, our aim as professional communicators is to identify and avoid any accidental communication in our lives. It's important you understand what this kind of unintentional communication looks like so that you can avoid it in your own professional life.

Expressive Communication

Expressive communication "arises from the emotional, or motivational, state of the individual" (McCroskey, 2016, p. 21). This definition tells us that this form of communication is primarily speaker-focused. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is a **transactional** element involved whenever we communicate, with the audience playing a key role in the communicative process. In expressive communication, the emphasis is more on the speaker, and less on the audience and how they receive the message.

Characteristics of Expressive Communication:

- Focuses on primarily on addressing the speaker's needs, not the audiences'
- Appears as emotional venting in some cases
- Relies upon speaker's impulse rather than their rational choice
- Little concern for meeting the audience's specific needs/values/expectations
- Can be selfish and impulsive
- Often damaging to the speaker's credibility and the audience relationship

Reflection Questions: Expressive Communication

Reflect on the following questions regarding your own personal experience with **expressive**

communication. Identify at least two examples of each.

1. What ways have you used expressive communication in your **personal life**?
2. What ways have you used expressive communication in **the classroom**?
3. What ways have you used expressive communication at **work**?

As with accidental communication, we will want to avoid using expressive communication in our professional lives. Technical communication has both purpose and a connection to audience–both of which are missing in expressive communication.

Rhetorical Communication

Rhetorical communication will be the primary focus of RCM 200. McCroskey (2016) defines **rhetorical communication** as "the process of a source stimulating a source-selected meaning in the mind of a receiver by means of verbal and non-verbal messages" (p. 21). The "source" is another term for the speaker; the "source-selected meaning"

"Rhetorical communication is the primary tool with which we influence and control the thoughts and actions of other people, as well as the environment in which we live" (McCroskey, 2016, p. 19).

implies that the source has the intention to create a specific meaning in the mind of the audience. McCroskey's (2016) definition of rhetorical communication emphasizes the need for meaning to be created in the mind of the **audience**. He writes that this type of communication is "*goal-directed*" (McCroskey, 2016, p. 22, emphasis in original) and that it's always purposefully directed to an audience.

Characteristics of Rhetorical Communication:

- Intentional communication with a purpose
- Success depends on the speaker adapting the message for the audience
- Creates understanding and connection
- Always ethical
- Speaker is aware and purposive in their communication
- Includes deliberate and conscientious choices when addressing an audience
- Relies on the speaker's respect for the audience, their belief in the message's purpose, and their own sincerity

Reflection Questions: Rhetorical Communication

Reflect on the following questions regarding your own personal experience with **rhetorical communication**. Identify at least two examples of each.

1. What ways have you used rhetorical communication in your **personal life**?
2. What ways have you used rhetorical communication in **the classroom**?
3. What ways have you used rhetorical communication at **work**?

By the time you finish this course, you will see how **rhetorical communication** can help you in your career, as well know how to apply these principles in day-to-day job duties such as writing reports and giving presentations.

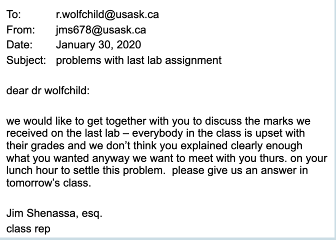
Exercise #1: Reading Quiz

Answer the questions below to check your understanding of this chapter. The questions are mixture of multiple choice and true/false.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You *can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=686#h5p-12*

Exercise #2: Case Study Application

Read the following email and think about the type (or types) of communication it uses. Also, pay attention to your first impressions as you read.



To: r.wolfchild@usask.ca
From: jms678@usask.ca
Date: January 30, 2020
Subject: problems with last lab assignment

dear dr wolfchild:

we would like to get together with you to discuss the marks we received on the last lab – everybody in the class is upset with their grades and we don't think you explained clearly enough what you wanted anyway we want to meet with you thurs. on your lunch hour to settle this problem. please give us an answer in tomorrow's class.

Jim Shenassa, esq.
class rep

Before reading McCroskey (2016), you would have probably identified this email as a poorly-written one, but would not necessarily be able to articulate why. Now that you know some rhetorical theory, you can provide a more detailed answer as to why this email fails in its purpose.

Use the questions below to guide you analysis.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=686#h5p-13

Key Takeaways

- McCroskey's (2016) defines **communication** as "the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another by means of a message" (p. 20-21). He further explains that this definition covers three types of communication: **accidental**, **expressive**, and **rhetorical**.
- **Accidental communication** can occur when the speaker is unaware that they are sending a message at all. Even if they don't mean for their message to be interpreted a certain way, things like their body language or tone can impact how their message is interpreted.
- **Expressive communication** occurs primarily from the speaker themselves. This type of communication has little regard for the needs

and interests of the audience. As a result, this kind of impulsive communication can break audience connection.

- **Rhetorical communication** is the focus of this course. It uses strategies to intentionally craft a message so that it appeals to the audience and helps the speaking create a connection with them.

References

McCroskey, J. C. (2016). *An introduction to rhetorical communication: A western rhetorical perspective*. Pearson Education.

Chapter 3: The Nine Axioms of Communication

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the Nine Axioms of Communication.
- Apply each axiom to professional and personal situations and articulate how an axiom is—or is not—being used.
- Explain how your personal footing and face can positively or negatively impact a given communication situation.

Key Terms and Concepts

- axiom
- footing

- credibility
- face
- face loss
- ambiguity

What are the Nine Axioms of Communication?

All of us have received a message, either in text or spoken form, that either made us feel something. Maybe it made you excited or annoyed, happy or sad. But what specifically made you feel that way? Could you specifically articulate why the message made you respond in the way you did?

This is where MacLennan's (2009) *Nine Axioms of Communication* come in. They can help us understand how communication works, and they can help us identify effective communication strategies and diagnose problems.

Here are all Nine Axioms listed out.

The Nine Axioms of Communication

1. Communication is not simply an exchange of information, but an interaction between people.
2. All communication involves an element of

relation as well as content.
3. Communication takes place within a context of ‘persons, objects, events, and relations’.
4. Communication is the principal way by which we establish ourselves and maintain credibility.
5. Communication is the main means through which we exert influence.
6. All communication involves an element of interpersonal risk.
7. Communication is frequently ambiguous: what is unsaid can be as important as what is said.
8. Effective communication is audience-centred, not self-centred.
9. Communication is pervasive: you cannot not communicate

(MacLennan, 2009)

Most importantly, these axioms help you design effective messages, so that you better understand what you *should* say and how you should say it. Just as importantly, the Axioms tell you what you should not say and what you should avoid when designing and delivering a message.

We will now go over each of these axioms in detail. After each one, you will have an opportunity to apply your understanding to personal experiences and real world scenarios.

The Axioms, in general

MacLennan (2009) defines an **axiom** as “a universal principle or foundational truth that operates across cases or situations”

(p. 8). In other words, the **axioms** of communication are inescapable principles, and we must always strive to be conscious of them, whenever we engage in any sort of communication.

Bear in mind that, while each **axiom** emphasizes a specific aspect of communication, the **axioms** are interconnected; therefore, attempting to ignore or downplay the importance of any of them can indeed impair your ability to communicate effectively.

Axiom 1

> "Communication is not simply an exchange of information, but an interaction between people" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 9).

Every time we communicate there is a personal dimension, a personal impact. We must always think about who is going to be reading our email, letter, or report, who is going to listen to our presentation. Understanding that communication involves interaction really forces us to be conscious of the personal dimension whenever we communicate, and to remember that communication is a complicated, dynamic process, and not a simple transfer of data from one individual to another.

To be a good technical communicator, you should always try to include a personal connection. You do not need to sound like a robot. You can still share elements of your personality and show the person on the other end of your communication that you recognize their shared humanity.

When we communicate, it's not just the facts that matter. What matters most is *how* we communicate those facts and *how* the audience might receive those facts. Regardless of the result of that communication (whether it is positive or negative), an interaction always happens.

Reflection Questions

Read the scenarios below. How would these situations make you feel? How is the first **axiom** at play in these interactions?

1. You are using a dating app and someone messages you with the word "hey." Several minutes pass and they say nothing else.
2. You are at work trying to finish a project when a co-worker comes up to and immediately asks you to do something for them without even saying hello.
3. A supervisor asks you to put together a graph for a report as soon as possible. Even though you are in the middle of something else, you stop what you are doing, make the graph, and send it off to them. The supervisor does not thank you or even acknowledge that they received the graph.

Axiom 2

> "All communication involves an element of relation as well as content" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 10).

When we think about relation or relationships in communication, we are not thinking in terms of romance, but we are considering the role of connection**.** Ultimately, our connection with an audience should influence how we communicate our ideas.

There are three ways that relation comes into play when we communicate:

1. **Establishing a relationship**: You are connecting with someone for the first time and introducing yourself because you've never met before.
2. **Maintaining a relationship**: You will make conscious choices about what you say and how you say it to ensure a relationship keeps going into the future.
3. **Harming a relationship**: This obviously causes negative repercussions. As a technical communicator, we want to try to minimize this as much as possible, even when it's unavoidable.

Here's an example. The first time you hand-in assignment to a professor, whether its this class or any other, you are developing the relationship you have with your professor. This goes both ways since how your professor responds to your work will also establish, maintain, or harm your relationship with them.

For example, let's say you receive your first assignment back from a professor and you get a bad grade. How your professor explains why you got a bad grade will impact your relationship with them. The professor may harm your relationship with them if they only give you negative feedback, or even no feedback at all. As a result, you may feel dejected and not capable in the class.

Unfortunately for the professor, it's their job to provide negative feedback on student assignments so this is always a risk for them. However, in order to mitigate the potential harm, a good professor will also try to suggest ways you can revise their work to make it stronger. In this way, a professor can manage a potentially negative interaction without harming their relationship with students.

A concept that will directly impact your relationship with someone is your **footing,** which is the "foundation up on which your **credibility** rests in a given interaction" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 10). Here's an example. Who would you prefer to receive feedback on technical writing from, an RCM 200 professor or your friend who is unemployed and plays video games all day? You may certainly value your friend, but the professor clearly has more **credibility** than they do.

Ultimately, **footing** is about having an awareness of who you are and what your position is in any communication situation. It's also about appropriateness. If you can recognize your **footing**, and you can respond appropriately, you will be more successful.

In order to determine whether the **footing** we've adopted is appropriate, we need to consider:

1. whether we have the proper credentials
2. whether our **footing** corresponds to our role in the situation
3. and whether our audience grants it.

It's important to keep in the mind that if you only meet one of the above considerations, that doesn't necessarily mean you have **footing** in a given situation. For example, we may have the proper credentials—such as a degree or professional experience—that allow us to speak on a topic, but it may not be appropriate for us to do so. There are situations that call upon each of us in particular to draw upon our expertise, and there are situations in which it is more appropriate for us to refrain from using our expertise, or to allow someone else with similar expertise to comment. Similarly, if an audience doesn't recognize our adopted footing as appropriate, we simply don't have the **footing** to make the comments we're making.

One way to check your **footing** is to ask yourself:

> "What right do I have to say what I want to say?"

If you have that authority that you feel you have, if the situation is appropriate, **<u>and</u>** if your audience also recognizes, then you can probably say what you want to say. However, if you don't have authority, or your **footing** is not appropriate to your role in the situation, or your audience doesn't recognize your authority, and you go through with that communication, you risk harming your **credibility.**

Reflection Questions

1. Below are three scenarios. Using the three criteria discussed above, consider your **footing** in each one. After that, consider what specific factors might help you establish your **footing** in each scenario.
    - discussing with friends an increase of the minimum wage to $15 an hour
    - applying for a management-level position in your field
    - joining a student committee to make recommendations on tuition costs

2. Recall a time when you harmed your relation with someone due to some poor communication choices. What went wrong and how could it have been done differently?

Axiom 3

> "All communication takes place within a context of 'persons, objects, events, and relations'" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 11).

This **axiom** reminds us that all communication takes place within a context of a particular *situation*.

Communication is situational. Whenever we wish to understand a message properly, we need to examine the context in which it was expressed. For instance, we might consider:

- who the intended audience was
- what the audience's relationship to the speaker was
- where and through what medium the message was transmitted
- why the message was created.

When taken out of context, a message can be misunderstood or even manipulated. Additionally, when we are designing a message, we must be mindful of the fact that there is not one approach to solving all communication situations; the situation must have an impact on how we decide to design our response to it.

We need to develop our judgement of how to respond to a situation properly. As a result, this course has been designed to help you better understand how to look at a communication situation—what questions to ask about the situation, what elements of the situation to assess—so that you can have the maximum amount of information available to you when you begin to design a message to solve it.

What are some general elements of a communication situation that we need to think about? You may recall that Bitzer (2009) tells us that we need to think about the exigence, that is, the problem we're trying to solve through persuasion; the audience, paying particular attention to what they know, what they value, and how they feel about the topic; and the constraints, including, of course, your **footing**. In short, this **axiom** tells us that we need to do our research very carefully before we develop a message.

Reflection Questions

Watch the video below. For both cases mentioned, use the four considerations to think about where the miscommunication occurs for the both the sender and receiver.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=565#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/commgonewrong

Axiom 4

"Communication is a principal way of establishing ourselves and maintaining credibility" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 12).

Most of you are in school because you want to become a member of a profession such as an engineer, agrologist, agronomist, maybe a veterinarian or a physician, or perhaps you intend to stay in school and become a professor.

Whatever profession you choose, you are going to have some **credibility** simply because you are a member of that profession, and have thus managed to complete all the education that is required to join the profession. However, your success and your reputation in that profession will be based on what you do with that education.

As a professional, you will regularly engage in communication as an *action*. Since we establish our **credibility** through our actions, and since communication is the action that underlies all other activities we engage in as professionals, effective professional communication is crucial for establishing our **credibility.** Since colleagues and clients see us engage in communication more than anything else, and since we are being judged on our communication, it is important that we make our communication as effective as possible.

All your knowledge, everything you are gaining through your education, is not very useful if you cannot communicate it to people. They won't understand that you have that knowledge, or they may not believe that your knowledge is accurate or applicable. Thus, you need to establish your credibility before you can use what you know.

Reflection Question

Once you leave school, how will you establish **credibility** in your field? If communication is an action, what actions will you need to take? Are they any common mistakes people make in your field that you will need to avoid?

Axiom 5

> "Communication is the main means through which we exert influence" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 13).

Think of what you want in the world. What do you want, beyond your degree? A career? A certain level of income? To get married? Much of what you want to achieve comes through successfully **influencing** others, and the way in which you communicate plays a key role in this process. You're going to earn your degree if you can convince your professors that you know everything you need to know. Once you get your degree, you may need to convince an employer to hire you, through a job package and job interview. Perhaps you will start your own company, and then you will use your communication to raise funds and then recruit the best possible employees, as well as loyal clients. All of these achievements come not only through your hard work, but also through your persuasive skills.

You are going to be an educated, engaged citizen, so you'll need to have excellent communication skills in order to share your skills, your knowledge, and your perspective on the world.

Reflection Questions

As MacLennan (2009) makes clear, influence is not all about getting other people to do things for you. It's about how influence can be used to achieve a mutually beneficial result.

From a global perspective, consider the work of Peruvian singer Renata Flores. When she was 14, Ms. Flores translated the song “The Way You Make Me Feel” by Michael Jackson into Quechua, her Indigenous language which is also the language of the Incas. The video explains her music as well as it’s impact. As you watch it, consider how she used the influence of a popular song and social media to promote engagement with and interest in the Quechua language.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=565#oembed-2

Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/langressurect

Now lets consider this **axiom** from a professional context.

Imagine you are a team leader for a project. In this role, you are in charge of directing the project, but also addressing any challenges your team faces. Below are two scenarios with two challenges you may encounter in such a role.

How might you use your **influence** as a team lead in order to encourage better cooperation amongst your team members?

Scenario 1: Your team is feeling frustrated. Everybody is working on their own individual part and nobody understands how their portion will impact the larger project. As a result, the team has lost time by making several mistakes that need to be fixed. While such mistakes could have been avoided by better communication within the group, everyone is protective of their progress, and shares only what has been completed.

Scenario 2: Your team has been making a lot of progress on the project, but is not going to meet the deadline. Your supervisor decides to give you another team member, David, to help you out. Your supervisor arranges a meeting in which David introduces himself, but nobody on the team wants his help. In private, individual members admit they're not sure how David can help them. Additionally, several of your team members tell you that they're worried that David will take all the credit for doing only a little bit of work.

Axiom 6

> "All communication involves an element of interpersonal risk" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 14).

Since all communication involves relation, then relation is at risk whenever you are communicating. Furthermore, your **credibility,** your influence, and your **footing** are also at risk whenever you communicate. If you communicate poorly, then you risk damaging these crucial elements of effective communication, so it's important that reflect carefully on how to communicate most effectively in every situation.

Face is also at risk. **Face** is who we want the world to perceive us as, how we want to present ourselves to the world. If the world affirms that self-image, we are able see ourselves in the way we want to be seen.

In fact, for most of us, the **face** we project to the world is more competent than we actually feel. We want to appear that we have everything under control, even though it is perfectly normal not to feel that way internally, at least not all the time. We may not feel terribly self-confident, but we don't want to show that anxiety about our performance to the world; we want the world to see us as confident and competent.

Fortunately, the world will affirm our desired self-image. We generally accept people as they present themselves, since doing so is part of the process of building community.

Nevertheless, we risk our **face** when we are communicating because, when we are presenting ourselves and our ideas, we risk being judged, and there is the possibility that others will not perceive us in the way we wish to be perceived.

As a result we experience **face loss**. If you feel nervous about participating in discussions or giving speeches in this course, it is because of the fear of face loss, or face challenge. However, always remember that your audience is also invested in helping you maintain your projected sense of self—no one wants to see you lose **face**, since such an occurrence would make everyone uncomfortable, as if each person in the audience had also lost face with you.

It is important that we recognize **face** risk because we may someday have to issue a face challenge to somebody. For instance, we may have to design a message that corrects somebody's behaviour in a workplace. Employees usually prefer a boss to think of their work as excellent, so when a boss criticizes their work, they may experience embarrassment or humiliation. Such feelings often cause people to act defensively—employees may look for reasons that they're wrong, instead of accepting the feedback. Because our sense of **face** exists in all interactions, we need to carefully consider the **face** implications whenever we are communicating with someone.

Reflection Questions

Below are three scenarios that may happen to you in the workplace. How might your **face** be affected in each?

- **Scenario 1**: As you know by now, not all communication is verbal. Let's say you are working in an open-office space like the one pictured on the right. You have been working for several hours on your computer and decide to take a break. You decide to check social media at your desk, and while you do that, a supervisor quickly walks behind you on their way to a meeting and sees that you are not working. The supervisor doesn't know you are on a break, and they do not stop to ask what you are doing.

- **Scenario 2:** Something always seems to make you late. At least once a week, you miss your bus and show up 15 to 30 minutes late to work. You also easily lose track of time because you are focused on work, so you often to show up to meetings a minute or two late and disrupt them.
- **Scenario 3**: Right now, you are working on three different projects and nothing is going right. You are frustrated and you are happy to let everyone who will listen know it. You complain at your desk, at your coworkers' desks, and even in the breakroom. Your coworkers try to offer some solutions, but you do not listen them. Instead, you blow off their ideas by saying, "Yeah, maybe. I'll think about it."

Axiom 7

> "Communication is frequently ambiguous: what is unsaid can be as important as what is said" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 14).

This **axiom** helps us better understand how to interpret messages that others send to us, and design our messages more consciously. It reminds us that communication is complex, and that there is often much more at work than its verbal content.

Ambiguous communication can complicate a message in a couple of different ways. First, unstated assumptions can create **ambiguity**. If we, either intentionally or unintentionally, do not share information that is required to help our audience understand our message, we are responsible for miscommunication. Also, non-verbal cues, such as body language and other sources of accidental communication, can also damage the clarity of a message.

Sometimes, such accidental communication can betray the true purpose of a message, and, sometimes, the information sent by the accidental communication may be completely unrelated to the message a speaker is communicating; either way, an audience should not be left to try to decipher the ultimate meaning of the message.

Thus, we must aim to have a clear understanding of all of the ways our message can be interpreted by an audience, and to be in control of how it could be perceived. Designing our messages with care enables us to be responsible and accountable for any sort of assumption that could embedded in our communication.

Communication is full of spaces, through which our audience can perceive us one way or another, so it's up to us to ensure that our audience understands what we want to say, and not to misunderstand us. Whenever we communicate, we must do our best to make conscious choices.

Reflection Questions

One form that **ambiguity** can take is **lexcial ambiguity**. This occurs when certain words take on multiple parts of speech. That is, depending on context, the same word could be a noun, verb, or adjective. Take the sentence below for example:

> Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo.

Believe it or not, that is a grammatically correct sentence. How is that possible? It is because of **lexical ambiguity**. Check out the video below for more detail.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:*

https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=565#oembed-3

Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/lexicalbuffalo

Lexical ambiguity is just one way you may see ambiguity in your career. Sure, a piece of writing may make sense grammatically, but that doesn't mean it's good writing. Can you think of writing you've seen where you weren't clear what was being said?

Let's look at **ambiguity** more generally with some real world situations. Below are three scenarios where **ambiguity** occurs. Where does the **ambiguity** come from and how could the situation be made less ambiguous?

- **Scenario #1:** You are working on a group project with three other people. Each person decides to be responsible for a different section, and you decide to do the final portion. However, your part is dependent on the work of everyone else and you can't start until they are done. The deadline is coming up soon and the rest of your group still isn't finished. You have other projects to worry about, so you ask them when they will be done. Their response is, "we'll get it to you soon."

- **Scenario #2:** Your employer sends a company wide email that states, "There are big changes coming in the next couple of weeks. We have decided to restructure our workforce so we can put our company on a stronger path to grow. Our management team has been working around the clock to change how we do business and we know each of you will be a big part of those changes. It will be a difficult transition, but we will only succeed if we keep our heads down and focus on the big picture."
- **Scenario #3:** You receive an assignment back from an instructor with a bad mark on it. You read over the instructor's comments and see comments such as "not clear enough," "this graphic is confusing," and "be more specific."

Axiom 8

> Effective communication is audience-centred, not self-centred (MacLennan, 2009, p. 15).

While MacLennan phrases this **axiom** differently, a re-phrasing can help prevent any potential confusion: if you want your message to be received and acted upon, you're going to have to think carefully about your audience.

Recall that a pathos appeal, when used appropriately, can improve the connection of the person who's speaking with the person who's listening. The better we can engage our audience, the more likely our communication will be successful. Understanding our audience means considering how much they already know about your topic, how they might react to your message, and what would best motivate them to accept your message. Answering all of these questions is crucial in order to improve the design of your message.

Being audience-centred means having a good understanding of what the audience's expectations are. Whenever you do an assignment for RCM 200, for example, you'll need to first consider what your audience is expecting; that is, what are the standards and requirements that your instructor expects you to meet? The more you're able to adhere to those expectations, the more likely it is that you'll be successful.

Reflection Question

For an example of audience-centered messaging, look no further than the University of Saskatchewan's very own College of Engineering.

In 2020, the college unveiled it's re-designed first-year engineering program called Re-Engineered. The college promised that the new program was not only innovative, but would also be more accessible and supportive of first year students. But what did that mean? How would this program be different from other first-year engineering programs across Canada?

The College released the following video to help answer those questions. As you watch it, how does the speaker try to make connections with the audience? How is pathos used to show the speaker cares about the audience's interest? How is the speaker trying to get you to accept her message?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=565#oembed-4

Link to the Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/usaskeng

Axiom 9

"Communication is pervasive: you cannot not communicate" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 16).

Notice the word "**pervasive**"—it is not "*persuasive*." Communication is all around us, saturating everything. It is unavoidable. Once we open up the door to communication, once we start engaging someone, once we've established relation, we cannot choose to turn it off. This is because literally everything we do within that dynamic will be read as some type of message.

Think of the times when you have been upset with someone not communicating—chances are, you were upset because you were interpreting their silence, since silence can also be an act of communication. Think of the times you've messaged someone. You could see the moment someone read the message, but they didn't respond. If you were expecting some sort of response, wouldn't you assume they were saying something, by not saying something? What about those times you had interviewed for a job, and you waited anxiously to hear whether you got it. If they didn't call, were they still sending you a message?

We need to recognize that once we enter a dynamic in which we are communicating with someone in any capacity, all our words, all our actions, all our silences, will be read as a message. Since there is no possibility under such circumstances for non-communication, we should always attempt to be in control of our messages, by making choices that lead to the impact and influence that we hope to achieve as professionals.

Key Takeaways

- The *Nine Axioms of Communication* are universal, interconnected principles of communication that are present whenever we try to communicate with others.
- How we create relation with our audience — whether we are establishing, maintaining, or

harming a connection — can have long lasting impact on that relationship.

- Our connection will also be impacted by our **footing**, **credibility**, and **face** . Therefore, it is important that we consider these elements in mind when communicating.
- **Ambiguity** can also complicate a message. Whether intentional or not, leaving information out can result in miscommunication.
- By crafting messages that are audience-centred, we are more likely to be successful in our communication.

References

Bitzer, L. F. (2009). The rhetorical situation. In J. MacLennan, *Effective communication for the technical professions* (2nd ed.) (pp.18-21). Oxford University Press. (Abridged from Bitzer, L.F. (1968). The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1(1), 1-14.)

MacLennan, J. (2009). *Effective communication for the technical professions* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Chapter 4: The Rhetorical Triangle

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

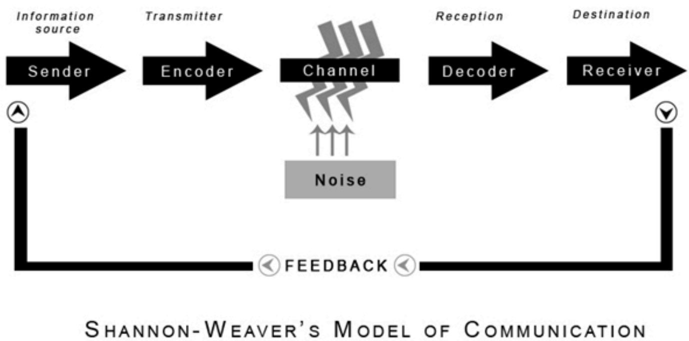
- Differentiate between the Shannon-Weaver model of communication and the rhetorical triangle model of communication
- Explain why Aristotle's rhetorical triangle model is the preferred communication model for this course

Key Terms and Concepts

- Shannon-Weaver model/transmission model
- sender
- receiver
- noise
- feedback
- rhetorical triangle

The Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication

Communication textbooks often adopt the **Shannon-Weaver model** (1948)—also known as the **transmission model**—to represent the linear process of communication, as shown in the image below.



In this linear model, a **sender** encodes information and, through a transmitter, sends it to a **receiver**, who subsequently decodes the message. According to this model then, information seems to move in a simplified, linear manner, even though the process can be complicated by **noise**, which is information that is added unintentionally to a message during transmission, and **feedback**, which is information that the receiver transmits back to the sender.

The **Shannon-Weaver model** does have limits though. While this model of communication provided a fruitful basis for information theory—a body of theory that investigates the processes by which information is encoded and transmitted in a digital context—it is less useful when we consider human communication. In this regard, the model fails to represent the dynamic nature of interpersonal communication, which is due to the complexity of people. In other words, the **Shannon-Weaver model** simplistically depicts an act of communication as though information was somehow shared through a simple, linear action:

> sender transmits a message -> receiver receives the message -> transmission complete!

Unfortunately—perhaps—this is not how human communication works.

A "Simple" Communication Example

Consider, for instance, the simplest example of human communication: when one person greets another person. Let's say Person A, whom we'll refer to as "the speaker," has a prior relationship with Person B, whom we'll refer to as "the audience." In this case, the nature of that relationship will likely influence the type of greeting that the speaker shares. Now, what about the speaker's relationship to their message? What if they are uncomfortable with small talk, and feel compelled to greet the audience, even though the speaker fears that the greeting will invite small talk?

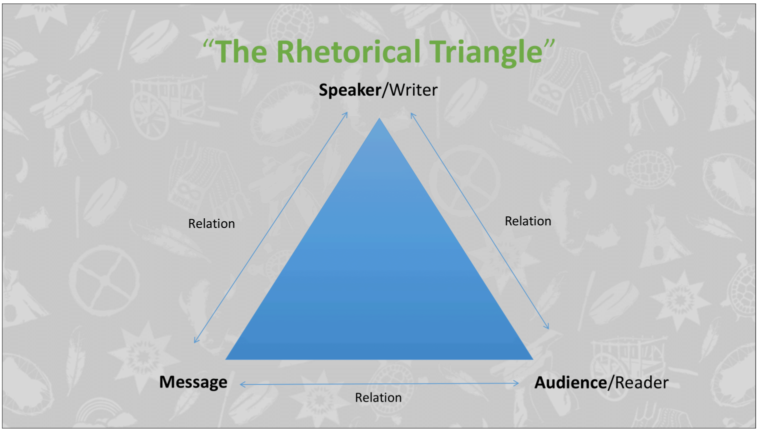
However they feel about the message, the speaker's relationship to their message will influence the way in which their message is expressed. They may be curt in their greeting, or create ambiguity by looking away quickly if they are anxious to greet the audience.

Now, let's turn to the audience: how will they interpret such a message? Inevitably, the audience's understanding will depend, in part, on the nature of their relationship with the speaker and their prior experience with the sort of greeting the speaker offers.

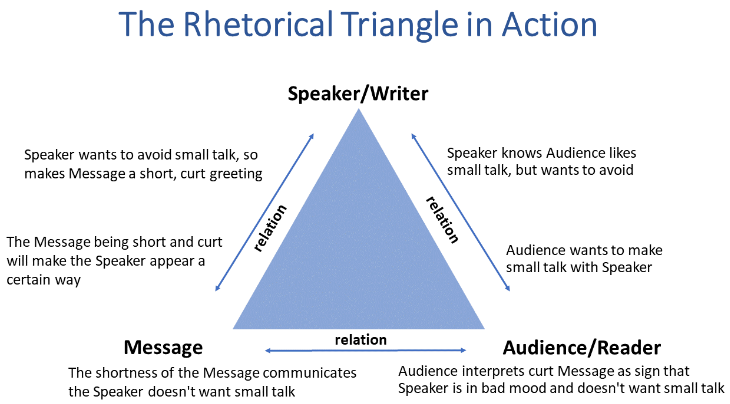
That is just one simple example that shows just how complex it can be to analyze communication. As we will see in this course, communication can be much more intricate.

The Rhetorical Triangle

To account for the complexity of communication, RCM 200 uses a communication model known as the **rhetorical triangle**. Through this model, we can see that each of the elements of communication—the speaker, audience, and message—are related to each of the others, and we can understand that communication is a complex, *dynamic* system. The diagram below shows this.



Now, let apply this model to our **"simple" communication example** from earlier in the chapter:



As the image above shows, there is a lot happening in this one interaction, and all of it is simultaneous!

A key to success in your communication is to recognize it as a dynamic process, where the relationship of the speaker, message, and audience are always impacting each other.

Key Takeaways

- The **Shannon-Weaver model** states that communication is a linear process where the **sender** encodes a message and a **receiver** decodes it.

- While helpful for understanding communication at basic level, the Shannon-Weaver model does not account for all the complexities of human communication.
- In this course, we use Aristotle’s **the rhetorical triangle** model because it emphasizes that elements of communication—speaker, audience, and message—are related to each other. This model shows that communication is much more dynamic in nature.

References

Communication Theory. (n.d.) [Diagram of Shannon-Weaver’s Model of Communication]. https://www.communicationtheory.org/shannon-and-weaver-model-of-communication/

RHETORICAL THEORY

Chapter 5: Aristotle and the Modes of Appeal

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain Aristotle's definition of rhetoric
- Differentiate between the three modes of appeal: logos, pathos, and ethos
- Distinguish a rhetorical model of communication from other communication models

Key Words and Concepts

- Aristotle's definition of rhetoric
- Modes of Appeal
- logos
- pathos
- ethos
- rhetor

- credibility
- character

What is the Art of Rhetoric?

Have you ever had a discussion about a controversial matter, after which you changed your opinion? Have you ever had an argument with a friend or family member that resulted in either you or the other person more aggressively defending a position that became less defensible as the argument progressed? Have you ever found yourself carried away by someone's bad idea, only to ask yourself later, "What was I thinking?!"

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, the art of **rhetoric** might help you understand exactly what happened.

Rhetoric, defined most broadly, is the art of persuasion. Since any type of communication can be created with the intention of influencing opinions or behaviours, rhetorical principles can be found in speeches, written documents, images, films, and even gestures and other non-verbal modes of expression.

By studying rhetorical principles, and their use by the authors of different types of communication, we can cultivate two important skills: recognizing how we are persuaded and using those tools to persuade others for our own professional purposes.

First, we can develop a clearer understanding of how we are persuaded to believe the messages we find convincing. As humans, we often come to accept an idea about the world not only on the basis of available evidence, but also because of our trust in the source of the information. Additionally, the way we perceive the information as fitting in with our beliefs about the nature of reality can have an effect. By considering the principles of **rhetoric**, we can isolate elements of an act of persuasion in order to have a clearer understanding of how reasonable a message is.

Second, studying the art of **rhetoric** can help us communicate more effectively. Because we are so frequently using persuasion—whether we're attempting to secure a job, trying to persuade a family member or colleague to help us with a difficult task, or even hoping to convince a friend to accept our opinion—the ability to be persuasive is crucial for success in both our professional and personal life.

Because persuasion is a universal human activity, complex rhetorical traditions have developed among cultures throughout the world. In this textbook, we focus on the European tradition of **rhetoric**, which began to be documented in Athens in the fifth century BCE, and which has continued to be studied, developed, and applied for nearly two and a half millennia.

According to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE), **rhetoric** is an art through which one can develop "an ability, in each [particular] case], to see the available means of persuasion" (Kennedy, 1991, p. 36). This definition is important for our purposes for two reasons.

First of all, if we're not naturally charismatic, we may ask ourselves, "can I learn to be persuasive?" Aristotle observes that some people are persuasive by nature, while others develop the skill through study and practice. Thus, he anticipates this question by describing **rhetoric** as a *technē* (pronounced "TEKH-*nay*,"); that is, as an art or skill with rules that can be learned (Kennedy, 1991, p. 29). Because some people have a knack for persuasion—others seem to accept their ideas even when those ideas are not very good ones—we all need to hone our persuasive skills in order to help our audience accept our message. Otherwise, a potential audience could risk being misled by an uninformed opinion expressed by a particularly charismatic speaker or writer.

Second, by referring to the "available means of persuasion," Aristotle points to what are also known as the three **modes of appeal**: **ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**. The **modes of appeal** are distinct ways of engaging an audience, and are particularly useful for evaluating others' messages as well as for helping us carefully design our own messages. Analyzing a persuasive message using these tools can give us insight ultimately into whether the message is actually persuasive or not. By considering them while we are composing a document or preparing a presentation, we can increase the likelihood that our audience will be persuaded by our own message.

The Three Modes of Appeal

While Aristotle's approach to **rhetoric** informed rhetorical training in the European tradition to varying degrees, rhetorical scholars in the twentieth century became particularly interested in his theories. These scholars started a movement called the Neo-Aristotelian school of **rhetoric**. While the **modes of appeal** began with Aristotle, their description below reflects the influence of these more recent scholars.

These **modes of appeal** are simple yet profound tools that enable us to analyze the persuasive qualities of messages composed by others and to design more effective messages ourselves.

Before we dive into each mode, watch the video below for a brief introduction to each one.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=396#oembed-1

Now that you have a general understanding of the **logos**, **pathos**, and **ethos**, let's discuss each one in detail.

Logos: Appeal to Logic

Logic. Reason. Rationality. **Logos** is brainy, intellectual, cool, calm, collected, and objective.

When authors or speakers rely on **logos**, it means that they are using logic, careful structure, and objective evidence to appeal to the audience. Authors or speakers can appeal to an audience's intellect by using information that can be fact checked (using multiple sources) and thorough explanations to support key points. Additionally, providing a solid and non-biased explanation of one's argument is a great way for an author to invoke **logos**.

For example, let's say an instructor wants to convince their students that they should complete their homework. The instructor might explain that they understand everyone is busy and they have other classes (non-biased), but the homework will help the students get a better grade on their test (explanation). The instructor could add to this explanation by providing statistics showing the number of students who failed and didn't complete their homework versus the number of students who passed and did complete their homework (factual evidence).

Logical appeals rest on rational modes of thinking**,** such as:

- **Comparison –** a comparison between one thing (with regard to your topic) and another, similar thing to help support your claim. It is important that the comparison is fair and valid—the things being compared must share significant traits of similarity.
- **Cause/effect thinking –** you argue that X has caused Y, or that X is likely to cause Y to help support your claim. Be careful with the latter—it can be difficult to predict that something "will" happen in the future.
- **Deductive reasoning –** starting with a broad, general claim/example and using it to support a more specific point or claim
- **Inductive reasoning –** using several specific examples or cases to make a broad generalization
- **Exemplification –** use of many examples or a variety of evidence to support a single point
- **Elaboration** – moving beyond just including a fact, but explaining the significance or relevance of that fact
- **Coherent thought** – maintaining a well organized line of reasoning; not repeating ideas or jumping around

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Pathos: Appeal to Emotions

When **rhetors** rely on **pathos**, it means that they are trying to tap into the audience's emotions to get them to agree with a claim. Authors or speakers using **pathos** appeals want the audience to feel something: anger, pride, joy, rage, or happiness. For example, many of us have seen the ASPCA commercials that use photographs of injured puppies, or sad-looking kittens, and slow, depressing music to emotionally persuade their audience to donate money.

Pathos-based rhetorical strategies are any strategies that get the audience to "open up" to the topic, to the argument, or to the **rhetor.** Emotions can make us vulnerable, and **rhetors** can use this vulnerability to get the audience to believe that their argument is a compelling one.

But pathos strategies are not only limited to using emotional appeals in your argument. Pathos appeals might also include:

- **Expressive descriptions** of people, places, or events that help the reader to feel or experience those events
- **Vivid imagery** of people, places or events that help the audience to feel like they are seeing those events
- Sharing **personal stories** that make the audience feel a connection to, or empathy for, the person being described
- Using **emotion-laden vocabulary** as a way to put the audience into that specific emotional mindset (what is the author or speaker trying to make the audience feel? and how are they doing that?)
- Using any information that will **evoke an emotional response from the audience**. This could involve making the audience feel empathy or disgust for the person/group/event being discussed, or perhaps connection to or rejection of the person/group/event being discussed.

When reading a text or listening to a speech, locate when the speaker is trying to convince the reader using emotions in their communication. When emotional appeals are used to excess in an argument, this kind of rhetorical strategy can sometimes indicate a lack of substance or emotional manipulation of the audience.

Exercise #1: Identify Pathos Appeals

Pathos is all about tapping into the emotions of your audience to get them to agree with one of your claims. This is done most commonly in advertisements. All advertisements want you to react in some way. They may want you to buy a specific product they are selling, donate to a certain charity, or even take an action that will benefit only yourself. The most effective advertisements, then, are the ones that make a **pathos** appeal to their audience.

Watch both videos below. Each one is an advertisement. As you watch, consider the following questions:

1. What action does the advertisement want you take?
2. How is the advertisement appealing to your emotions?

For the second question, see if you can identify at least three **pathos** appeals.

Video #1: Sarah McLachlan SPCA Commercial

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=396#oembed-2

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/sarahmclach

Video #2: British Heart Foundation

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=396#oembed-3

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/britheartfound

Ethos: Appeal to Values/Trust

Ethos appeals have two facets: audience values and authorial credibility/character.

On the one hand, when **rhetors** make an ethical appeal, they are attempting to tap into the values or ideologies that the audience holds. This can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- patriotism
- tradition
- justice
- equality
- dignity for all humankind
- self preservation
- specific social, religious or philosophical values (Christian values, socialism, capitalism, feminism, etc.).

These values can sometimes feel very close to emotions, but they are felt on a social level rather than only on a personal level. When authors or speakers evoke the values that the audience cares about as a way to justify or support their argument, we classify that as **ethos**. The audience will feel that the author or speaker is making an argument that is "right" (in the sense of moral "right"-ness, i.e., "My argument rests upon that values that matter to you. Therefore, you should accept my argument"). This first part of the definition of ethos, then, is focused on the audience's values.

On the other hand, this sense of referencing what is "right" in an ethical appeal connects to the other sense of **ethos:** the author or speaker. **Ethos** that is centered on the author or speaker revolves around two concepts: the **credibility** of the **rhetor** and their **character**.

Credibility of speakers or authors is determined by their knowledge and expertise in the subject at hand. For example, if you are learning about Einstein's Theory of Relativity, would you rather learn from a professor of physics or a cousin who took two science classes in high school thirty years ago? It is fair to say that, in general, the professor of physics would have more

credibility to discuss physics. To establish their **credibility**, **rhetors** may draw attention to who they are or what kinds of experience they have with the topic being discussed as an ethical appeal (i.e., "Because I have experience with this topic—and I know my stuff!—you should trust what I am saying about this topic"). Some authors or speakers do not have to establish their **credibility** because the audience already knows who they are and that they are credible.

Character is another aspect of **ethos**, and it is different from **credibility** because it involves personal history and even personality traits. A person can be credible but lack **character** or vice versa. For example, in politics, sometimes the most experienced candidates—those who might be the most credible candidates—fail to win elections because voters do not accept their **character**. Politicians take pains to shape their **character** as leaders who have the interests of the voters at heart. Candidates who successfully prove to the voters (the audience) that they have the type of **character** that the voters can trust is more likely to win.

Thus, **ethos** comes down to trust. How can **rhetors** get the audience to trust them so that they will accept their argument? How can authors or speakers make themselves appear as credible speakers who embody the character traits that the audience values?

Aristotle succinctly states that there are three things we trust other than logical proof: good judgement (practical wisdom), good will, and good character (virtue) (Kennedy, 1991).

In building ethical appeals, we see authors or speakers:

- Referring either directly or indirectly to the values that matter to the intended audience (so that the audience will trust the speaker)
- Using language, phrasing, imagery, or other writing styles common to people who hold those values, thereby

"talking the talk" of people with those values (again, so that the audience is inclined to trust the speaker)
- Referring to their experience and/or authority with the topic (and therefore demonstrating their credibility)
- Referring to their own character, or making an effort to build their character in the text
- Displaying their concern for the audience

When reading or listening, you should always think about the **rhetor's credibility** regarding the subject as well as their **character**.

Exercise #2: Chapter Quiz

Test your understanding of the material in this chapter with the quiz below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=396#h5p-5

Key Takeaways

- **Rhetoric** is a set of principles that allow a speaker or writer to persuade an audience to take a specific action.
- Learning these principles will help us understand how we are persuaded by messages and, most importantly, how we can use those principles to persuade others in professional contexts.
- Aristotle is the most famous teacher of **rhetoric**. He believed that anyone could learn the art of persuasion through practice. His three **modes of appeal** are considered one of the best ways to persuade others.
- The three **modes of appeal** are **logos**, **pathos**, and **ethos**.
- **Logos** occurs when authors or speakers use logic, careful structure and objective evidence to appeal to the audience.
- **Pathos** occurs when authors or speakers try to tap into an audience's emotions to get them to agree with a claim.
- **Ethos** occurs when authors or speakers appeal to the values of an audience and try to establish their own credibility and character.
- To be successful at persuasion, a person must use all three **modes of appeal** when constructing their message. Ignoring any one of them will make the message less effective at persuading an audience.

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Attributions

Chapter 6: Bitzer and The Rhetorical Situation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define the elements of Bitzer's rhetorical situation
- Distinguish between an exigence and a rhetorical exigence
- Distinguish between an audience and a rhetorical audience
- Explain how Bitzer's three constituents—rhetorical exigence, rhetorical audience, and constraints—can impact a rhetorical situation

Key Terms and Concepts

- Rhetorical Situation
- Rhetoric
- Rhetor
- Exigence
- Rhetorical Exigence
- Rhetorical Audience
- Constraints

What is a Rhetorical Situation?

Under what conditions does persuasion take place?

The same question can be made for **rhetoric**: under what contexts does rhetorical discourse become possible? This question was the basis for Bitzer's (2009) article "The Rhetorical Situation." In this article, Bitzer (2009)[1] defines three elements that are required for rhetorical discourse to exist. These elements are:

1. the rhetorical exigence
2. the rhetorical audience
3. the rhetorical constraints

When combined, these three elements make up what Bitzer (2009) calls **the rhetorical situation**. More broadly, Bitzer (2009)

1. Note: Bitzer's article was originally published in the inaugural issue of the journal Philosophy and Rhetoric in 1969. We are using the 2009 publication date because you will be reading an abridged version of Bitzer's article in the Canvas module.

defines a **rhetorical situation** as “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence” (pp. 19-20).

That’s a very complex quote, so we are going to break it down. If it helps, we can use the term “communication context” in place of **rhetorical situation** as both mean the same thing. At it’s core, Bitzer (2009) tells us what is the communication context for persuasion: what are the parts of it and what does it look like? To answer those questions, though, we will need to go over some terminology.

What is Rhetoric?

We use the word **rhetoric** a lot in this course, so it’s important that we have a clear definition of it before we go any further. According to Bitzer (2009), “a work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce change or action in the world; it performs some task” (p. 19).

In other words, **rhetoric** is practical, purposeful communication that attempts to create change in the world by enabling a **rhetor** to persuade people to change their beliefs or solve problems.

That probably sounds likes a pretty big claim! How does **rhetoric** change the world? Bitzer (2009) writes, “…rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action” (p. 19). This means that **rhetors** do not act directly. If they see a problem, they are not the ones showing up, rolling up their sleeves, and creating change themselves; rather, they create change through communicating *messages* that bring together the thoughts and actions of an audience.

This is the core or rhetorical discourse. It is not the **rhetor** that is on the ground creating change, rather they use their words to convince others to do it. **Rhetors** use communication not only to help an audience think in a certain way, but also to inspire the audience to act according to the ideas they've been convinced to accept. Thus, Bitzer (2009) asserts that "the rhetor alters reality by bringing into existence a discourse of such a character that the audience, in thought and action, is so engaged that [they] becomes the mediator of change" (p. 19).

That may sound all well and good, but what does it have to do with working in a professional setting when you leave the university? We now know that **rhetoric** is communication that persuades an audience to think in a certain way, or do certain things. Will you be doing any of this in your career? Most definitely! The clients or producers you work with will have problems they need solved, and you will want to convince them that your plans, ideas, or solutions will solve those problems. If you can't, you may not get that important contract for your company, or you be passed over for future projects. Rhetorical techniques can help you be more successful.

Rhetorical Exigence

Whenever we wish to persuade an audience to take action or change their beliefs, we must first have a clear definition of the problem or issue we would like them to address. This problem is what is known as **exigence.** A precise understanding of a problem better equips us to find a solution, and enables the audience to better understand how their behaviour or beliefs could improve the situation.

Keep in mind, however, that even though we are using the world "problem" here, that doesn't mean that an **exigence** is always negative. In fact, the **exigence** could be something that needs to be said or done, which don't always have a negative connotation.

Additionally, it's important to understand that not all problems are rhetorical in nature. As Bitzer (2009) indicates for an **exigence** to be rhetorical, it must be able to be affected by human activity.

Many problems we face do not have a **rhetorical exigence** because of factors beyond our control: natural disasters, diseases, and death are all examples of phenomena that continue to exist regardless of human behaviour. However, within these non-rhetorical **exigences**, one can find many potentially **rhetorical exigences** since people can be persuaded to behave in ways that minimize the harm done by such phenomena.

The other important distinguishing feature of a **rhetorical exigence** is that it requires the use of communication (or what Bitzer calls "discourse") in order to resolve or mitigate the issue it is addressing. If you can solve the problem by means other than communication, then it is not considered a rhetorical exigence.

This distinction is important to understand, as you will need to pick a topic with **rhetorical exigence** for both your written report and presentation in this course. Students often struggle with picking a topic that meets this criteria, so let's look at a few examples where we show the difference between **exigence** and **rhetorical exigence**. We will lay out some scenarios and explain why they do or do not have **rhetorical exigence**. If you can, try to predict what would be a rhetorical exigence for the scenario before you read further.

The news is reporting that a severe winter storm bringing 50 centimetres of snow is about to reach our area.

The winter storm itself has non-rhetorical exigence since no human intervention could stop a winter storm. It will happen regardless of what actions humans do or do not take. However, the potential loss of power and access to grocery stores could be examples of **rhetorical exigences** in the situation. People could be persuaded to prepare for power outages by buying a generator or buying lots of warm blankets. Alternatively, people could be convinced stock up on supplies ahead of time like water and non-perishable foods.

After reading the explanation above, it may come as no surprise to you that debates often occur about whether an exigence is rhetorical or not. Take the following example:

Climate change is drastically impacting our environment and humans need to step in to slow its effects.

It is widely and generally accepted that human activity contributes to climate change, yet detractors attempt to argue that climate change is natural process that is unresponsive to human behaviour. As a result, they regard attempts to mitigate or remediate its effects are potentially misguided. Potential debates like these show that while you may feel your problem has a clear **rhetorical exigence**, others may not agree with you.

That being said, the act of telling an audience that humans need to step in to stop climate change does not have **rhetorical**

exigence in of itself. This is because, even if your audience agrees, they may not know what to do, or feel like they can't make a meaningful impact on such a global issue.

However, according the vast majority of researchers, *specific* human activities contribute significantly to climate change. Thus, such activities can be examples of **rhetorical exigences** because populations can be persuaded to change their behaviour. They can use fewer disposable products or invest in renewable energy and thereby mitigate the potential damage caused by an increasing atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide.

Let's look at this another way: Consider the difference between these two statements in terms of their **exigence**:

> (1) "I want my audience to reduce the time they idle their vehicle because the earth's climate is heating up."
>
> (2) "I want my audience to reduce the time they idle their vehicle because vehicle emissions contribute to the current increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide, which contributes to climate change."

Although we understand the implied argument of the first example due to our familiarity with this particular **exigence**, the second example better establishes the credibility of the **rhetor** because of the clarity of thought it expresses. It carefully draws the connection between human behaviour and its undesirable effects, and clearly presents the **exigence** as a condition we can improve through our collective effort, as opposed to it being an abstract quality of nature that is only implicitly connected to our activity.

This distinction between **exigence** and **rhetorical exigence** is tough. A lot of students struggle with it, so if you are still unclear, do not hesitate to reach out to your instructor for help.

Rhetorical Audience

The goal of rhetorical discourse is to "produce change by influencing the decision and action of persons who function as mediators of change" (Bitzer, 2009, p. 20). Obviously, we can't do that without an audience.

Like with **exigence** though, it is important to distinguish between an audience and a **rhetorical audience** as they are not the same thing. For example, you have probably walked by the dozens of bulletin boards on campus that advertise different presentations that you can attend for free. In many of those cases, the presenter is talking about their research. You could be in the audience for any of those presentations and learn something new and valuable about a topic, but would they push you to make a change?

Probably not. In those circumstances, you are part of an audience, but not a **rhetorical audience.**

According to Bitzer (2009), a rhetorical audience has two criteria:

1. The audience must be able to take action that can either solve the problem or at least improve the situation.
    - This criterion might seem obvious, but it reminds us of the importance of finding a way for our audience to solve, or at least mitigate, the problem we've

identified, or of finding an audience that has the power to do so.

2. There must be some way for the author or speaker to persuade the audience to change their opinion or take action.

    - If the audience is unwilling or unable to consider the **rhetor's** message, there is no **rhetorical situation,** since no change can happen through persuasive communication.

In summary, a **rhetorical audience** is one that can take action to solve a problem *and* can be persuaded by the **rhetor** to take that action.

Constraints

Obliviously, all this talk about convincing others to take action comes with some limits. These limits are what Bitzer (2009) calls **constraints.** A constraint is anything that can make it difficult for your message to be received. Sources of **constraints** include, but are not limited to**:**

- beliefs
- attitudes
- documents
- facts
- traditions
- images
- interests
- motives

These constraints are what limits a **rhetor's** effectiveness in persuading their **rhetorical audience**. It's important to note, however, that these constraints come from both sides. Specifically, a rhetor's beliefs may affect how they design a message, and similarly, an audience's beliefs will determine how they receive that message.

As a result, constraints cannot be simply acknowledged by the **rhetor** and then subsequently ignored. Constraints must be used as tools to help design the message itself.

For example, let's say you want to convince your rhetorical audience to vote in favor of a project that will create a waste-to-energy plant as a way to generate new energy for your city. You may personally know that process is safe for the environment, but your **rhetorical audience** does not know that. Some, maybe all, will be concerned at the idea of smoke from burned trash getting into the atmosphere. Therefore, you must address this constraint in your presentation by talking about how filtering works.

Here's another example. One of the best ways to understand Bitzer's point about constraints is to imagine a situation in which you wish to persuade an audience to solve an **exigence**, similar to the argument you'll make in your extemporaneous speech later this term.

Let's return to the **exigence** we considered earlier in the chapter: idling vehicles contribute significantly to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide, which is responsible for climate change. Some constraints in this rhetorical situation could include:

1. disagreement about the degree to which climate change is a threat to our ecosystem
2. an inclination to value our own comfort and convenience above the well-being of future generations
3. the difficulty of changing one's habits in spite one's belief in the importance of doing so

4. doubts concerning the likelihood that changing one's idling habits will mitigate the problem

Other types of constraints naturally arise from the medium that you use to communicate your message; for instance, are you delivering a speech, posting on social media, writing an editorial, or speaking with your colleagues or family? Constraints also arise due to your personality; for instance, what sorts of communicative risks are your willing to take, and are they likely to yield a positive response?

Looking Ahead

Two of your big assignments in this course are a written report and a persuasive speech. You will be expected to apply this rhetorical theory (and others) into both assignments.

For your persuasive speech at the end of term, you'll need to find a **rhetorical exigence** that your audience can solve, or at least mitigate. As you think about potential or current problems you'd like your audience to solve, think carefully whether the exigence exists among your audience, and whether the action you've identified will actually solve the exigence.

For instance, let's pretend you are particularly interested in dental hygiene, and you found some evidence that certain demographics have dental hygiene habits that could be improved. In order to solve this exigence, you decide you want to persuade people to brush their teeth at least twice per day, and floss at least once per day.

As you consider whether to use this **exigence** and action for your speech, you would first need to consider whether your audience, that is, your classmates, actually fall into this demographic, otherwise you may end up simply attempting to persuade them to commit to an action they already engage in regularly.

If they already have good dental hygiene, the **rhetorical exigence** you've identified would not exist in this context, and thus you would not have a rhetorical situation. Nevertheless, the **exigence** might exist among a larger demographic outside of the classroom, in which case, in order to address the **exigence**, you would need to identify an action that enables your audience to promote good dental hygiene.

Chapter Quiz

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=451#h5p-8

Key Takeaways

- **Rhetoric** is purposeful communication that aims to create change in the world by allowing a **rhetor** persuade an audience to change their beliefs or solve problems.
- The **Rhetorical Situation** is a combination of elements that determine whether it is possible to persuade others in a given situation. These elements are **rhetorical exigence**, **rhetorical audience**, and **constraints**.
- **Exigence** is a problem that needs to be addressed in a given situation. However, keep in mind that this "problem" does not have to be negative in nature. An exigence can be something that needs to be said, or a task that needs to be accomplished. As a result, not all exigences are rhetorical in nature.
- A **rhetorical exigence** is one that can be

affected by human activity. Preventing a winter storm is an exigence, but it is not a rhetorical exigence because humans can not stop it. However, humans can take measures to prepare for the storm to keep themselves safe. The act of persuading humans to prepare for the storm is rhetorical exigence.

- A **rhetorical audience** is an audience who can take action that will either solve the problem or at least improve the situation.
- **Constraints** are elements—such as the beliefs, traditions, motives of your audience or yourself—that can potentially hinder your message. As a result, constraints must be assessed in advance of your presentation and used to design your message.

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Chapter 7: Booth and The Rhetorical Stance

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define the rhetorical stance and the three corrupt stances
- Distinguish between the three corruptions stances: pedant stance, advertiser stance, entertainer stance

Key Terms and Concepts

- “The Rhetorical Stance”
- Rhetorical balance
- Rhetorical corruptions / perversions
- Pedant stance
- Advertiser stance
- Entertainer stance

A Professional Hazard

Let's start off with an activity.

Exercise #1: Summarizing Technical Content

Watch video below. Before you move on to questions beneath it, try and summarize the technical content.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=398#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/retproturenc

1. How easy was it to summarize the content?
2. If it was difficult to do so, why?
3. How could the speaker have made the content easier for you to understand?

Did you have difficulty understanding the innovative product that is being described?
If you are, it's because that video is meant to be an example of technobabble nonsense—it's actually an example of an 'inside joke' that's been circulating with engineers for the last 70

years.

What happens when our rhetorical communication loses its balance? The video above is just one example of Wayne Booth's (1963) **pedant stance**, or a corruption of logos appeals. This chapter defines the **rhetorical stance** and explores what happens when a mode of appeal becomes distorted or corrupted in communication.

The Rhetorical Stance

Drawing on Aristotle, Booth defines **rhetorical balance** and explores the consequences of misusing the **modes of appeal**:

> "The common ingredient that I find in all of the writing I admire…is something that I shall reluctantly call the rhetorical stance, a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker" (Booth, 1963, p. 141).

This means that there are three parts we need to think about when we consider **rhetorical balance**. Does this sound familiar at all it? It should. What do these parts make you think of? "Available arguments?" "Interests and peculiarities?" "Implied character"?

Booth's three elements are the same as the modes of appeal:

- "the available arguments about the subject itself" = **logos**
- "interests and peculiarities of the audience" = **pathos**

- “implied character of the speaker” = **ethos**

He finds that he admires writing that keeps these three elements in balance, a **rhetorical balance**, if you will. Whenever you craft a persuasive message, you should strive to maintain this balance.

However, this doesn’t mean that you will always have equal parts of ethos, pathos, logos. Depending on what scenario you’re in, you may need to emphasize one over the others, but that doesn’t mean that you neglect the others. Rather you need to respect them properly and ensure you don’t focus too much on one at the expense of the others.

Booth discusses **rhetorical balance** primarily through rhetorical imbalance: the three **corruptions** or **perversions** of the **rhetorical stance**. These **rhetorical corruptions/perversions** highlight the problems that arise when one mode of appeal is out of balance from the others. Let’s look at each one now.

The Pedant’s Stance

The pedant’s stance “consists of ignoring or underplaying the personal relationship of speaker and audience and depending entirely on statements about a subject—that is, the notion of a job to be done for a particular audience is left out” (Booth, 1963, p. 141).

Booth dedicates the bulk of his discussion to the **pedant’s stance** professor’s as an example. He recognizes that, as a group, professors commonly fall prey to this corruption. This is because they have a tendency to lecture students without ensuring that their audience is understanding the information they are attempting to convey. Thus, pedants do not bother to adapt information carefully for a specific audience; rather, they expect an audience to interpret and prioritize information on their own, instead of targeting the information particularly for a specific audience in a specific context.

The Advertiser's Stance

Booth (1963) indicates that **the advertiser's stance** "comes from *under*valuing the subject and *over*valuing pure effect: how to win friends and influence people" (p. 143).

We can see an example of **the advertiser's stance** in how companies use "greenwashing" to market their products. Greenwashing occurs when a company markets their product or service in such a way that it appears to be environmentally friendly, when, in reality, the product or service does not have, or hardly has, any environmental benefits. A good example of this are companies that sell bottled water. Often, the images on their labels use natural elements (mountains, rivers, lakes, etc.) even though the bottles themselves are hazardous for the environment.

Another more recent example comes from Starbucks. Starbucks recently made a commitment to banning single-use straws from their stores in order to reduce the amount of plastic waste. Instead, they would only use strawless lids. However, there are concerns that the lids will use more plastic than the original straw-lid combo. This campaign has led to accusations of greenwashing against the company. While Starbucks does not dispute this is an issue, they stress that the plastic used for the new lids is much easier for recycling infrastructure to catch and reuse, as opposed to straws which are too small.

Similarly, a company can also boost their own public image by addressing the audience's concerns about the environment. This is often done in combination with a pathos (an emotional appeal).

Exercise #2: Advertiser's Stance in Media

Watch the ad from Apple below.

How is **the advertisers stance** being used here to push the company's agenda?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=398#oembed-2

Link to Original Video tinyurl.com/appleclimate

The Entertainer's Stance

Finally, Booth defines **the entertainer's stance** as the "willingness to sacrifice substance to personality and charm" (Booth, 1963, p. 144). In communication, entertainers prioritize their own ego gratification over establishing appropriate relation with an audience or delivering a coherent message. Thus, entertainers often focus excessively on gaining their audience's approval or admiration, or, in some cases, contempt, while failing to establish their professional credibility and persuade their audience.

Exercise #3: Apply the Rhetorical Stance

Did you realize that *Dragon's Den* is a show about rhetoric? It focuses on the act of persuading others to fund an idea/product.

After watching the clip below, you will conduct a rhetorical analysis. Consider the questions below as you apply RCM 200 theory.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=398#oembed-3

1. Who is saying what to whom and for what purpose?
2. Is Steven's pitch to the Dragons an example of effective persuasion communication?
3. If not, which stance has Steven fallen into during his presentation?
4. Considering a balanced rhetorical approach, how could Steven's pitch been improved?

Chapter Quiz

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=398#h5p-6

Key Takeaways

- Booth states that **rhetorical balance** is essential in a given **rhetorical situation**. Specifically, he says that the most admirable writing is that which maintains a balance between three elements (which are the same as the modes of appeal): the available arguments (logos), the interests/ peculiarities of the audience (pathos), and the character of the speaker (ethos).
- Of course, it may not be possible to perfectly balance all three modes of appeal in a given **rhetorical situation**. Sometimes one or two modes may need to emphasized over another. What matters is that you do not overdo it at the expense of the other modes of appeal.
- When the three modes are out of balance, this is known as a **rhetorical corruption/perversion**. He mentions three corruptions: **the pedant's**

stance, **the advertiser's stance**, and **the entertainer's stance**.

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TECHNICAL WRITING ESSENTIALS

Chapter 8: Technical Writing Resources

Technical Writing Resources

As you probably know already, a lot is at stake when a professional composes formal documents such as grant applications, project proposals, formal reports, and cover letters. Hiring managers will throw out an entire application from an applicant if they see a single punctuation error. Potential clients may think you aren't very professional if you keep making the same grammatical errors over and over again. Therefore, it is important to learn a few skills that will help you to identify recurring writing errors in your work. Even experts in the field make mistakes, but Writing Studies scholars have demonstrated that **self-awareness** can be developed in order to improve our technical writing.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of correct grammar, consistent use of either Canadian or American spelling in your written assignments, and proper citation of sources. Your ability to write well not only demonstrates your professionalism, but also establishes your *writerly* ***ethos***, which demonstrates your credibility on the page.

The following chapters will be a little different from the rest in our textbook. In the next few chapters, you will explore and reflect on common writing problems as they apply to you. Citation is certainly an important part of this process, but we will discuss that later in a future chapter.

We will start by providing an overview of sentence structure, and then you will have a chance to review a writing issue that is relevant to you.

Chapter 9: The Basic Elements of a Sentence

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Recognize the difference between a clause and phrase
- Distinguish between an independent clause and a dependent clause
- Identify and explain the four different sentence structures (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex)

Key Terms and Concepts

- phrase
- clause
- independent clause

- dependent clause
- coordinating conjunction
- subordinate conjunction

Unsurprisingly, you are required to submit written assignments for this course. Your own level of comfort in this area will be different from that of other students, but like all skills, writing is improved through practice. All of us have strengths when it comes to writing, and all of us have areas we can improve.

We're going to start small right now and focus on sentence level issues that can harm your writing. This way, we have a common language as we discuss this topic. After that, you'll have a chance to pick a common writing issue that is relevant to you.

Let's start by going over basic grammatical terms that you will need to know for this section.

Exercise #1: Grammar Vocabulary Self-Assessment

Below you will see some flash cards with grammatical terms. These are all terms that we will mention through out this technical writing section. Try to predict what you think these words mean. If you can't define the word, can you come up with an example? If the definitions don't make sense yet, that's okay! We'll go into these things later. This assessment is just for your to test your own knowledge.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=354#h5p-35

Clauses and Phrases

When building anything, be it a car, a house, or even a sentence, it is important to be familiar with the tools you are using. For this course, grammatical elements are the main "tools" you use when when building sentences and longer written works such as reports. Thus, it is critical to have some understanding of grammatical terminology in order to construct effective sentences. If you would like to review some basic parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, articles, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc), see the [Parts of Speech Overview](#) at the Purdue OWL website. Now let's get into it!

The two essential parts of a sentence are the **subject** and the **verb**. The **subject** refers to the topic being discussed while the **verb** conveys the action or state of being expressed in the sentence. When you combine these two elements, you get a **clause**. All **clauses** must contain both a **subject** and a **verb**.

Here are two simple examples of a **clause**.

(1) I walk.
(2) I eat food.

Both sentences have a **subject** and a **verb,** so they are **clauses**. There are two types of clauses in writing: an **independent clause** and a **dependent clause**.

There are also **phrases**, which lack either a subject or a verb, or both, so they need to relate to or modify other parts of the sentence. Don't worry about that too much about **phrases** though. We are going to focus on **clauses** here.

Independent clauses, also called main clauses, can stand on their own and convey an idea. Let's look at some examples.

Here is a sentence:

> The engineers stood around the table looking at schematics for the machine.

Can you identify the **subject**, **verb**, **clause**, and **phrase** in that sentence? If not, that's okay.

Here's a break down of the difference parts of the sentence.

Independent Clause	**Phrases**
1. The **engineers** stood around the table	looking at the schematics for the machine.
(**subject**) (verb) (phrase)	(phrase) (phrase)

Notice the **independent clause** [The engineers stood around the table] is a complete idea. If we took at the phrase, the independent clause would work as a complete sentence. The **phrase** [looking at schematics for the machine] is not. It has a verb [looking], but not a subject, which is why it isn't a **clause**. It could not be a complete sentence on its own.

Dependent clauses rely on another part of the sentence for meaning and can't stand on their own.

Here's an example:

After they discussed different options, they decided to re-design the the components.

Can you identify the different parts we have discussed so far? Below is a break down of the sentence.

Dependent Clause	**Independent Clause**
2. After **they** discussed different options,	**they** decided to re-design the components.
Sub. Conj. (**subject**) (verb) (object)	(**subject**) (verb) (phrase)

Sentence 2 has one **dependent clause** and one **independent clause**, each with its own subject-verb combination ["they discussed" and "they decided"]. The two clauses are joined by the **subordinate conjunction**, "after," which makes the first clause subordinate to (or dependent upon) the second one.

Being able to identify the critical parts of the sentence will help you design sentences that have a clear and effective subject-verb relationship.

If you need some more guidance on **clauses**, please watch one or both of the videos below. The first video takes a humorous approach, while the second is more formal.

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Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/holidayclause

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=354#oembed-2

Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/indepclauses

Exercise #2: Identify the Clause

In this activity, you will identify all the words in either the **independent clause** or **dependent clause** in a sentence. You must click on all the words that are part of that **clause** to get the points.

For example, if you are supposed to identify an **independent clause**, and your sentence is

I will go to work after I eat breakfast.

you would click on "I" "will" "go" "to" and "work"

If you are supposed to identify a **dependent clause** for the same sentence, you would click on "after" "I" "eat" and "breakfast".

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Sentence Structures

Sentence structures are how we combine **independent clauses**, **dependent clauses**, and **phrases** to create complete ideas in our writing. There are four main types of sentence structures: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. In the examples above, Sentence 1 is a simple sentence, while Sentence 2 is complex.

We will go over each sentence structure now.

SIMPLE SENTENCES have one main **clause clause** and any number of phrases. Below is the formula for a simple sentence.

subject + verb

The following are all examples of simple sentences:

- A simple sentence can be very effective.
- It makes one direct point.
- It is good for creating emphasis and clarity.
- Too many in a row can sound repetitive and choppy.
- Varied sentence structure sounds more natural.

Can you identify the **subject**, **verb**, and **phrases** (if any) in the above sentences?

COMPOUND SENTENCES have two or more main **clauses** joined by **coordinating conjunctions** (CC) such as *and, but, for, yet, nor, or, so*. A common acronym for remembering all of the conjunctions is FANBOYS. You can also connect them using punctuation such as a semi-colon or a colon. By **coordinating** the ideas, you are giving them roughly equal weight and importance.

Please note that these **coordinating conjunctions** are different from **subordinate conjunctions**, which show a generally unequal relationship between the clauses.

Below is the formula for a compound sentence:

subject + verb, CC subject + verb

The following sentences are all compound. The **coordinating conjunctions** are all in bold:

- A compound sentence coordinates two ideas**,** **and** each idea is given roughly equal weight.
- The two ideas are closely related**, so** you don't want to separate them with a period.
- The two clauses make up part of the same idea, **so** they should be part of the same sentence.
- The two clauses may express a parallel idea, **and** they might also have a parallel structure.
- You must remember to include the coordinating conjunction, **or** you may commit a comma splice.

In formal writing, avoid beginning a sentence with a **coordinating conjunction**.

COMPLEX SENTENCES express complex and usually unequal relationships between ideas. One idea is "**subordinated**" to the main idea by using a **subordinate conjunction** (like "while" or "although"). One idea is "dependent" upon the other one for logic and completeness. **Complex sentences** include one main clause and at least one dependent clause (see Example 2 above). Often, it is stylistically effective to begin your sentence with the dependent clause, and place the main clause at the end for emphasis.

subord. conjunction + subject + verb (*this is the dependent clause*), subject + verb (*this is the independent clause*)

The following are all examples of complex sentences. **Subordinate conjunctions** are in bold.

- **When** you make a complex sentence, you subordinate one idea to another.
- **If** you place the subordinate clause first, you give added emphasis to the main clause at the end.
- **Despite the fact that many students try to use them that way**.
    - x NOTE: this last bullet is a *sentence fragment*, and not a subordinate clause. Subordinate clauses cannot stand on their own.

Check out this link for a list of **subordinate conjunctions** if you would like to see more examples.

COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES have at least two **independent clauses** and at least one **dependent clause**. Because a **compound-complex** sentence is usually quite long, you must be careful that it makes sense; it is easy for the reader to get lost in a long sentence.

Given the complex nature of the structure, let's look at a few examples and break them down into their parts:

Alphonse doesn't like action movies because they are so loud, so he doesn't watch them.

Independent Clause #1: Alphonse doesn't like action movies.

Dependent Clause: because they are so loud
Independent Clause #2: he doesn't watch them.

> Although it will be close, I think we will meet the deadline, and we will complete the project.

Dependent Clause: Although it will be close
Independent Clause #1: I think we will meet the deadline
Independent Clause #2: we will complete the project.

> While our supervisor can be a bit of a jerk at times, he genuinely cares about the work and he wants to see us succeed.

Dependent Clause: While our supervisor can be a bit of a jerk at times
Independent Clause #1: he genuinely cares about the work
Independent Clause #2: he wants to see us succeed

EXERCISE #3 Identifying Sentence Types

Read the sentences below and identify which sentence structure is being used.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=354#h5p-3

EXERCISE #4: Combining sentences

Below are two sentences separated by a line (|). Combine the pair of sentences to make one idea subordinate to the other. You can do this by either writing them down, or thinking it in your brain. When you have an answer, click on the sentences to see two possible answers.

Notice the impression you convey by how you subordinate one idea to another. If your combined sentence was a topic sentence for a paragraph, what idea would the reader expect that paragraph to emphasize?

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Now that you have an idea of different sentence structures, let's focus on specific issues that can damage your writing. Below, you will find links to other chapters, each with it's own specific writing focus. Since everyone's needs are going to be different, we want you to focus on **one** chapter that you think you need the most help with. Each section will have activities for you to do to check your understanding of the content.

If you're not sure which to choose, ask your self the questions below. If you don't know the answer, then click the link to be taken to the appropriate section.

- Are your sentences often too short, and not conveying complete ideas? (Sentence Fragments)
- Do you write in long, confusing sentences and not know how to break them up? (Run-On Sentences)
- When is it appropriate to use the passive voice? Is a nominalization a good thing? (Verb Tense)
- Do you know how to use a semicolon or colon? (Punctuation)
- Have you ever been told that your writing needs to be trimmed down? (Eliminating Wordiness)

Key Takeaways

- A sentence must have a subject and verb to form a complete idea.
- A clause has both a subject and verb. There are two types of clauses: an independent clause (which can stand alone) and a dependent clause (which can not stand alone).
- Using a variety of sentence types as well as using these types strategically to convey your ideas will strengthen your style. Keep the following in mind:
    - **Simple sentences** are great for emphasis. The make great topic sentences.
    - **Compound sentences** balance ideas; they are great for conveying the equal importance of related ideas.
    - **Complex sentences**, when you use them effectively, show complicated relationships between ideas by subordinating one idea to another.
    - **Compound-complex sentences** can add complexity to your writing, but you need be make sure it the writing doesn't lose the reader.
- Ultimately, using a combination of these structures will make your writing stronger.

References

Purdue Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Parts of speech overview*. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/parts_of_speech_overview.html

Attributions

Chapter 10: Sentence Fragments

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the cause of sentence fragments
- Identify three different types of sentence fragments
- Apply strategies to fix sentence fragments

Key Terms and Concepts

- sentence fragments
- preposition
- prepositional fragment
- subordinate conjunction
- subordinate conjunction fragment
- gerund
- gerund fragment

It's inevitable. In using a variety of sentence types in your writing, you will have errors. One of the most common errors that writers make are **sentence fragments.**

The Basics

In past writing assignments, your professor may have written the word "Fragment" or "frag" or even "not a complete sentence" on your paper. A **sentence fragment** is a sentence that is missing a **subject** or a **verb**. While the sentence may include a description or may express part of an idea, it does not express a complete thought, and that is the issue.

Look at the example below:

Children helping in the kitchen.

The above example is a **sentence fragment**. It does not express a complete thought. If you read it out loud, it should sound like something is missing. In this case, a **verb** is missing.

Now, you might say, "Wait a minute, isn't 'help' a verb?" Well, often it is a verb, but in this case it is not. What we have here is known as a **gerund phrase**. We'll explain this in more detail in a little bit, but, essentially, what that means is that the entire **phrase** above serves as the subject for the sentence. That's right! Multiple words can combine to make a single subject!

Thankfully, you can easily fix this type of fragment by adding the missing subject or verb. In the example, the sentence was missing a verb. Adding *often make a mess* makes this a complete sentence.

Children helping in the kitchen **often make a mess**.

It's that easy! If someone tells you there is a **sentence fragment** in your writing, first figure out whether you're missing a subject, verb, or both, and then fill it in.

Exercise #1: What is Missing?

Read each **sentence fragment** below and decide if a subject or verb is missing. Then, try to come up with a fix on your own. Click on the arrow to check your answer.

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Before we dive into different types of sentence fragments and how to fix them, here's a short video that will provide an overview.

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Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/fixfrags

Identifying Sentence Fragments

Let's get a little more technical now. We know that a **sentence fragment** occurs when a subject or verb is missing from a sentence. **Sentence fragments** also occur because of some common error, such as starting a sentence with a **preposition**, a **subordinate conjunction**, or a **gerund** —don't worry, we'll explain what those are in a minute. If you use the four basic sentence structures when you write, you should be able to avoid these errors and thus avoid writing **sentence fragments**. Nevertheless, mistakes still happen, so it's important to know what to look for while you revise.

Preposition Fragments

Prepositions serve a lot of different purposes. These are words such as *in*, *on*, *at*, *of*, and *under* (and there are many, *many* more). Essentially, they are used to show relationships between words.

For example:

The dog is *under* the table.

under is the preposition as it shows where the dog is in relation to the table. For more background on what a preposition is, check out this link from Grammarly.

When you see a preposition in a sentence, check to see that it is part of a sentence containing a subject and a verb. If it is not connected to a complete sentence, it is a **sentence fragment**.

Here is an example of a **preposition fragment**:

After walking two miles.

In the above example, *after* is the **preposition** and we are also missing a subject. Who is walking the two miles?

Let's try this again.

After walking over two miles. John remembered his wallet.

Now we have two sentences. Does that fix the problem? We know who did the walking now. It's John.

Well, no. It doesn't. "After walking over two miles" is still a **sentence fragment** because it is missing the subject. Even if it's explained in the next sentence, it still doesn't work grammatically because it's not a complete idea.

Luckily, the problem is an easy fix. You can combine the **sentence fragment** with the second sentence.

The easy way is to replace the period with a comma:

After walking over two miles, John remembered his wallet.

You can also rearrange the sentence so the **preposition fragment** goes at the end of the sentence. Just make sure you drop the comma.

John remembered his wallet *after* walking over two miles.

Is one version better than the other? Technically, no. As with all writing, the best approach depends on context. If you have an entire paragraph that starts with only prepositional phrases, it's going to look a little odd. It's all about balance and using a variety of sentence structures to make your writing stand out.

Subordinate Conjunction Fragments

Do you remember **subordinate conjunctions** from the chapter on sentence structure? **Subordinate conjunctions** include words such as *since*, *because*, *without*, or *unless*. Like **prepositions** , they serve many different purposes. For more background on how **subordinate conjunctions** work, check out this link from Grammarly.

Take a look at the incorrect example sentence below. In this case, *because* is the **subordinate conjunction**.

Because we lost power.

"Now hold on!" you might be saying, "you said at the start of this chapter that a **sentence fragment** is missing either a subject or a verb, and that first sentence has both!"

You're right. It does. There is a subject (we) and a verb (lost), but since the sentence begins with "because," it does not feel like a complete idea. Read it out loud. It should sound like something is missing. Its incompleteness suggests that it's a **sentence fragment,** and more specifically, a **subordinate conjunction fragment**! Fortunately, there is an easy fix. Let's add another sentence just like last time.

Because we lost power. The entire family overslept.

Does something about this type of sentence seem familiar? It should! Structurally, it should remind you of the **prepositional fragment** we just fix. Many writers will try adding a another sentence to fix their **sentence fragments** like in the example above and not actually fixing anything! The example above is obviously still wrong, but its similarity to the **prepositional fragment** example suggests how to fix it.

Because we lost power, the entire family overslept.

The entire family overslept because we lost power.

Be sure not to forget to include that comma between the two sentences if the **subordinate conjunction** starts the sentence.

Gerund Fragments

Gerunds are a little more complicated. Essentially, when a word ends in *-ing,* it can be either a noun, an adjective, or a verb. If the -ing word is noun, or, in some cases, an adjective, then it is known as a **gerund.**

Let's use the word "singing" as an example.

She is singing at the festival tonight.

In the above example, *singing* is combined with a helper verb (is) to make *is singing*. In this case, *singing* is being used as a verb.

Now look at this example.

Singing is what I was born to do!

Don't be fooled! *Singing* looks the exact same, but it's not being used as a verb anymore. It's a noun! More specifically, it's the subject of the sentence. Now it's a**gerund**!

Let's look at one other example with the word *working*:

Verb: I **was working** on my part of the report until midnight.

Gerund: Working on reports until midnight make me tired the next morning.

In the first sentence, *working* has a helping verb (was) which means it's the verb form. In the second sentence, *working* is being used as the subject of the sentence, which makes it a noun. Therefore, it is a **gerund**.

If you need a little more help understanding **gerunds,** check out this link from Grammarly.

So what do these **gerunds** have to do with **sentence fragments**? Let's look an an example of a **gerund fragment**:

Taking deep breaths. Saul prepared for his presentation.

In that example, *taking* is the **gerund**. Does the first sentence make sense on it's own? Does it sound like a complete idea?

No. It doesn't.

So how do we fix this? Well, like the other two fragment types we covered, we can combine the fragment with the next sentence by using a comma instead of a period.

> *Taking* deep breaths, Saul prepared for his presentation.

You can also rearrange the order of the sentences. However, when you do that, you may have to add words so it makes sense.

> Saul prepared for his presentation by *taking* deep breathes.

You can also change the **gerund** back into a verb by changing the structure of the sentences.

> Saul prepared for his presentation. He *was taking* deep breaths.

Notice that we can tell *taking* is a verb now because it has a helping verb (was).

Sentence Fragment Review

As we've seen, **sentence fragments** can take many different forms. Fortunately, they are easy to fix. It's all a matter of knowing what to look for and making sure your fixes make sense. Let's test your understanding now.

Exercise #2: Identify and Fix the Sentence Fragment

Below you will see two sentences. One will be a sentence fragment, the other will be a complete sentence. First, identify which sentence is the fragment and what type it is: a **preposition fragment**, a **subordinate conjunction fragment**, or a **gerund fragment**.

Next, come up with a fix so that both sentences make grammatical sense. The solution will provide two *possible* solutions, since there are many ways you could fix the sentences. If you're not sure if your solution works, please check with your instructor.

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If you would like to watch another video on **sentence fragments**, try this one:

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Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/senfragrev

Key Takeaways

- A **sentence fragment** occurs when it is missing either a **subject**, **verb**, or both.
- They can generally be fixed by adding the missing elements to the sentence. The most common issue is that a verb is a missing.
- There are also different types of fragments: **prepositional fragments**, **subordinate conjunction fragments**, and **gerund fragments**.

Now that you are finished with this chapter, you can either click on one of the other sentence-level issues and learn about them, or continue to the next required chapter.

Go To Another Topic

Run-On Sentences | Verb Tense | Punctuation | Eliminating Wordiness

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Attributions

Chapter 11: Run-on Sentences

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the cause of a run-on sentence
- Differentiate between a fused sentence and a comma splice
- Apply three strategies to fix run-on sentences

Key Terms and Concepts

- run-on sentence
- fused sentence
- comma splice
- coordinating conjunctions
- subordinate conjunctions
- transition words

It's inevitable. In using a variety of sentence types in your writing, you will have errors. One of the most common errors students have are **run-on sentences.**

The Basics

Just as short, incomplete sentences can be problematic, lengthy sentences can be problematic too.

As writers we want to ensure our sentences are always form a complete idea to avoid confusion for our reader. A "complete sentence" is also known as an **independent clause** which we learned about in the previous chapter. Here's an example:

> I have to complete my project by tomorrow. It is worth 30% of my grade.

Both sentences are independent clauses. They both express a complete idea.

However, many people make mistakes when they incorrectly combine two or more independent clauses. This is what is known as a **run-on sentence**.

A **run-on sentence** can take two main forms. Before we tell you what those are, so if you articulate it on your own. Read the examples below and see if you can identify what is wrong with each.

> **Example #1**: I have to complete my project by tomorrow it is worth 30% of my grade.

Example #2: I have to complete my project by tomorrow, it is worth 30% of my grade.

Example #1 is known as a **fused sentence**. This means that two independent clauses are combined without any punctuation.

Example #2 is known as **comma splice**. This means that two independent clauses are incorrectly joined by a comma.

Look at two more examples below. Can you tell which one is a **fused sentence** and which is a **comma splice**?

Example #1: We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

Example #2: A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes play all over the yard.

Example #1 is a **comma splice.** Example #2 is a **fused sentence**. Let's do some more practice identifying the two.

Exercise #1: Fused Sentence or Comma Splice?

Read the **run-on sentences** below. Decide if they are an example of a **fused sentence** or a **comma splice**.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=893#h5p-27

Fixes for Run-on Sentences

While **run-on sentences** are extremely common, they are also easily fixed by using punctuation, **coordinating conjunctions**, or **subordinate conjunctions**.

Punctuation

A period and a semicolon are the most common punctuation marks used to fix **run-on sentences**.

A period will correct the error by creating two separate sentences.

Run-on: There were no seats left, we had to stand in the back.

Complete Sentence: There were no seats left. We had to stand in the back.

Using a semicolon between the two complete sentences will also correct the error. A semicolon allows you to keep two closely related ideas together in one sentence. When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that both parts of the sentence are **independent clauses**.

Many people mistakenly assume a semicolon can be used like a comma, and that is not correct.

Run-on: The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Complete Sentence: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Make sure that both ideas are closely related before you use a semicolon. If they are not related, you cannot use a semicolon.

For example, a semicolon can't be used in the following sentence because both ideas are not related:

Incorrect Semicolon Use: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** we ate fast food for dinner.

Now, you might be saying, "What if they ate fast food because of the accident? Wouldn't the two sentences be related then?"

In such a case, you may be right. But it falls on the writer to make that distinction clear to the reader. It's **your job** to make sure the connection between your ideas is clear! This can be done with **transition words**.

When you use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses, you may wish to add a transition word to show the connection between the two thoughts.

After the semicolon, add the transition word and follow it with a comma:

Run-on: The project was put on hold we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Complete Sentence: The project was put on hold; *however*, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

We can also apply this to our incorrect example above:

Incorrect Semicolon Use: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** we ate fast food for dinner.

Correct Semicolon Use: The accident closed both lanes of traffic**;** therefore, we ate fast food for dinner.

Coordinating Conjunctions

You can also fix **run-on sentences** by adding a comma and a **coordinating conjunction.**

Remember, a **coordinating conjunction** acts as a link between two clauses.

These are the seven **coordinating conjunctions** that you can use: *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*.

Use these words appropriately when you want to link the two independent clauses.

Run-on: The new printer was installed, no one knew how to use it.

Complete Sentence: The new printer was installed**,** *but* no one knew how to use it.

Subordinate Conjunctions

Adding **subordinate conjunctions** is another way to link independent clauses. Like the **coordinating conjunctions**, **subordinate conjunctions** show a relationship between two independent clauses. There are many different **subordinate conjunctions**. Check out this link to see a list.

Run-on: We took the elevator, the others still got there before us.

Complete Sentence: *Although* we took the elevator, the others got there before us.

In the example above, the run-on is a **comma splice**, which results from joining two complete ideas with a comma. In the correct example, the subordinating conjunction *although* appears at the start to show the relationship between the sentences. Now, it's okay to combine both sentences with a comma.

Here's another example:

Run-on: Cobwebs covered the furniture the room hadn't been used in years.

Complete sentence: Cobwebs covered the furniture *because* the room hadn't been used in years.

In this example, the run-on is a **fused sentence**. We fixed this issue by inserting the **subordinate conjunction** *because* in-between both sentences.

Exercise #2: Fixing Run-on Sentences

A reader can get lost or lose interest in material that is too dense and rambling. This can easily happen when there are too many **run-on sentences** in a paragraph. Use what you have learned to correct the following passages. When you think you have a solution, compare it to the possible answer. Changes are bolded and colored purple.

If your answers are a little different, that's okay, as long as you followed the strategies we discussed. If you're not sure, please ask your instructor.

The report is due on Wednesday, but we're flying back from Miami that morning. I told the project manager that we would be able to get the report to her later that day she suggested that we come back a day early to get the report done and I told her we had meetings until our flight took off. We e-mailed our contact who said that they would check with his boss, she said that the project could afford a delay as long as they wouldn't have to make any edits or changes to the file our new deadline is next Friday.

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Anna tried getting a reservation at the restaurant, but when she called they said that there was a waiting list so she put our names down on the list when the day of our reservation arrived we only had to wait thirty minutes because a table opened up unexpectedly which was good because we were able to catch a movie after dinner in the time we'd expected to wait to be seated.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=893#h5p-25

Without a doubt, my favorite artist is Leonardo da Vinci, not because of his paintings but because of his fascinating designs, models, and sketches, including plans for scuba gear, a flying machine, and a life-size mechanical lion that actually walked and moved its head. His paintings are beautiful too, especially when you see the computer enhanced versions researchers use a variety of methods to discover and enhance the paintings' original colors, the result of which are stunningly vibrant and yet delicate displays of the man's genius.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=893#h5p-26

Key Takeaways

- A **run-on sentence** occurs when two or more independent clauses are connected without proper punctuation

- There are two types of **run-on sentences**: a **fused sentence** and a **comma splice**.
- A **fused sentence** occurs when two independent clauses are combined without punctuation.
- A **comma splice** occurs when two independent clauses are combined with a comma.
- Both types of **run-on sentences** can be fixed by adding correct punctuation, a **coordinating conjunction**, or a **subordinate conjunction** to the sentence. The one that's best depends on the information the writer is trying to convey.

Now that you are finished with this chapter, you can either click on one of the other sentence-level issues and learn about them, or continue on to the next required chapter.

Go To Another Topic

Sentence Fragments | Verb Tense | Punctuation | Eliminating Wordiness

References

Possel, H. (n.d.). *Transition Words*. Smart Words. https://www.smart-words.org/linking-words/transition-words.html

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Attributions

Chapter 12: Verb Tense

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify the purpose of verbs
- Explain why maintaining a consistent verb tense is important
- Explain how using the active voice and avoiding nominalizations can make your writing more direct.

Key Terms and Concepts

- verb tense
- simple present
- simple past
- simple future
- active voice
- passive voice
- nominalization

All starting writers struggle with **verb tenses**. More specifically, they tend to struggle with keeping the tenses consistent, especially in long documents.

If you've ever received feedback from a professor like "inconsistent tense" or "passive voice" then it generally means something is wrong with your verbs. It's important to fix this issue because keeping **verb tenses** consistent will ensure your audience knows whether an event happened in the past, present, or future.

In this chapter, we will briefly review **verbs**, discuss different **verb tenses**, and finish off by discussing how to avoid the **passive voice** and **nominalizations**.

The Basics

Verbs do two things. First, they are the action of the sentence. They tell the reader what sort of action you, someone, or something, did.

> I walked to the store.

In the above example, the verb "walked" tells the reader what kind of action brought you to the store. We know the person didn't run, skip, or saunter to the store: they walked.

The second thing verbs do is tell the audience *when* something happened. This is where **verb tenses** come in. In the same example, "walked" is in the past tense so we know the event happened in the past. There are three main tenses: present, past, and future. However, within those three tenses are several more.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=372#h5p-28

That is certainly a lot of **verb tenses**, but, thankfully, you will not have to use all of them in professional communication. In fact, you will mostly be using **simple present**, **simple past** and **simple future**. The issue that most people run into, though, is being *consistent* with their verb tenses.

Maintaining Consistent Verb Tense

Consistent **verb tense** means the same verb tense is used throughout a sentence or a paragraph. As you write and revise, make sure you use the same **verb tense** consistently and avoid shifting from one tense to another unless there is a good reason for it.

Let's look at an example. In the following box, can you see how the tense is inconsistent?

> We will submit the report after I finished my section.

There are two different verb tenses being used here: **simple future** (will submit) and **simple past** (finished). Let's fix this problem by keeping the tenses consistent.

Simple Future: We will submit the report after I finish my section
Simple Past: We submitted the report after I finished my section

As you can see, there are two ways to fix this program. While both are now grammatically correct, the one you use will depend on what information you are trying to convey.

Exercise #1: Pick the Inconsistent Verb Tense

Read the sentences below. Pick the one that uses inconsistent verb tense.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=372#h5p-30

Now, in some cases, clear communication will call for different tenses. Look at the following example:

When I was a teenager, I wanted to be a firefighter, but now I am studying computer science.

In the above example, the writer talks about a past desire and their present situation. Whenever the time frame for each action or state is different, a tense shift is appropriate.

Exercise #2: Identify the Incorrect Verb Choice

Read the email below for incorrect verb tenses. Click all the verbs that use the wrong tense.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=372#h5p-31

The inconsistent tense in the e-mail will very likely distract the reader from its overall point. In the professional world, your coworkers will most likely not correct your **verb tenses** or call attention to grammatical errors, but it is important to keep in mind that these errors do have a subtle negative impact in the workplace, just as they do when applying for jobs and communicating with clients. If you keep making small mistakes like this, the receiver of your message may assume you do not pay attention to little details.

Simplifying Verbs

Another issue that writers have is overcomplicating their verbs with extra words. In almost every instance, if you realize you can simplify your writing by taking out words, that is the best option. In regards to verbs, the issue typically stems from writers using **passive voice** and **nominalizations** in their writing.

Active Voice and Passive Voice

Even when writers have consistent verb tenses, they often overcomplicate their writing by expressing the action in as many words as possible. One way they do this is by using the **passive voice**. Consider the following sentences, for instance. Which would you prefer to read?

PASSIVE VOICE	ACTIVE VOICE
The candidate cannot **be supported by** our membership.	Our members cannot **support** the candidate.

Most readers would prefer the second option. Why? Here, the **active voice** construction on the right uses two fewer words to say the same thing. As a result, it is more direct than the **passive voice** construction. How does it do that?

First, let's define the two terms. **Active voice** is a sentence structure where the subject <u>carries out</u> the action. **Passive voice** is a sentence structure where the subject <u>receives</u> the action.

Essentially, it all comes down to the **subject** and **verb**. Who is the subject of the **passive voice** sentence? It's not "the candidate" because the action of the sentence is not being done by them. The subject is “our membership” because they are the ones doing the supporting.

In the **active voice** sentence, “members” has been moved to the start of the sentence. It is clear that they are doing the action.

Both sentences are valid grammatically. You could use either format in your writing, and the reader would understand what you are saying. However, the **active voice** is generally the better one to use since active sentences tend to be shorter, more precise, and easier to understand.

There are legitimate uses of the **passive voice** though. When you want to deemphasize the doer of the action, **passive voice** is a good choice. Look at the example below.

> Ten late arrivals were recorded this month

In this example, the **passive voice** above doesn’t place blame or credit, so it can be more diplomatic in some contexts. **Passive voice** also allows the writer to avoid personal references or personal pronouns (he, she, they) to create a more objective tone. Additionally, there are situations where the doer of the action is unknown, as in the following example.

> Graffiti was painted on the side of our building last night.

We don’t know who created the graffiti, so a passive form is useful here.

However, keep in mind that overusing the **passive voice** sounds unnatural and appears as an attempt to extend the word count or sound more fancy and objective. Most readers prefer the **active voice** because the **passive voice** is either more wordy or vague. Nevertheless, it is important to consider what is conventional in the type of writing you're engaging in—for instance, certain disciplines require that lab reports use the **passive voice**.

Nominalization

Another issue that overcomplicates writing is when writers turn the main action they describe into nouns, a process called **nominalization**. This involves taking a verb and adding a suffix such as *-ant, -ent, -ion, -tion, -sion, -ence, -ance,* or *-ing*, as well as adding forms of other verbs, such as "to make" or "to give." **Nominalization** may also require articles (*the*, *a*, or *an*) before the action nouns. Consider the following comparisons of nominalized-verb sentences with simplified verb forms:

NOMINALIZED FORM	SIMPLIFIED FORM
The committee **had a discussion** about the new budget constraints.	The committee **discussed** the new budget constraints.
We **will make a recommendation** to proceed with the investment option.	We will **recommend** proceeding with the investment option.
They **handed down a judgment** that the offer wasn't worth their time.	They **judged** that the offer wasn't worth their time.
The regulator will **grant approval of** the new process within the week.	The regulator will **approve** the new process within the week.
He always **gives me advice** on what to say to the media.	He always **advises** me on what to say to the media.
She's **giving** your application **a pass** because of all the errors in it.	She's **passing** on your application because of all the errors in it.

You can tell that the simplified sentences have greater impact than those that use **nominalizations**. In all of the **nominalization** examples, more words are required to say the same thing. When writing contains all three issues we've discussed (inconsistent verb tense, passive voice, and nominalizations), it becomes muddled and lacks the clarity that is expected in professional writing

Exercise #3: Identify the Verb Issue and Simplify

Read the sentences below. Determine whether there is an issue with the passive voice or nominalizations. Then, try to simplify the sentence. Please note that our solution is just one possible solution. If yours doesn't match, it could still be correct. Check with your instructor if you're not sure.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=372#h5p-32

Key Takeaways

- **Verb tense** helps you express when an event takes place.
- Maintaining consistency among **verb tenses** in your writing will ensure your communication is clear. While there are twelve different tenses in English, the three you will be using the most are **simple present**, **simple past**, and **simple future**.
- A more direct style of writing is almost always preferable. Therefore, it is often to best to avoid the **passive voice** and **nominalizations**.

Now that you are finished you can either click on one of the other sentence-level issues and learn about them, or continue to the next part of the chapter on quoting.

Go To Another Topic

Sentence Fragments | Run-On Sentences | Punctuation | Eliminating Wordiness

References

Grammarly. (2021, January 14). *Verb tenses*. https://www.grammarly.com/blog/verb-tenses/

Attributions

Chapter 13: Punctuation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- List the differences between a comma, semicolon, and colon
- Explain when to use a semicolon instead of a comma in a list
- Determine which punctuation to use in a sentence

Key Terms and Concepts

- comma
- semicolon
- colon
- independent clause
- coordinating conjunction
- subordinate conjunction

"Punctuation marks are the road signs placed along the highway of our communication, to control speeds, provide directions and prevent head-on collisions" (Iyer, 2001).

The Basics

Consider how punctuation can change the meaning of the following **run-on sentence**:

> I have two hours to kill someone come see me.

The main function of punctuation is to separate **phrases** and **clauses** into meaningful units of information. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the basic structure of sentences—phrases and clauses—to understand the proper uses of punctuation. When punctuation is missing or incorrectly used, the reader may get a completely different message than the one intended.

Take the sample sentence above. A period placed in the wrong place makes a huge difference in terms of the information that is communicated to the reader.

> Example #1: I have two hours to kill. Someone come see me.
> Example: #2: I have two hours to kill someone. Come see me.

Here's another example using commas.

Example #1: Let’s eat, grandma!

Example #2: Let’s eat grandma!

Obviously, all the above examples communicate drastically different messages. Errors like this can not only confuse readers and waste time, but can have disastrous results in cases where the writing has legal, economic, or safety implications.

The article “Comma Quirk Irks Rogers” provides an example of how a punctuation error can have real world costs and consequences. One comma error in a 10-page contract cost Rogers Communication $2 million dollars (Robertson, 2016). If you need further evidence, read about the case of the trucker’s comma that went all the way to the supreme court, resulting in a $10 million dollar payout (Nast, 2017)!

There are several helpful rules that will help you determine where and how to use punctuation, but first, it might be helpful to understand the origins. Punctuation was initially developed to help people who were giving speeches or reading aloud. Various kinds of punctuation indicated when and for how long the reader should pause between phrases, clauses, and sentences:

Comma = 1 second pause

Semicolon = 2 second pause

Colon = 3 second pause

Period = 4 second pause

These “pause rules” can still offer some guidance, but they are not foolproof since there are many reasons that someone might pause while speaking. These reasons can be that the speaker simply ran out of breath, got distracted, or needed time to think of a word.

Below are some more consistent rules that you should follow to properly punctuate your sentences. These rules are presented in a numerical order to help you remember them more easily. We will start with commas, since they are one of the most common errors students make.

The Comma (,)

Commas are one of the most versatile pieces of punctuation out there. They can do many things, which means they are easy to use incorrectly. Before jumping into the five rules, here is a video that provides a quick overview. The video focuses on how commas are used with **coordinating conjunctions** and **subordinate conjunctions** which you should already be familiar with.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=387#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/commaTED

Now let’s get to the rules.

COMMA RULE #1 – Introduce the Subject

If the subject is not the **first** word/phrase in the sentence, place a comma before it to separate it clearly from the introductory element and indicate clearly what the subject of the sentence is.

Sentences are most often strongest when the subject is the first element of the sentence. However, sometimes the subject needs to be delayed until later in the sentence.

Take a look at the following example:

> Before starting the project, we should ask the customer what they want.

The subject of the sentence is "we" but that is delayed by the introductory phrase "Before starting the project." Including that comma helps the reader understand the meaning of the sentence by helping them identify the subject more easily.

While it is still possible that a reader will understand the sentence if the comma is left out, there are times where a comma is absolutely essential. Otherwise, the sentence will be unclear.

In the following sentence, see if you can determine what the subject is without a comma to help you:

Based on that initial design concepts will be generated.

The subject—and therefore the meaning of the sentence—depends on where you place the comma. It could go in a couple of places. If the initial phrase is “Based on that,” and “that” refers to some previously stated idea, then the sentence indicates that the subject is “initial design concepts,” and the verb is “will be generated.” Here’s what that would look like:

Based on that**,** initial design concepts will be generated.

However, if the initial phrase is “Based on that initial design,” then we already have an initial design to work from and do not have to generate one. We are now focusing on creating more advanced “concepts,” that will be “based on that initial design.”

Here’s what that would look like:

Based on that initial design**,** concepts will be generated.

So if the subject is not the first word in your sentence, place a comma before it to clearly show what the subject is (hence “comma rule #1”).

In each of the following examples, the subject of the main clause is **bolded**.

After an introductory word	Finally, **the design** must consider all constraints. Initially, **the design** must meet early objectives.
After an introductory phrase	Meeting all the client's needs, **this design** has the potential to be very successful. Unlike Emma, **Karla** loves mechatronics.
After a subordinate clause	If the design meets all the objectives, **we** will get a get a raise. Although we are slightly over budget, **the design** will be cost effective overall. While he interviews the client, **she** will do a site survey.

COMMA RULE #2 – Interrupt the Subject and Verb

Never place a single comma between the subject and verb of the sentence; you need either two commas (like brackets) or no commas between the subject and verb.

When you place an interrupting word, phrase, or clause between the subject and verb, if that phrase is a non-essential element, you must enclose that phrase in commas (use the "bracket test": if you could enclose it in brackets, then you can use commas). If the phrase is essential to the meaning, omit the commas.

The words interrupting the subject and verb are **bolded** in the examples below.

Interrupting word	Communication errors, **unfortunately**, can lead to disastrous design flaws. The rules, **however**, are quite easy to learn.
Interrupting Nonessential Phrase or Clause (**these phrases or clauses** could be bracketed, and even omitted, without changing the meaning of the sentence)	The Johnson street bridge, **commonly known as the "Blue Bridge,"** had to be replaced. The new bridge, **completed last year,** is a rolling bascule design. The new bridge, **which is a rolling bascule design**, was completed last year.
Interrupting Essential phrases or clauses do not use commas; **these phrases or clauses** are essential to the meaning of the sentence	The objective **that is most critical to our success** is the first one. That bridge **that needed replacing** was the Blue Bridge. The man **with the yellow hat** belongs to Curious George. The student **who has the best design** will get an innovator's award.

If you would like more information on Essential vs Non-Essential elements, and when to use "that" vs "which," check out this ***Grammar Girl*** link: Which versus That

Beware the "Pause Rule"—many comma rule #2 errors occur when a sentence has a long subject phrase followed by the verb "is." People have the tendency to want to place a comma here, even though it is incorrect, simply because they would normally pause here when speaking. Below is an example of the wrong use:

> The main thing that you must be sure to remember about the magnificent Chinese pandas of the southwest**,** is that they can be dangerous.

In this case, a comma should not be used.

COMMA RULE #3 – The Serial Comma

When listing a series of 3 or more items, separate the items with commas.

Whether you are listing 3 or more nouns, verb, adjectives, phrases, or even clauses, use commas to separate them. In general, do **not** place a comma before the first item or after the last item. If you are only listing two items, do not separate them with commas. Note what happens when you forget to put commas in the following sentence:

I love cooking my family and my pets.

The author may have intended to list three things that she loves, but without punctuation, she ends up listing two things she loves to cook. Here is the correct version:

I love cooking**,** my family**,** and my pets.

Only use the commas if there are three or more elements being listed. Make sure to list the elements in a consistent grammatical form (all nouns, or all verbs, or all using parallel phrasing).

2 listed elements	All initial designs must incorporate mechanical structures and electrical systems. (2 nouns)
(no commas needed)	Squirrels eat acorns and sleep in trees. (1 subject + 2 verbs)
3 listed elements	The final design must incorporate mechanical, electrical, and software subsystems. (3 adjectives describing different subsystems) Squirrels eat acorns, sleep in trees, and dig holes in the garden. (3 verbs) The proposed designs must not go over budget, use more than the allotted equipment, or take longer than 1 week to construct. (3 verbs: go, use, and take)
faulty parallel phrasing	Proposed design concepts must adhere to all constraints, meet all objectives, and the components x must be on the approved list. (2 verbs and a 1 noun)
(one of these things is not like the others…)	The new bridge is aesthetically pleasing, structurally sound, and has x a pedestrian walkway. (2 adjectives and 1 verb)

There is some debate about whether to place a comma before the "and" used before the final listed item. This comma, referred to as the Oxford Comma since it is required by Oxford University Press, is optional in many situations. For an optional piece of punctuation, the Oxford Comma has stirred up a surprising amount of controversy!

Here's a video that explains that controversy, if you're interested.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can *view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=387#oembed-2*

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/oxfordcontr

COMMA RULE #4 – Joining Clauses

Separate **independent clauses** by placing a comma before the **coordinating conjunction.**

While you might occasionally omit commas if the two clauses you want to join are very short ("She drove and he navigated."), it is a good habit to separate them with a comma for the sake of clarity.

The mnemonic device for remembering the coordinating conjunctions that can link two independent clauses together is **FANBOYS** (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*). When you have two complete sentences, but you want to join them together to make one larger idea, use a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

FANBOYS	Two clauses joined by a comma and coordinating conjunction
, for	Thank goodness next week is reading break**, for** we all need rest.
, and	Vampires drink blood**, and** zombies eat brains.
, nor	You should not play with vampires, nor should you hang around with zombies.
, but	The undead are not acceptable playmates**, but** werewolves are ok.
, or	You can simply avoid werewolves during the full moon**, or** you can lock them in the basement.
, yet	Some rules of etiquette suggest it is rude to lock someone in the basement, **yet** safety is of paramount concern.
, so	I think you understand my concerns**, so** I will leave it at that.

COMMA RULE #5 – Signal to the reader

Use commas to indicate that a non-essential sentence element (a word, phrase, or clause) follows the comma, or to signal an abrupt shift in thought.

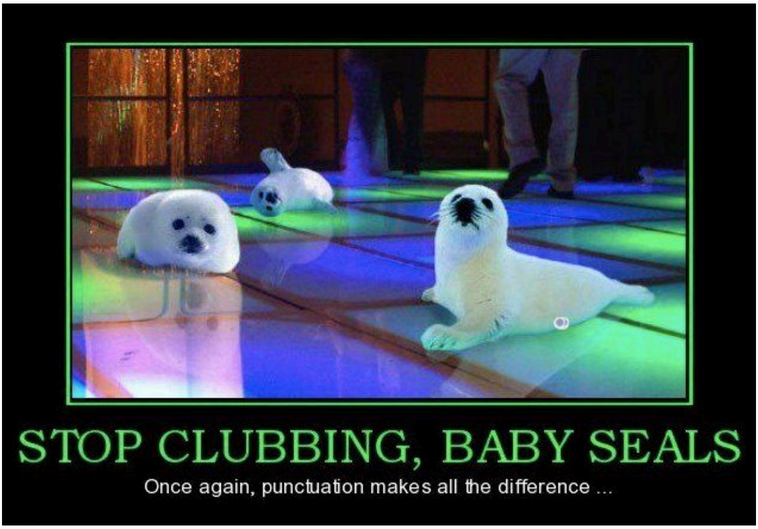

Image #1: Punctuation makes all the difference

Learning comma rules takes practice, of course.

Practice makes perfect, in the long run.

Vampires make everyone nervous, even the bravest slayers.

I told you I need it by Wednesday, not Thursday.

Consider the difference between "It's raining cats and dogs" and "It's raining, cats and dogs."

Exercise #1: Identify the Broken Rule and Fix

Below are six sentences. Identify the rule being broken, and put commas in the correct spots (if needed).

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The Semicolon (;)

Most people are pretty confident when it comes to rules around the comma. The semicolon, on the other hand, is another story entirely. Are they more like a comma, or more like a period? Well, the answer is that they can be work like both, depending on the situation of course!

Here's a video that provides an overview:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can *view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=387#oembed-3*

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/semicolorules

Semicolons are used to link ideas when something stronger than a comma is needed. A semicolon has three main functions. Here are the first two:

Semicolon Rule #1

Use a semicolon to join closely related **independent clauses** into one sentence:

If the two independent clauses are closely related in content, then a semicolon may be appropriate.

Here is an example:

> Scott was impatient to get married; Sharon wanted to wait until they were financially secure.

The subject in both sentences are both strongly related—indeed, in this case, they are engaged!

Semicolon Rule #2

Use a semicolon to link two sentences joined by a **transition word** (however, therefore, finally, moreover, etc.)

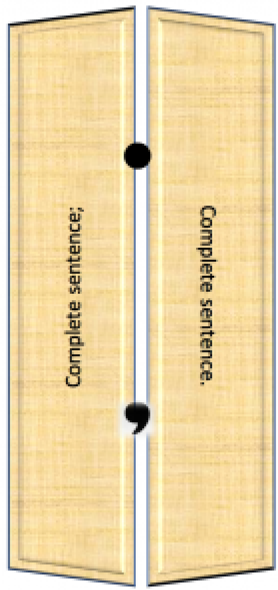
Transition words are a great way to connect your sentences. Here is an example:

> Canadian History is a rather dull class**; however**, it is a requirement for the elementary education program.

You may have noticed that in both examples above, a semicolon works the same way a period does. If you could put a period there, then you can put a semicolon there—as long as both sentences are related. The semicolon simply connects the ideas more closely as part of one key idea and makes the pause between them a little shorter.

The main rule you must remember is that if you use a semicolon in this way, the clauses on either side of the semicolon must be complete sentences. You cannot use a semicolon to introduce a phrase or fragment.

Complete sentence; complete sentence.



Think of the semicolon as working like a hinge in a bi-fold door; it joins two complete door panels that each have their own frame together as one.

Also remember that you cannot simply use a comma instead of a semicolon to link the two clauses; doing so would result in a comma splice.

Semicolon Rule #3

Use a semicolon to separate items in a complex list where one or more of the items have internal punctuation

Take a look at this sentence:

The role of the vice-president will be to enhance the university's external relations, strengthen its relationship with alumni, donors, and community leaders, and implement fundraising programs.

Was it hard to read at all? It probably was because it's unclear what list items should be grouped together. This is where the third function of the semicolon comes in.

Here's a correct example:

The role of the vice-president will be to enhance the university's external relations**;** strengthen its relationship with alumni, donors, and community leaders; and implement fundraising programs.

In this case, the semicolon separates long, complex list items that contain commas within them. Without the semicolon, we have a complicated sentence that is difficult to read.

The Colon (:)

Like the semicolon, a colon is another type of punctuation that confuses a lot of people. Thankfully, it serves a simple purpose. Here is a video to review its use:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=387#oembed-4

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/linkingcolon

COLON RULE

Use a colon to introduce amplification in the form of an example, explanation, quotation, summary, or list.

Keep in mind that when correctly used, colons are only placed where the sentence could come to a complete stop (*i.e.* you could put a period there instead).

Amplification	The hurricane lashed the coastal community: within two hours, every tree on the waterfront had been blown down.
Example	The tour guide quoted Gerald Durrell's opinion of pandas: "They are vile beasts who eat far too many leaves."
List	Today we examined two geographical areas: the Nile and the Amazon.

Remember that when introducing a list, example, or quotation with a colon, whatever comes *before* the colon should be a complete sentence. You should not write something like this:

Today we examine**d:** x

Three important objectives we must consider are: x

If these clauses cannot end in a period, they should **not** end in a colon. Whatever comes *after* the colon can be a fragment or list; it does not have to be a complete sentence.

Exercise #2: Comma, Semicolon, and Colon Review

Read the sentences below. Drag and drop the correct punctuation mark into each blank.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=387#h5p-38

Key Takeaways

- Proper punctuation is essential when conveying meaning in writing. When used improperly, it can have huge financial consequences.
- **Commas**, **semicolons**, and **colons** link ideas in different ways.
- **Commas** can introduce the subject of a

sentence, interrupt the subject and verb, be used to separate a list of three or more items, connect **independent clauses** with the addition of a **coordinating conjunction**, and indicate non-essential elements in a sentence.

- **Semicolons** can join closely related independent sentences, link two sentences with a transition word, and separate items in a complex list.
- **Colons** are only placed where the sentence could come to a complete stop. The information that follows the colon can amplify the information that came before it, provide an example, or provide a list.

Now that you are finished with this chapter, you can either click on one of the other sentence-level issues and learn about them, or continue on to the next required chapter.

Go To Another Topic

Sentence Fragments | Run-On Sentences | Verb Tense | Eliminating Wordiness

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Attributions

Chapter 14: Eliminating Wordiness

Learning Objectives

After this section, you should be able to:

- Explain why concise writing is important in professional communication
- Identify common causes of wordy writing
- Apply the six methods listed below to make a piece of writing more concise.

Key Terms and Concepts

- conciseness
- lead-ins
- jargon
- plain words

The Basics

In your university classes, you are probably used to trying to stretch out your writing to reach that 1000-word goal for an essay. This is a habit you want to *avoid* in professional communication because professional audiences— employees, clients, supervisors, etc.—prefer writing that is clear and, most importantly, **concise**. For our purposes, **conciseness** means using the fewest words possible to achieve the goal of communication.

What is the goal of communication? It is to ensure that your reader understands your intended meaning. Just ask yourself, if you were given the choice between reading a 500 word article and a 250 word article that both say the same thing, which one would you prefer to read?

To be clear, there is nothing grammatically wrong with all the examples we will cover below. However, having perfect grammar doesn't mean a message is particularly well-written either. The issue here is a matter of style. Using the techniques listed below will keep readers focused on your message and help them interpret what you are saying more easily.

So how do we make our writing more **concise**? Here are a few basic steps you can follow.

1. Mass-delete Whatever Doesn't Belong

The first practical step towards trimming your document is a large-scale purge of whatever doesn't contribute to the purpose you set out to achieve. Such a purge is important because you don't want to waste time proof-editing anything that you're just going to delete anyway. However, this action is probably the most difficult one to take because it involves deleting large swaths of writing that may have taken some time and effort to compose.

A good rule is that if the content could potentially sidetrack readers, whose understanding of the topic would be unaffected (at best) or (at worst) overwhelmed by it's inclusion, those sentences, paragraphs, and even whole sections simply must go. Highlight, delete, and don't look back.

2. Delete Long Lead-ins

The next-biggest savings in writing space come from deleting **lead-ins. Lead-ins** are the groups of words that you wrote to gear up towards your main point. In ordinary speech, we use **lead-ins** as something like throat-clearing exercises. In writing, however, these are useless at best because they state the obvious. At worst, **lead-ins** immediately upset the reader by signaling that the rest of the message will contain some time-wasting text.

Take the following the examples:

- I'm Jerry Mulligan and I'm writing this email to ask you to please consider my application for a co-op position at your firm.
- You may be interested to know that you can now find the updated form in the company shared drive.
- To conclude this memo, we recommend a cautious approach to using emojis when texting clients, and only after they've done so first themselves.

They're all a bit long-winded, aren't they? Can you identify the **lead-ins**?

If not, here are the same examples with the **lead-ins** highlighted.

- **I'm Jerry Mulligan and I'm writing this email to ask you to** please consider my application for a co-op position at your firm.
- You **may be interested to know that you can** now find the updated form in the company shared drive.
- **To conclude this memo**, we recommend a cautious approach to using emojis when texting clients, and only after they've done so first themselves.

These **lead-ins** are unnecessary.

In the first example, the recipient sees the name of the sender before even opening their email. It's therefore redundant for the sender to introduce themselves by name and say that they wrote this email. Likewise, in the third example, the reader can see that this is the conclusion if it's the last paragraph, especially if it comes below the heading "Conclusion."

In each case, the sentence really begins after these **lead-in** expressions, and the reader misses nothing in their absence. Here's how they look with their **lead-ins** removed.

- Please consider my application for a co-op position at your firm.
- You can now find the updated form in the company shared drive.
- We recommend a cautious approach to using emojis when texting clients, and only after they've done so first themselves.

All three examples are improved by having their **lead-in** removed. If your writing has similar long **lead-ins**, delete them.

3. Pare Down Unnecessarily Wordy Phrases

We habitually use long stock phrases in our writing and speech because they sound fancy. However, length does not grant respectability. These phrases look ridiculously cumbersome when seen next to their more **concise** equivalent words and phrases, as you can see in Table 1 below. Unless you have good reason to do otherwise, always replace the wordy phrases with **concise** ones in your writing.

Table 1: Replace Unnecessarily Wordy Phrases with Concise Equivalents

Replace These Wordy Phrases	with These Concise Equivalents
due to the fact that	because
not later than July 7	by July 7
at this present moment in time	now
in any way, shape, or form	in any way
pursuant to your request	as requested
thanking you in advance	thank you
in addition to the above	also
in spite of the fact that	even though / although
in view of the fact that	because / since
are of the opinion that	believe that / think that
afford an opportunity	allow
despite the fact that	though
during the time that	while
on a weekly basis	weekly
at a later date/time	later
until such time as	until
in the near future	soon
fully cognizant of	aware of
in the event that	if
for the period of	for
attached hereto	attached
each and every	all
in as much as	because / since
more or less	about
feel free to	please

Again, the reader misses nothing if you use the words and phrases in the second column instead of those in the first. Also, **concise** writing is more accessible to readers who are learning English as an additional language.

4. Delete Redundant Words

Our writing and speech is also filled with redundant words in stock expressions. These prefabricated phrases aren't so bad when spoken because talk is cheap. In writing, however, which should be considered expensive, they make the author look like an irresponsibly heavy spender. Be on the lookout for the expressions below so that you are in command of your language.

Simply delete the crossed-out words in red if they appear in combination with those in blue:

- ~~absolutely~~ essential (you can't get any more essential than essential)
- ~~future~~ plans (are you going to make plans about the past? plans are always future)
- small ~~in size~~ (the context will determine that you mean small in size, quantity, etc.)
- refer ~~back~~ to ("back" doesn't help the verb "refer" in anyway, so cut it)
- ~~in order~~ to (only use "in order" if it helps distinguish an infinitive phrase, which begins with "to," from the preposition "to" appearing close to it)
- each ~~and every~~ or ~~each and~~ every (or just "all," as we saw in the table above)
- repeat ~~again~~ (is this déjà vu?)

5. Delete Filler Expressions and Words

If you audio-record your conversations and make a transcript of just the words themselves, you'll find an abundance of filler words and expressions that you could remove without harming the meaning of your sentences. A few common ones that appear at the beginning of sentences are "There is," "There are," and "It is," which must be followed by a **clause** starting with the pronoun "that" or "who." Consider the following examples:

1.~~There are~~ many ~~who~~ want to take your place.	**Many want to take your place.**
2. ~~There is~~ nothing you can do about it.	**You can do nothing about it.**
3. ~~It is~~ the software ~~that~~ keeps making the error.	**The software keeps erring.**

In the first and third cases, you can simply delete "There are" and "It is," as well as the relative pronouns "who" and "that" respectively, leaving the sentence perfectly fine without them. In the second case, deleting "There is" requires slightly reorganizing the word order, but otherwise requires no additional words to say the very same thing. In each case, you save two or three words that simply don't need to be there.

Other common filler words include the articles "a," "an," and "the," especially in combination with the **preposition** *of*. You can eliminate many instances of "*of the*" simply by deleting them and flipping the order of the nouns on either side of them.

technology ~~of the~~ future	**future technology**

Obviously, you can't do this in all cases (e.g., changing "first of the month" to "month first" makes no sense). When proofreading, however, just be on the lookout for instances where you *can*.

The definite article the preceding plural nouns is also an easy target. Try deleting the article to see if the sentence still makes sense without it.

~~The~~ shareholders unanimously supported the initiative.	**Shareholders unanimously supported the initiative.**

Though the above excess words seem insignificant on their own, they bulk up the total word count unnecessarily when used in combination throughout a large document.

~~Basically~~, you can't ~~really~~ do much to ~~fully~~ eliminate bad ideas because they're ~~quite~~ common.	**You can't do much to eliminate bad ideas because they're so common.**

6. Favor Short, Plain Words and Revise Jargon or Bureaucratic Expressions

If you pretend that every letter in each word you write costs money from your own pocket, you would do what readers prefer: use shorter words. The beauty of **plain words** is that they are more understandable and draw less attention to themselves than big, fancy words while still getting the point across. This is especially true when you are writing reports, which are often filled with unnecessary **jargon**. Choosing shorter words is easy because they are often the first that come to mind, so writing in plain language saves you time.

Obviously, you would use **jargon** for precision when appropriate for your audience's needs and your own. You would use the word "photosynthesis," for instance, if (1) you needed to refer to the process by which plants convert solar energy into sugars, and (2) you know your audience knows what the word means. In this case, using the **jargon** saves word space because it's the most precise term for a process that otherwise needs several words. Using **jargon** merely to extend the number of words, however, is a desperate-looking move that your instructors and professional audiences will see through as waste of time due to a lack of quality ideas.

For business writing, simplifying language is more effective. Table 2 shows examples of commonly used, complicated, or bureaucratic expressions and their simpler alternative.

Table 2: Plain and Simple Language

Complicated or Bureaucratic Expression	Simpler Alternative
in lieu of	instead of
whereas solicit	because ask for
apparent	clear
as per your request	as you requested
commence	begin, start
consolidate	combine
ascertain	find out
demonstrate	show
disseminate	distribute, send
endeavour	try
erroneous	wrong
expedite	speed up
facilitate	help
implement	carry out
inception	start
leverage	use
optimize	perfect
terminate	end
proximity	near
finalize	about
subsequent	complete
utilize	use

Source: Brockway (2015)

The longer words in the above table tend to come from the Greek and Latin side of the English language whereas the shorter words come from the Anglo-Saxon (Germanic) side.

When toddlers begin speaking English, they use Anglo-Saxon-derived words because they're easier to master, and therefore recognize them as plain, simple words throughout their adult lives.

Exercise #1: Identify the Filler

Read the sample email below. Click on words or phrases that are filler or redundant and could easily be removed without losing the sentences meaning. For example, if a sentence reads:

> Due to the fact that this project is absolutely essential, we must fix the problem immediately

You would click on the words "Due to the fact that" and "absolutely."

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=411#h5p-33

Exercise #2: Fix the Filler

Now that you have identified the filler words and phrases in the sentence. How could you simplify the language? Below is the same email. Try to write your own, simplified version. Then compare it to the possible version below.

> Dear Hiring Committee,
>
> I am Cassandra Thompson and I am writing this letter to ask you to please consider my application for any future openings at your company in the near future. Your company's community first model aligns with my own future plans to work in community development after I graduate from college. Personally, I believe community engagement is absolutely essential in order for a business to succeed. This believe is due to the work I did as an intern for Senator Caufield's local office. I was in charge of the running the front desk during the time that I worked there. I was often the first person constituents met, so I have a lot of experience conversing with new people. I

also have experience disseminating information to news outlets, consolidating constituent questions, and demonstrating a professional demeanor. I hope that you will consider my application, as I know I can improve the quality of your company’s interactions with the community.

Sincerely,

Cassandra Thompson

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=411#h5p-34

Key Takeaways

- In professional communication, clear and concise writing is key. Always strive to remove unnecessary wording and trim back when possible to ensure your ideas are clearly communicated.

- A few words here and there may not seem like a big difference, but over the course of entire, multi-page report, it could make a huge difference in how well your message is understood by your reader.

Now that you are finished with this chapter, you can either click on one of the other sentence-level issues and learn about them, or continue on to the next required chapter.

Go To Another Topic

Sentence Fragments | Run-On Sentences | Verb Tense | Punctuation

References

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Attributions

TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENCE

Chapter 15: Memos and Letters

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between a memo and letter and explain their different purposes in a professional setting.
- Identify the seven elements of the full block letter format.

Key Terms and Concepts

Type your examples here.

- SIDCRA
- Memos
- Header Block
- Letters
- Full block letter format

Professional Correspondence

A lot of your time as a professional will be spent communicating through letters, memos, emails, and text messages. Some of these forms of communication are probably more familiar to you than others; however, as a professional it is important that you understand how and when to use each format and why. This is because your employer will expect you to be able to communicate effectively to maintain your **credibility** and build relation with co-workers, clients, and the public.

When you craft your correspondence, letters and memos are treated as informal reports and follow the **SIDCRA** format. Similarly, in a professional context, emails and texts should maintain this organizational structure to help your audience understand and retrieve information quickly. This is why you should begin with the main point for each of these types of correspondence. Busy readers need to be able to scan the document quickly to assess if the document requires immediate attention.

As always, before you begin to write, consider your audience's needs and your purpose for writing in the first place. For all correspondence, you should:

- Include a detailed subject line which provides a summary, or a sense of purpose for the document,
- Provide a brief introduction which states the purpose for writing and provides an overview or forecasting of the rest of the document,
- Provide necessary context for your reader in either the introduction or in a background paragraph,
- Use headings to help your reader find information quickly, and to help you, the writer, organize information effectively, and

- Keep paragraphs short and focused on one main point.

To decide which format to use, consider the size and importance of your audience, your purpose for writing, and the complexity of the information being communicated.

Although RCM 200 introduces standard templates and formats, there is some room for variation, and you should always follow your employer's particular preference for letter, memo, and email format.

For this chapter, we will focus on memos and letters. The following chapter will be on email and text messages.

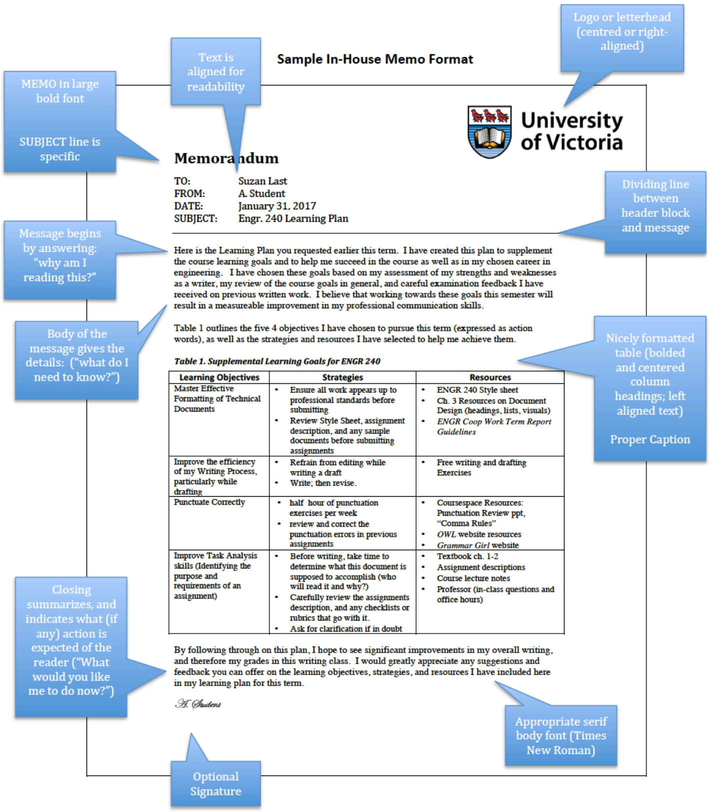
Memos

Memoranda, or **memos**, are one of the most versatile document forms used in professional settings. **Memos** are "in house" documents (sent within an organization) to pass along or request information, outline policies, present short reports, or propose ideas. While they are often used to inform, they can also be persuasive documents. A company or institution typically has its own "in house" style or template that is used for documents such as letters and memos.

Memo Format

Figure #1 below shows a sample of an "in house" memo style (the style we will use for memo assignments written for this class), with annotations pointing out various relevant features. The main formatted portions of a memo are the Logo or

Letterhead (which is optional), the Header Block, and the Message.



Memorandum

TO: Suzan Last
FROM: A. Student
DATE: January 31, 2017
SUBJECT: Engr. 240 Learning Plan

Here is the Learning Plan you requested earlier this term. I have created this plan to supplement the course learning goals and to help me succeed in the course as well as in my chosen career in engineering. I have chosen these goals based on my assessment of my strengths and weaknesses as a writer, my review of the course goals in general, and careful examination feedback I have received on previous written work. I believe that working towards these goals this semester will result in a measureable improvement in my professional communication skills.

Table 1 outlines the five 4 objectives I have chosen to pursue this term (expressed as action words), as well as the strategies and resources I have selected to help me achieve them.

Table 1. Supplemental Learning Goals for ENGR 240

Learning Objectives	Strategies	Resources
Master Effective Formatting of Technical Documents	• Ensure all work appears up to professional standards before submitting • Review Style Sheet, assignment description, and any sample documents before submitting assignments	• ENGR 240 Style sheet • Ch. 3 Resources on Document Design (headings, lists, visuals) • *ENGR Coop Work Term Report Guidelines*
Improve the efficiency of my Writing Process, particularly while drafting	• Refrain from editing while writing a draft • Write; then revise.	• Free writing and drafting Exercises
Punctuate Correctly	• half hour of punctuation exercises per week • review and correct the punctuation errors in previous assignments	• Coursespace Resources: Punctuation Review ppt, "Comma Rules" • *OWL* website resources • *Grammar Girl* website
Improve Task Analysis skills (Identifying the purpose and requirements of an assignment)	• Before writing, take time to determine what this document is supposed to accomplish (who will read it and why?) • Carefully review the assignments description, and any checklists or rubrics that go with it. • Ask for clarification if in doubt	• Textbook ch. 1-2 • Assignment descriptions • Course lecture notes • Professor (in-class questions and office hours)

By following through on this plan, I hope to see significant improvements in my overall writing, and therefore my grades in this writing class. I would greatly appreciate any suggestions and feedback you can offer on the learning objectives, strategies, and resources I have included here in my learning plan for this term.

A. Student

Figure #1 *Sample Memo, annotated.*

The Header Block

The **Header Block** appears at the top left side of your memo, directly underneath the word **MEMO** or **MEMORANDUM** in large, bold, capitalized letters. This section contains detailed information on the recipient, sender, and purpose. It includes the following lines:

- **TO:** give the recipient's full name, and position or title within the organization
- **FROM**: include the sender's (your) full name and position or title
- **DATE**: include the full date on which you sent the memo
- **SUBJECT or RE**: write a brief phrase that concisely describes the main content of your memo.

Place a horizontal line under your header block, and place your message below.

The Message

The length of a memo can range from a few short sentences to a multi-page report that includes figures, tables, and appendices. Whatever the length, there is a straightforward organizational principle you should follow. Organize the content of your memo so that it answers the following questions for the reader:

1. **Opening:** Do I have to read this? Why do I have to read this?
2. **Details:** What do I need to know?
3. **Closing:** What am I expected to do now?

The Opening

Memos are generally very direct and concise. There is no need to start with general introductions before getting to your point. Your readers are colleagues within the same organization and are likely familiar with the context you are writing about. The opening sentences of the memo's message should make it clear to the reader whether they have to read this entire memo and why. For example, if the memo is informing me about an elevator that's out of service in a building I never enter, then I don't really have to read any further?

The Details

The middle section of the message should give all of the information needed to adequately inform the readers and fulfill the purpose of the memo. Start with the most general information, and then add the more specific facts and details. Make sure there is enough detail to support your purpose, but don't overwhelm your readers with unnecessary details or information that is already well known to them.

The Closing

The final part of the message indicates what, if any, action is required or requested of the readers. If you are asking your readers to do something, be as courteous as possible, and try to indicate how this action will also benefit them.

For more information on writing memos, check out the memo page on the the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University: Parts of a Memo.

Exercise #1: Sample Memo

Below are two images. The first shows a potential memo layout with tips for creating one. The second shows a sample memo.

Does the sample memo have all the parts we've discussed in this section? Does it need more information? Less? Is there anything you think would be helpful for the author to include?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: *https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=987#h5p-55*

Letter

Letters are brief messages sent to recipients that are often outside the organization, or external. They are often printed on letterhead paper that represents the business or organization, and are generally limited to one or two pages. While email and text messages may be used more frequently today, the business letter remains a common form of written communication as it serves many functions, such as:

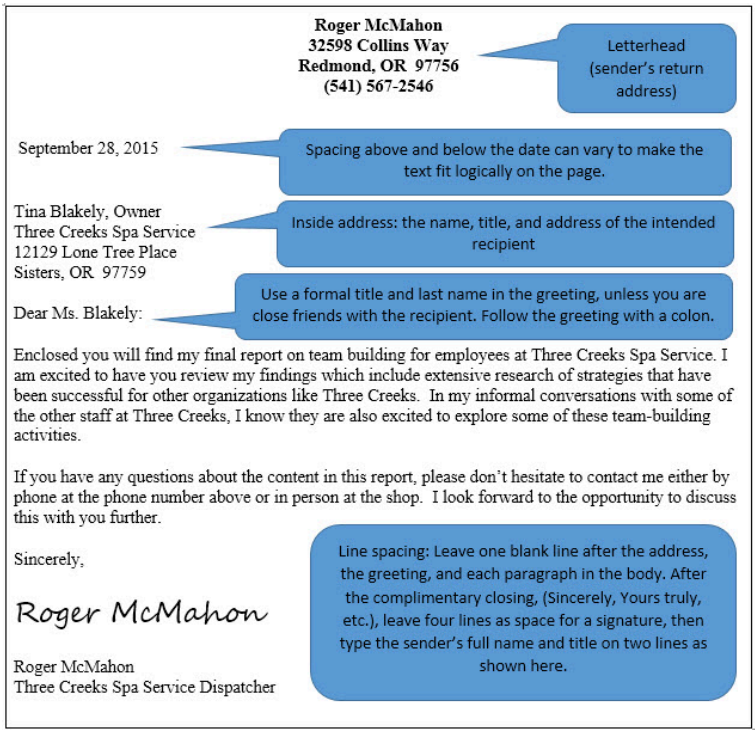
- introducing you to a potential employer

- announcing a product or service
- communicating feelings and emotions (complaint letters, for example).

Letters are the most formal format for business correspondence, and your **credibility** will be established by using a formal tone and a conventional format for the document.

Use a letter format for communicating with people outside of your own organization, or for information which will be kept on file (such as a letter of offer from an employer) or may be needed for legal proceedings. Your reader will expect a well written and well formatted document. The **full block letter format** is the most straightforward letter format and will be covered in the next section. Professionals who produce their own correspondence using this format will appreciate its simplicity and consistency.

As we will soon see, there are many types of letters, and many adaptations in terms of form and content. **Figure #2** shows a letter of transmittal meant to introduce a technical report to its recipient. You will eventually write a transmittal letter like this for your written report assignment in this course.


Roger McMahon
32598 Collins Way
Redmond, OR 97756
(541) 567-2546

September 28, 2015

Tina Blakely, Owner
Three Creeks Spa Service
12129 Lone Tree Place
Sisters, OR 97759

Dear Ms. Blakely:

Enclosed you will find my final report on team building for employees at Three Creeks Spa Service. I am excited to have you review my findings which include extensive research of strategies that have been successful for other organizations like Three Creeks. In my informal conversations with some of the other staff at Three Creeks, I know they are also excited to explore some of these team-building activities.

If you have any questions about the content in this report, please don't hesitate to contact me either by phone at the phone number above or in person at the shop. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss this with you further.

Sincerely,

Roger McMahon

Roger McMahon
Three Creeks Spa Service Dispatcher

Figure #2 *Sample letter of transmittal*

The Full Block Letter Format

A typical letter has 7 main elements, which make up the **full block letter format**.

1. **Letterhead/logo**: Sender's name and return address
2. **The heading:** names the recipient, often including address and date
3. **Salutation**: "Dear ______ " use the recipient's name, if known.
4. **The introduction**: establishes the overall purpose of the

letter

5. **The body**: articulates the details of the message
6. **The conclusion:** restates the main point and may include a call to action
7. **The signature line:** sometimes includes the contact information

You can see how these elements are implemented in the example above. Keep in mind that letters represent you/or and your company in your absence. In order to communicate effectively and project a positive image, remember that

- your language should be clear, concise, specific, and respectful
- each word should contribute to your purpose
- each paragraph should focus on one idea
- the parts of the letter should form a complete message
- the letter should be free of errors.

Exercise 2: Sample letter

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=987#h5p-59

Types of Messages

Letters and memos can be written for many purposes. Here are just a few reasons you may have to write these documents in your professional career. We will also provide some tips for each one.

Making a Request

Whenever you make a request, whether in a **memo** or **letter**, remember to consider the **tone** of your words: be polite and be respectful. It is certainly easier, and faster, to send off a message without proofreading it, but doing so will help you make sure that you do not sound demanding or condescending to your audience.

Remember that your request will add to your audience's already busy day, so acknowledge the time and effort necessary to address your request. Finally, always be as specific as possible about what you expect your reader to do and provide the necessary information so that the reader can successfully fulfill your request.

When making a request you should:

- quickly establish relation, and then begin with the main point
- explain in the body of the document your needs and provide details to justify the request
- end by extending goodwill and appreciation

- always be courteous and proofread to eliminate poor tone

Thank-Yous

Thank-you letters may feel like an old-fashioned way to communicate, but even in today's fast-paced world, a well-written thank you letter can establish your **credibility** and professionalism. A hand written thank-you letter is always most appropriate, but a business thank-you letter may be printed on company stationery.

A thank-you letter does not need to be long, but it should communicate your sincere appreciation to the reader.

- Be specific about what you are thanking the reader for. Avoid clichés and stock phrases.
- Include some details about why you are thankful and how you benefited from the reader's actions.
- End with a sincere compliment and repeat the thank-you.

Interview Thank-You Note

A brief thank-you letter or thank-you email is an important step in the interview and job search process. Not only will the note of thanks communicate your professionalism, but it will also give you an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the company. Use this opportunity to remind the reader why you are the best candidate for the position.

"Good News" Messages

Obviously, preparing a good news message (such as a message of of Congratulations, Acknowledgement, and Acceptance) is easier than preparing a negative message. However, care should be taken in all correspondence to maintain your **credibility** as a professional.

- Be specific about the achievement or award.
- Be sincere in your congratulations.
- Avoid using language which might sound patronizing or insincere.

"Bad News" Messages

In the course of your professional career, you are going to need to write negative messages (such as messages of Complaint or Refusal) for a variety of reasons. **Tone** is very important here; comments should be made using neutral language and should be as specific as possible.

A thoughtful writer will remember that the message will likely have negative consequences for the audience, and although it may be appropriate to begin with a buffer sentence to establish relation, get to the main point as quickly as possible. Keep your audience's needs in mind; your audience will need to clearly understand your decision and your reasons for making such a decision.

Do not hide your bad news in ambiguous language to save your own sense of **face**. Finally, remember to be courteous and considerate of your audience's feelings. Avoid inflaming the situation with emotional, accusatory, or sarcastic language, and avoid personal attacks on your reader.

- Be polite and use neutral language.
- Be specific about the bad news you are conveying.
- Provide relevant details so your audience can understand your decision.

- End with an appropriate closing; avoid insincere or falsely positive endings which are disrespectful to your audience.

Apology / Conciliation

Learning how to apologize well is an important skill for young professionals. A poorly written apology can exacerbate problems for both you and your company. Don't apologize unnecessarily, but when an apology is in order, do so sincerely and with full recognition of your audience's hurt, frustration and disappointment.

Once you reach a leadership position in your field, you may also need to apologize for someone else's error. As a leader in an organization, it will be your job to take responsibility and to apologize fully to maintain your organization's credibility.

Sincere apologies focus on the audience's needs and feelings, not the needs and feelings of the person issuing the apology. Avoid the ubiquitous "this is not who I am" phrase as part of an apology because saying "this is not who I am" is not an apology at all. If you do something that requires an apology, take responsibility and recognize that your actions or words caused hurt or inconvenience for someone else. An apology must also be sincere; an accusation veiled as as an apology will not persuade anyone that you are actually sorry. A phrase such as "I am sorry you feel that way" will not convince your audience that you are sincerely sorry. An apology should:

- Sincerely acknowledge that you are sorry for the words or actions which caused harm
- Acknowledge that the audience's hurt, frustration, or anger is real, and warranted
- Take responsibility for the mistake and the negative consequences of the mistake
- Never suggest that the audience is somehow to blame for

the problem
- Offer some form of compensation if it seems appropriate to do so

Transmittal Letters

When you send a report or some other document (such as a resumé) to an external audience, send it with a letter that briefly explains the purpose of the enclosed document and a brief summary. For more information on these kinds of transmittal documents for reports, visit Chapter 29: Formatting the Report. For more information on cover letters, visit Chapter 19: Cover/Application Letters.

Click the link to download a Letter of Transmittal Template (.docx).

Letters of Inquiry

You may want to request information about a company or organization such as whether they anticipate job openings in the near future or whether they fund grant proposals from non-profit groups.

In this case, you would send a letter of inquiry, asking for additional information. As with most business letters, keep your request brief, introducing yourself in the opening paragraph and then clearly stating your purpose and/or request in the second paragraph. If you need very specific information, consider placing your requests in list form for clarity. Conclude in a friendly way that shows appreciation for the help you will receive.

Follow-up Letters

Any time you have made a request of someone, write a follow-up letter expressing your appreciation for the time your letter-recipient has taken to respond to your needs or consider your job application. If you have had a job interview, the follow-up letter thanking the interviewer for his/her time is especially important for demonstrating your professionalism and attention to detail.

Exercise #3: Letters

Letters within the professional context may take on many other purposes, such as communicating with suppliers, contractors, partner organizations, clients, government agencies, and so on.

Below are three images of letters. The first shows a layout using the full-block format discussed above. The second image is a cover letter, the second is a transmittal letter.

Do the sample letters have all the parts we've discussed in this section? If so, what do they still need? Is there anything you think would be helpful for the author to include?

An interactive H5P element has been

excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=987#h5p-56

For additional examples of professional letters, take a look at the sample letters provided by David McMurrey in his online textbook on technical writing: *Online Technical Writing: Examples, Cases & Models*.

Key Takeaways

- Even in the digital age, writing correspondence will be a regular part of your professional career. Not only do these types of correspondence help maintain your **credibility** as an employee, they help you build relation with co-workers, clients, and the public.
- **Memos** are in house, internal documents that serve a number of purposes, such as passing along information or proposing ideas. Their format includes a **Header Block** followed by the message itself. A message has three parts: the

opening, details, and a closing.

- **Letters** are more formal than memos, since they are generally externally sent to people outside of a company or organization. They use a **full block format** which is the standard for most organizations. Like **memos**, there are many different reasons you may write a **letter**.

Attributions

Chapter 16: Text Messages and Emails

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify five strategies for using netiquette while communicating online
- Explain the four guidelines for texting is a business environment
- Recognize key elements of a strong professional email

Key Terms and Concepts

- netiquette
- texting
- chat applications
- email

Digital Communication


Photo #1: Team working together

Text messaging, emailing, and posting on social media in a professional context requires that you be familiar with **netiquette**, or proper etiquette for using the internet. We have all heard the news stories about people who have been fired and companies that have been boycotted for making offensive or inappropriate social media posts. People have even gone to prison for illegal use of private messaging. The digital world may *seem* like a free-for-all, "wild wild west" with no clear rules or regulations; however, this is clearly a dangerous perspective for a professional to take, as the consequences for breaking tacit rules, expectations, and guidelines for professional communications can be very costly.

The way that you represent yourself in writing carries significant weight. Writing in an online environment requires tact, skill, and an awareness that what you write may be there for a very long time and may be seen by people you never considered as your intended audience. From text messages to **memos** to letters, from business proposals to press releases, your written business communication represents you and your company: your goal is to make it clear, concise, constructive, and professional.

We create personal pages, post messages, and interact via online technologies as a normal part of our careers, but how we conduct ourselves can leave a lasting image, literally. The photograph you posted on your Instagram page or Twitter feed may have been seen by your potential employer, or that insensitive remark in a Facebook post may come back to haunt you later.

Guidelines for Communicating Online

Following several guidelines for online postings, as detailed below, can help you avoid embarrassment later:

- **Know your context**
    - Introduce yourself
    - Avoid assumptions about your readers; remember that culture influences communication style and practices
    - Familiarize yourself with policies on Acceptable Use of IT Resources at your organization.
- **Remember the human**
    - Remember there is a person behind the words; ask for clarification before making judgment
    - Check your **tone** before you publish; avoid jokes, sarcasm, and irony as these can often be misinterpreted and get “lost in translation” in the online environment
    - Respond to people using their names

- Remember that culture, age, and gender can play a part in how people communicate
    - Remain authentic and expect the same of others
    - Remember that people may not reply immediately. People participate in different ways, some just by reading the communication rather than jumping into it.

- **Recognize that text is permanent**
    - Be judicious and diplomatic; what you say online may be difficult or even impossible to retract later.
    - Consider your responsibility to the group and to the working environment
    - Agree on ground rules for text communication (formal or informal; seek clarification whenever needed) if you are working collaboratively

- **Avoid flaming: research before you react**
    - Accept and forgive mistakes
    - Consider your responsibility to the group and to the working environment
    - Seek clarification before reacting; what you heard is not always what was said
    - Ask your supervisor for guidance.*

- **Respect privacy and original ideas**
    - Quote the original author if you are responding with a specific point made by

someone else
  - Ask the author of an email for permission before forwarding the communication.

** Sometimes, online behaviour can appear so disrespectful and even hostile that it requires attention and follow up. In this case, let your supervisor know right away so that the right resources can be called upon to help.*

For further information on netiquette, check out the following links:

- Business Insider: Email etiquette rules every professional needs to know
- LinkedIn: Why is email etiquette important

Texting

Whatever digital device you use, written communication in the form of brief messages, or texting, has become a common way to connect. This is particularly true with **team chat applications** such as Slack and Microsoft Teams which are becoming increasingly popular with companies as a means for employees to quickly communicate with each other.

On these platforms, short exchanges are common as they are a convenient way to stay connected with others when talking on the phone, or sending an email, would be cumbersome. If you need a quick, brief answer right away, texting is often the best choice.

However, it's also important to be mindful of the company culture and what is deemed "appropriate" on these platforms. For example, when people text their friends and family, they often send **gifs** as a way to communicate their reactions. Should you also do this at your company? It depends. Some companies are okay with it, some are not. Even if they are okay with you using gifs, there may rules around the types of gifs that are sent. Pay attention to how others are communicating in these spaces and use that as a guide for your own communication style.

In summary, texting is not useful for long or complicated messages. When deciding whether a text or email is better, careful consideration should be given to the **audience**. Wouldn't it seem strange is someone sent you a text that was like an email?

Watch the short video below:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=551#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: https://tinyurl.com/textonbus

When texting, always consider your audience and your company, and choose words, terms, or abbreviations that will deliver your message appropriately and effectively.

Guidelines for Effective Business Texting

If your work situation allows or requires you to communicate via text messages, keep the following tips in mind:

- **Know your recipient:** "? % dsct" may be an understandable way to ask a close associate what the proper discount is to offer a certain customer, but if you are writing a text to your boss, it might be wiser to write, "what % discount does Murray get on $1K order?"
- **Anticipate unintentional misinterpretation:** texting often uses symbols and codes to represent thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Given the complexity of communication, and the useful but limited tool of texting, be aware of its limitation and prevent misinterpretation with brief messages.
- **Use appropriately:** contacting someone too frequently can border on harassment. Texting is a tool. Use it when appropriate but don't abuse it.
- **Don't text and drive:** research shows that the likelihood of an accident increases dramatically if the driver is texting behind the wheel ("Deadly distraction," 2009). Being in an accident while conducting company business would reflect poorly on your judgment as well as on your employer.

Email

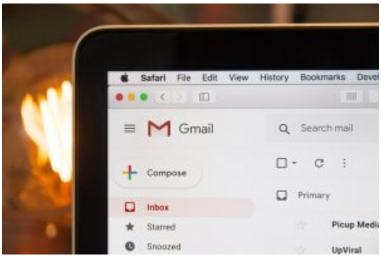


Photo #2: Email Platform

Email is familiar to most students and workers. In business, it has largely replaced print hard copy **letters** for external (outside the company) correspondence, and in many cases, it has taken the place of **memos** for internal (within the company) communication (Guffey, 2008).

Email can be very useful for messages that have slightly more content than a text message, but it is still best used for fairly brief messages. Many businesses use automated emails to acknowledge communications from the public, or to remind associates that periodic reports or payments are due. You may also be assigned to "populate" a form email in which standard paragraphs are used but you choose from a menu of sentences to make the wording suitable for a particular transaction.

Emails may be informal in personal contexts, but business communication requires attention to detail, awareness that your email reflects you and your company, and a professional **tone** so that it may be forwarded to any third party if needed. Email often serves to exchange information within organizations. Although email may have an informal feel, remember that when used for business, it needs to convey professionalism and respect. Never write or send anything that you wouldn't want read in public or in front of your company president.

As with all writing, professional communications require attention to the specific writing context, and it may surprise you that even elements of form can indicate a writer's strong understanding of **audience** and purpose. The principles explained here apply to the educational context as well; use them when communicating with your instructors and classroom peers.

Guidelines for Effective Business Emails

Open with a proper salutation: proper salutations demonstrate respect and avoid mix-ups in case a message is accidentally sent to the wrong recipient. For example, use a salutation like “Dear Ms. X” (external) or “Hi Barry” (internal).

Include a clear, brief, and specific subject line: this helps the recipient understand the essence of the message. For example, “Proposal attached” or “Electrical specs for project Y.”

Close with a signature: identify yourself by creating a signature block that automatically contains your name and business contact information.

Avoid abbreviations: an email is not a text message, and the audience may not find your wit cause to ROTFLOL (roll on the floor laughing out loud).

Be brief: omit unnecessary words.

Use a good format: divide your message into brief paragraphs for ease of reading. A good email should get to the point and conclude in three small paragraphs or less.

Reread, revise, and review: catch and correct spelling and grammar mistakes before you press “send.” It will take more time and effort to undo the problems caused by a hasty, poorly written email than to take the time to get it right the first time.

Reply promptly: watch out for an emotional response—never reply in anger—but make a habit of replying to all emails within twenty-four hours, even if only to say that you will provide the requested information in forty-eight or seventy-two hours.

Use "Reply All" sparingly: do not send your reply to everyone who received the initial email unless your message absolutely needs to be read by the entire group.

Avoid using all caps: capital letters are used on the Internet to communicate emphatic emotion or yelling and are considered rude.

Test links: if you include a link, test it to make sure it is working.

Email ahead of time if you are going to attach large files: audio and visual files are often quite large; be careful to avoid exceeding the recipient's mailbox limit or triggering the spam filter.

Give feedback or follow up: if you don't get a response in twenty-four hours, email or call. Spam filters may have intercepted your message, so your recipient may never have received it.

Tip: add the address of the recipient last to avoid sending prematurely. This will give you time to do a last review of what you've written, make sure links work, make sure you've added the attachment, *etc.*, before adding the sender's address and hitting send.

The sample email below demonstrates the principles listed above.

From: Steve Jobs <sjobs@apple.com>

To: Human Resources Division <hr@apple.com>

Date: September 12, 2021

Subject: Safe Zone Training

Dear Colleagues:

Please consider signing up for the next available Safe Zone workshop offered by the College. As you know, our department is working toward increasing the number of Safe Zone volunteers in our area, and I hope several of you may be available for the next workshop scheduled for Friday, October 9.

For more information on the Safe Zone program, please visit http://www.cocc.edu/multicultural/safe-zone-training/

Please let me know if you will attend.

Steve Jobs

CEO Apple Computing
sjobs@apple.com

Key Takeaways

- All companies use digital communication in some capacity. As a result, the way you represent yourself in digital spaces will have an impact—either positive or negative—on how others view you professionally. This is why it's important that you are familiar with the principles of **netiquette** which suggest how to communicate in these spaces.
- The core principles of **netiquette** include:

    1. Know your context
    2. Remember the human
    3. Recognize that text is permanent
    4. Avoid flaming: research before you react
    5. Respect privacy and original ideas

- Texting is often best when communicating small amounts of information. Email, on the other hand, is best when a message has more content. However, brevity is still important, as is attention to detail. Even if you are communicating with colleagues, a poorly formatted, error-heavy email can reflect poorly on your **credibility** as a professional.

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APPLYING FOR A JOB

Chapter 17: Rhetoric and the Job Search

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Reflect how to apply rhetorical theory we cover in this course to the job application process
- Explain how the three elements from Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation"—rhetorical exigence, rhetorical audience, and constraints—can impact the quality of your job package
- Identify reasons why it is better to have a job package that is audience-centred instead of one that is not
- Analyze an organizational profile in a job posting and identify at least 3-4 keywords

Key Terms and Concepts

- job package

- rhetorical communication
- rhetorical exigence
- rhetorical audience
- constraints
- audience-centred
- keywords

Employment materials are some of the most important—and most challenging—pieces of writing you will ever undertake.

Photo #1: Talking at a table

The aim of the this chapter is to ease your mind and demystify the job application process by giving you some core principles to follow. With these principles, you can create a **job package** that will make you a more desirable candidate to potential employers.

Whether you are applying to be an administrative assistant or an engineer, a web developer or a caregiver, many of the strategies are the same. As you read through this chapter, keep the following principles in mind:

- The more customized your materials are, the more successful they will be—generic materials are unlikely to capture an employer's attention.
- Your materials should not demonstrate why this job would benefit **you**. Instead, they should show how you, as a unique candidate, can benefit your **potential employer**.
- Your materials should not simply list every job you've ever held, but instead emphasize transferable skills, making an

argument for how your past accomplishments prepare you for the job you are applying for.

Tailoring your materials to a specific **audience** is to work smarter, rather than harder. In fact, tailoring is one of the core principles of technical writing. Imagine yourself in the position of a hiring manager. Would you be more likely to hire a candidate whose generic résumé looks like it has been sent to dozens of similar employers? Or would you be more likely to hire a candidate who has researched your business and understands what the job entails?

The answer is pretty obvious, isn't it?

Applying for a job is a great opportunity to practice your developing **rhetorical communication** skills!

Exercise #1: Reflecting on Theory

Take a look back at the rhetorical theories we've discussed over the last term, and reflect on how you can apply these rhetorical strategies to the job application process.

You may not have encountered the theory in Wayne Booth's "The Rhetorical Stance" yet. If that's the case, feel free to quickly skim the chapter if you would like to get ahead.

An interactive H5P element has been

excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=265#h5p-14

Applying the Rhetorical Situation to Job Applications

Knowing how to apply the theories above will set you on a strong path when you start applying jobs. We now want to focus on the theory of Lloyd Bitzer, who you should remember as the author of "The Rhetorical Situation". This article provides foundational theory for RCM 200. Recall the three rhetorical elements he discusses:

- **rhetorical exigence**
- **rhetorical audience**
- **rhetorical constraints**

Let's have a look at all three of these theories in the context of a job search.

Rhetorical Exigence

What is your **rhetorical exigence** as you begin your job search? You may be thinking that you want a job so you can make some money, and you may want to develop skills and get experience. While these needs are understandably important to you, employers will seldom hire you to solve your problems or fulfill your needs.

Think of it this way: why did the employer post the job in the first place? What problem prompted the job being posted? Well, the employer needs someone with skills and qualities to do the job. They want someone who can get along with people, and someone who is reliable. This means that the more you can show in your application materials that you are the *solution* to the employer's **rhetorical exigence**, the more successful you will be.

Rhetorical Audience

Who is the **rhetorical audience** for the job posting? This is pretty obvious: it's the employer! The more you know about the employer, the more carefully you can put your job package together. Thus, you must begin your research *before* starting your **cover letter** and **résumé** and especially before going into your **interview**.

How do you do begin your research? Simply google the employer. Check out any local news stories about recent projects or company developments. Read the company's mission statement and learn about any projects they are currently working on. This will give you a sense of how the company sees themselves in the world and what is important to them. This process may seem like it would take a while, but it's important to do it because this is how you show that you care about these things as well. If you can show that your mission and goals align with those of the employer, then they are more likely to call you in for an interview.

Use this information to make your job application materials more **audience-centred**.

Rhetorical Constraints

It is possible that you will run into some **constraints** as you create your job package. Here are just a few to consider:

The Employers' Needs

Photo #2: Researching the company

A job posting usually lists many different things that an employer wants from a candidate. It is important, then, that you are selective in the information that you include in your **cover letter** and **résumé**.

Go through the job posting and pick out **keywords** to put in your cover letter and the front page of your résumé. Whether your job application package is viewed first by a person or a computer tracking system, both are going to be looking for those **keywords** to make sure you meet the company's needs.

Ultimately, what will is that your application package will be not be looked at in isolation. Rather, it will be looked at as part of a stack of other viable candidates, and at the early stage of the hiring process, employers are actively looking for reasons to get rid of your application, and not consider it. This is why it is so important to make your job package materials **audience-centred** by tailoring to the needs of the employer!

Format

You are constrained by the length of your documents. You do not have ten pages to tell an employer all the reasons why you are great for a position. A cover letter and résumé that are too long will go straight into the recycling bin because they show you cannot be concise. Instead, aim for a 1-page cover letter and a 2-page résumé.

Additionally, the *look* of both documents is important. If they don't have good visual appeal, both documents will be set aside immediately. Therefore, be sure to think about white space, bolding, indentation, horizontal design features, etc. Your documents will need to be visually compelling and engaging; they should invite the audience to look at them. We will see some examples of different formats in the next couple of chapters.

Truth

You obviously want to show yourself in the best light, but you also need to tell the truth. If a résumé or cover letter suggests a lie, they will be thrown out right away. This means you need to think about what is relevant and most recent, and include that information on your résumé. Keep in mind Booth's discussion of the rhetorical corruptions, and in particular, the **Advertiser's Stance**. You will want to avoid sacrificing the **logos** of your message as you put together your application materials.

Reading the Job Ad

Job advertisements provide a lot of information about what is important to a company. It is very easy to immediately skip down to the skills section, and not consider the rest of the posting. Instead, take the time to read all of the job ad carefully to find **keywords** which highlight skills, qualities, and values that are important to the company.

Let's look at an example. Below is an organizational profile for Nutrien Ag Services. Organizational profiles are generally found at the top of job posting and are great places to search for **keywords**. This profile was found in a job posting for an internship position targeted towards students and new grads. See if you can identify at least 3-4 **keywords**. Keep in mind though that there are many more than that in the profile.

> At Nutrien, our Purpose is to grow our world from the ground up and we do so with safety and integrity as our core values. Nothing is more important than sending our people home safe, every day.
>
> Nutrien Ag Solutions is the retail division of Nutrien™**,** the largest crop inputs company in the

world. As part of our collective mission of Feeding the Future, Nutrien Ag Solutions provides full-acre solutions through our trusted crop consultants at more than 2,000 locations in North America, South America, Europe and Australia. For more than 150 years, we have been helping growers achieve the highest yields with a wide selection of products, including our proprietary brands: Loveland Products, Inc.; Proven®Seed and Dyna-Gro®Seed; as well as financial, custom application and precision ag services.

We harvest the best. Diverse views and experience make us strong. We look for people who have a safety-first mindset, who are collaborative team players, who deliver on their commitments, who are innovators in search of a better way, and who believe in inclusion.

Working at Nutrien Ag Solutions will provide you an opportunity to help us *Feed the Future,* and grow your career.

You probably noticed that there is fair amount of information that is not relevant to our purposes. That's okay, though; as long as you can find at least a few **keywords** that you can use to make you job application package more **audience-centred** , you'll be in a good position. Here is a list of **keywords** that you could potentially use for this job posting:

- safety
- integrity
- trust

- helping growers
- customized services
- precision
- diverse views
- collaborative
- reliable
- innovative
- inclusive

That's a lot! Don't worry though, you don't have to include all of those **keywords** in your job package. Instead, pick at least 3-4 that apply to you and your experience and include those in your materials.

Exercise #2: Reading a Job Ad

Now it's your turn.

Below is a paragraph from a Cargill job advertisement for a summer production management engineering internship position. This paragraph was listed under the organizational profile heading of the job posting. See if you can pick out the keywords that let you know what is important to Cargill:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=265#h5p-18

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=265#h5p-19

Now, reread the job ad and answer this question: how does Cargill see itself?

They see themselves as a unique, leading international produce that is growing their reputation every day.

Ultimately, you will be more successful in your job application if you can *show* you share these same values, and that you are the person with the same set of skills and qualities that the company has.

Key Takeaways

As you start putting together your **job package**, keep the following things in mind.

- Focus on the *employer's* **exigence**, not your own. If you can solve the employer's **exigence**, you will probably solve your own.
- Know your **audience**. The more research you can do about the employer, the more you can tailor your application materials to be **audience-centred**, which means you will be more successful with your job search.
- The best way to tailor your materials is to search for **keywords** in the job posting's organizational profile. Try to include at least 3-4 keywords in each of your **job package** materials.
- Consider all the **constraints** you face while still making your application stand out. Make sure your application is targeted and is something that people actually want to look at.

Attributions

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Photo #1 by Christina on Unsplash

Photo #2 by Duncan Meyer on Unsplash

Chapter 18: Application Preparation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Use job boards or other means to find a job posting that you can use for your job package assignment
- Conduct a self-inventory to evaluate your skills, achievements, and accomplishments
- Analyze a company's website or other sources to evaluate its goals and values and establish your connection to the company
- Identify keywords in a job posting that you can highlight in your own application materials to show you "speak their language"

Key Terms and Concepts

- pre-writing

- job package
- self-inventory
- keywords
- action verbs
- rhetorical audience
- rhetorical exigence

Spending adequate time preparing to write your employment materials can save you many headaches in the drafting phase, i.e., the writing phase where you are actually creating your materials. This chapter focuses on the **pre-writing** phase, which is when you should be gathering information and content to help generate those materials. In this chapter, you will find a potential job that you are eligible to apply for now, conduct a **self-inventory** of your skills and achievements, research your potential employer, and research the job you have selected. This may seem like a lot of work, but following these steps will make you more likely to stand out from all the other applicants.

Finding a Job

Finding a suitable job opening itself can be a time-consuming process. Here are a few resources to get you started:

Photo #1: Making a plan

- Job boards: browse sites like Indeed, CareerBuilder, Glassdoor and Monster to search for jobs in your field.
- Specialty job lists**:** look for lists of jobs in specific industries such as agriculture (Western Producer), nonprofits (Idealist), or media (MediaBistro)
- Company, organization and government websites: visit the employment section on websites of companies you admire; search federal, provincial, regional, and city websites for job postings.
- Your own network: talk to classmates, friends, past employers, and professors or visit LinkedIn to search for openings at companies in your network.
- Your college**:** visit your college or university placement office/career center and attend job fairs hosted at your college. The University of Saskatchewan has specific jobs listed for its students/alumni listed here.

Many job seekers also use Kijiji to look for work; just be aware that Kijiji postings often lack detail and may come from headhunters or placement agencies, rather than from the direct employer.

Once you have found a job, make sure to print and/or save a copy of the job posting or job description. You will use this document to help you tailor your application materials and prepare for your interview. Because companies often delete the job posting once they have received sufficient applicants, it is important that you save your own copy.

Exercise #1: Finding a Job Posting

One of your assignments for this course is to apply the rhetorical theory you are learning to the job application process.

For this assignment, you will create a **job package** for a position you are qualified to apply for. The exercises in this chapter will get you started.

Let's begin by actually finding some potential jobs! Use the web site options listed above to identify a couple of positions you are qualified for. Looking for internships in your field is a great place to start.

After you have gathered a few job postings, pick one that you are most excited about. This is the one you will use for the **job package** assignment and for the other exercises in this chapter.

Don't forget to print or save a copy of the job posting you choose. Once you have the posting ready to go, head on to the next section.

Conducting a Self-Inventory

It's important to know what you have to offer as a potential employee. As you work on your **résumé**, you may worry that you have nothing valuable to include, or you may worry that you are "bragging." One way to get over these hurdles is to allocate time to a **self-inventory**.

Brainstorm your skills, accomplishments and knowledge by asking yourself the following questions:

- What did you accomplish at a past or current work, school, or volunteer position?
- What transferable skills have you learned?
- What would you tell a friend or family member you were proud of having achieved there?

Start writing down skills and **action verbs** that describe your experiences and accomplishments, and don't worry about putting them into a résumé format yet.

Exercise #2: Self-Inventory

Let's take a moment to brainstorm some skills and **action verbs** that you can use in your **job package** assignment for this course. The best way to do this is to browse a skill list such as the one below.

Complete the following steps:

1. Scan the groupings of skills (Communication Skills, Creative Skills, Financial Skills etc.) for

action verbs related to skills you have or work you have done.

2. Write down the categories of **skills** you have (again, Communication Skills, Creative Skills, Financial Skills etc.) and the action verbs that describe skills you have or work you have done (e.g. analyzed, performed, calculated, advocated, etc.).

For example, you probably have done quite a few team projects in school already. You could probably pick “Communication Skills” and “Collaborated.”

Communication/ People Skills	Creative Skills	Management/ Leadership Skills
Collaborated	Combined	Assigned
Communicated	Created	Coordinated
Developed	Developed	Decided
Edited	Drew	Improved
Incorporated	Illustrated	Led
Proposed	Planned	Managed
Suggested	Revised	Oversaw
Synthesized	Shaped	Recommended
Translated	Crafted	Reviewed
Facilitated	Conceived	Supervised
Mediated	Established	Delegated

Table adapted from Creating Resumes I by Roads to Success, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.

For an additional list of action words for your job package, check out the Usask's Career Centre's materials on résumés and cover letters.

As you gather information about your work history and skills, double check that your information is accurate and current. Gather dates of employment, dates of trainings, lists of activities you have been involved in, academic awards, achievements and special projects. If you're having trouble remembering the information, ask former coworkers or managers about your significant workplace contributions.

Researching Your Potential Employer

Photo #2: Looking for work

As we've already discussed, you must adapt your **job package** materials to your potential employer because they are your **rhetorical audience**. Of course, to know your audience means you will need to first take the time to do a little research. It is important that you research your potential employer as well as the job for which you're applying. The easiest way to research a potential employer is to visit the company's website.

Look for an "About Us" page or a "Mission Statement," and observe how the company describes its goals and values.

Try to answer the following questions about the company or organization:

- Whom does this company serve?
- Who are this company's partners or competitors?
- What technologies would I use at this company?
- What is the tone of this company's materials (formal, conservative, humorous, "cutting edge," etc.)?
- How would you describe this company's brand?

Here are a few more ways to research a company: search for its name on LinkedIn and other social media sites, browse for news articles about the company or press releases written by the company, speak with friends or colleagues who work for the company, or call the company to request an informational interview. This may seem like extra work, but this research can help you analyze the needs of your **rhetorical audience** and, as a result, better market yourself as a solution to those needs.

As you research, look for ways to connect with the company:

- What do you admire about the company?
- Where do your values and interests overlap with those of the company?
- What makes this company a good fit for you?

Try to summarize your connection to the company in one sentence. Remember that your potential employer is also your **rhetorical audience**, and adapt your tone, examples, and level of technicality accordingly.

Exercise #3: Research the Employer

It's time to research the company where you are applying!

Using the company from your job posting, find the company's "About Us" and/or "Mission Statement" page and try to answer the questions listed above. You may need to look at other parts of the website or online to find some of the answers. The job posting is also a great place to find this info.

Once you have your answers, try to summarize your connection to the company in one sentence. What is it about this company that makes you want to work for them? What part of their goals and/or values do you most respond to? A sentence that explains this information would be great for the first paragraph of your **cover letter**!

Researching the Potential Job

To research the job itself, take advantage of the job posting you found. The job posting is your secret weapon; in this document, you are told what the employer is looking for in a candidate.

Exercise #4: Researching the Job

The job posting will give you insight into the **rhetorical exigence** that a company needs solved. Obviously, the solution is you! The best way to figure out how you can solve that problem is by scouring the job posting and making connections to the words in it.

You want to get into a conversation with the document as you go over it, so you will need a way to annotate the posting. Either print it out or copy and paste it in a document editor like Microsoft Word. Once you have the document ready, take the following steps:

1. Highlight or underline any qualifications that you hold—any skills you have, technologies you've used, etc.
2. Make note of any past achievements that relate to any of the preferred qualifications. Ideally, try to use the achievements and experiences you generated from Exercise #2. For example, if the job description seeks a candidate who can diagnose and solve technical problems, write down an example of a specific time in which you did so in a professional or academic setting.
3. Circle any **keywords** you might use in your own materials. Using the same terms as a potential employer demonstrates to that employer that you are able to "speak their language."
4. Note any questions/uncertainties and any qualifications you do not have in order to decide what to highlight and what to downplay in your materials (as well as what you need to learn more about).

Any content you find through this process can be discussed in your application materials. You may not end up using all of the content you generate, but its important to have options when trying to appeal to your **rhetorical audience**—the company.

If you're having trouble identifying **keywords**, creating a word cloud from the job description might help. This can be accomplished by using a website like EdWordle. Word clouds present text as a visual display, reorganizing content so that the largest words are those that appear most frequently in the analyzed text(see Figures 1 and 2 below). A word cloud can be a helpful visual tool to identify **keywords** to use in your résumé and cover letter. You might also be surprised to find that a "big word" (a commonly repeated **keyword**) is one that you would not automatically associate with the job.

For example, Figure 1, below, is generated from a job posting for a Children's Museum Experience Facilitator position. What words stand out to you?

Figure 1. Portland Children's Museum Experience Facilitator Job Description as a Word Cloud

We can see in Figure 1 that some of the words are obvious terms we would expect to find in a children's museum job description—museum, children, exhibits, playing, etc. However, "diversity" and "diverse" are both large terms, too. If you were applying for this job, you would now know to talk about your commitment to diversity/experience working with people from diverse backgrounds.

Now you try. Figure 2, below, is a word cloud generated from a job posting from Nutrien for a summer student position targeted towards **Mechanical Engineers**.

What words stand out to you?

Figure 2. Nutrien Summer Student, Mechanical Engineering Job Description as a Word Cloud

Obviously, certain words like “Nutrien” and “Engineering” are no surprise. However, there are a few **keywords** we can pull out of this: words like communication, inclusion, analysis, organizational. After putting together this word cloud, you now know a few areas and skills that you should speak to if you are applying for this position.

Exercise #5: Keyword Analysis

Generate a word cloud using your job posting. You can do this by using a website like EdWordle.

What words stand out to you? Are there any words that you didn’t notice back in Exercise #3? Try to identify at least 3-4 **keywords** that you will be able to speak to in your job application materials.

Key Takeaways

- Creating a **job package** can be a time-consuming process. However, you can make the process easier by engaging in some **pre-writing** activities.
- To find a job posting, you are not limited to using all-purpose **job boards** like Indeed. There are specialty **job boards** like Idealist that target specific job interests and some companies only post jobs on their websites. Also, you can tap into your existing networks that you already have access to such as friends, family, and University of Saskatchewan Career Services.
- Companies are your **rhetorical audience**. They want to know that you will align with their goals and values. You can learn what those are by using the "Mission Statement" and/or "About Us" page on the company's website or by searching the internet. Once you know this information, you should be able to summarize your connection to the company in a single sentence.
- You are the solution to a company's **rhetorical exigence**. The best way to show this is by

identifying **keywords** in the job posting and connecting those **keywords** to your skills, accomplishments, and achievements in your application materials.

Attributions

Chapter 19: Cover/ Application Letters

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain the difference between a cover letter and a résumé
- Recall at least three tips for making your cover letter stand out
- Distinguish between the four parts of a cover letter and the purposes of each
- Analyze a sample cover letter to determine strengths and weakness

Key Terms and Concepts

- cover letter / application letter
- full block letter format
- pathos
- ethos

- logos

Photo: A workspace

In the era of social media, the idea of writing a **cover letter** to introduce your résumé may seem outdated. However, the **cover letter** (also known as an **application letter**) still serves a few critical functions. If your résumé is characterized by *breadth*—giving a broad overview of your qualifications—the **cover letter** is characterized by *depth*—choosing a few most significant qualifications to cover in detail.

Your **cover letter** is the first writing sample your employer will see from you that is written in paragraphs rather than bullet points. In paragraphs, it is easier to market your unique qualifications and how you will fit in with the culture of the company. An effective **cover letter** will create a picture of you as a potential employee, and inspire a potential employer to learn more about you.

Keep the following tips in mind as you write your cover letter:

- Your cover letter is essentially an argument for why you should be granted an interview.
- Make sure to support the claim that you are qualified for the position with *evidence*. This evidence should come from the pre-writing exercises you did in the previous

chapter.

- Demonstrate your authority by speaking in detail about your qualifications, and *show* the reader that you have the skills and abilities necessary to do the job at hand. The more detail you offer and the more precise your language is, the more the reader will be able to picture you doing the job. *See the sample cover letter below for examples of "showing."*
- Use your audience analysis research to help you connect with the company and to choose the appropriate tone, level of formality, and level of technicality
- Follow the **full block format** for professional letters found in the Technical Communication chapter.
- Aim for one page for your letter and avoid spilling over onto a second
- Follow the Seven Cs to make sure you've edited your letter professionally

Outline for Cover Letters

With some adjustments, the **full block format** will help you design your **cover letter**, but what about the actual content? The general outline for a **cover letter** has four parts, each with their own elements. They are:

1. Salutation
2. Opening Paragraph
3. Body Paragraph(s)
4. Closing Paragraph

Make sure your cover letter has all the elements discussed below. Otherwise, your **cover letter** risks not being the persuasive document it needs to be to get you an **interview**.

Salutation

Make your best attempt to find a specific name (or at least the job title) of the person to whom you should address this letter. Avoid using generic salutations like “Dear Hiring Manager,” as they do not add any **relation** to your letter. If you do not know the specific audience to direct your letter to, you can omit this portion of the letter.

Opening Paragraph

State why you are writing, specifically naming the position to which you are applying. Indicate how you learned about the position (networking if you can). In one sentence, create a **pathos** appeal by using your audience analysis research to establish a connection with the company. Finally, in one sentence, summarize your strongest qualification/s for the job, in order to build up your credibility or **ethos**.

Body Paragraph(s)

Your body paragraphs show how you are uniquely qualified for the position. Build each paragraph around a *single* qualification or unique professional strength that relates to the job for which you are applying. Open the paragraph with a claim about this qualification/strength, and then provide a developed illustration of a time in your work or academic history when you used/excelled at this skill, or used it to benefit others.

For example, if the job requires excellent customer service skills, you might discuss a time in which you used your customer service skills to defuse a conflict or increase your company's profits. It can be effective to conclude your middle paragraphs with sentences that express how these past experiences will prepare you for the potential job. These concluding statements contribute to your **ethos** by demonstrating your good judgement, and establish an effective **logos** appeal by drawing connections between your skills and experiences and the company's needs.

Be sure to begin each paragraph with a clear topic sentence that unifies the information found in the paragraph.

Closing Paragraph

Thank the reader for their time and consideration. Gesture towards an **interview**. You may explicitly request an interview, or you may wish to include such a phrase as, "I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in person soon."

If there is any information the reader should know about getting in touch with you, include it; if your phone number and email address do not appear elsewhere in the cover letter, include them here. You may refer the reader to your enclosed **résumé**.

Exercise #1: Sample Cover Letters

Below are images of two cover letters. The first image shows an outline version. The second one is a sample. Review the outline, and then read the sample. Does the sample meet all the criteria we have discussed in this chapter? Why or why not? How could it be improved?

If you need a reminder on what the criteria for each part is, click the icon at the end of each element.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=584#h5p-57

Key Takeaways

- The **cover letter** is your argument for why a company should hire you. It is a way for you to market your qualifications to a potential employer and explain how you will fit into the company culture. This is accomplished by choosing your most significant qualifications and discussing them in detail.
- It is not enough to state: "I have customer service skills." You must back up this claim with evidence from your past experiences.
- It is also important to create a connection with your **audience**. If you can show how your own goals align with the company, it will be easier for

them to see why you would be a good fit.

- Your cover letter should have four elements: a Salutation, Opening Paragraph, Body Paragraph(s), and Closing Paragraph.
- For the Salutation, avoid generic greetings if possible. Try your best to find the specific name of the person receiving your letter.
- The Opening Paragraph is your chance to forge a connection to the company. Explain why you want to work for the company and summarize your strongest qualifications.
- Each Body Paragraph of your letter should focus on a specific qualification and provide evidence of how you acquired and/or used that qualification.
- The Closing Paragraph is there to thank the reader and affirm your interest in an interview. Don't forget to include your name and any necessary contact information.

Attributions

Chapter 20: Writing the Résumé

Learning Objectives

By the end of the chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify the three distinct purposes of a résumé in the job application process
- Compare the benefits and uses of a chronological résumé, functional résumé, and targeted résumé.
- Design your own targeted résumé that includes contact info, a headline, education, skills/achievements, and employment experience
- Evaluate the conventions of the résumé you have created using the guidelines presented in this chapter

Key Terms and Concepts

- résumé

- chronological résumé
- functional (skills) résumé
- targeted (hybrid) résumé
- reverse chronological order

What is a Résumé?

A **résumé** is a document that summarizes your education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences in a clear and concise format for potential employers. All of us want our **résumés** to stand out from the stack. However, the best way to create an eye-catching one is not through gimmicks or flash, but rather through substance and customization.

The word *résumé* is a French word that mean "a summary." Leonardo da Vinci is credited with writing one of the first known **résumés**, although it was more of a letter that outlined his credentials for a potential employer, Ludovico Sforza. The **résumé** got da Vinci the job, though, and Sforza became a longtime patron of da Vinci and later commissioned him to paint *The Last Supper*.

> **"The most important tool you have on a résumé is language"**
>
> **– Jay Samit**

Résumés and **cover letters** work together to represent you in the most positive light to prospective employers. With a well-composed **résumé** and cover letter, you stand out to the employer — who may give you an interview and then a good shot at landing the job.

The **résumé** serves three distinct purposes that define its format, design, and presentation:

1. To represent your professional information in writing
2. To demonstrate the relationship between your professional information and the problem or challenge the potential employer hopes to solve or address [this is your rhetorical exigence]
3. To get you an **interview** by clearly demonstrating you meet the minimum qualifications and have the professional background to help the organization meet its goals

An online profile page is similar to a **résumé** in that it represents you, your background, and qualifications. People network, link, and connect in new ways via online profiles or professional sites like LinkedIn. In many ways, your online profile is an online version of your **résumé** with connections and friends on public display. Your social media is often accessible to the public, so never post anything you wouldn't want your employer (current or future) to read, see, or hear.

This chapter covers a traditional **résumé**, as well as the more popular scannable features, but the elements and tips could equally apply to your online profile.

For an overview of the **résumé**, check out the following video:

Exercise #1: Interactive Video

Watch the interactive video below about strategies for creating a **résumé**. The video will stop at different points to check your understanding of the material.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=867#h5p-40

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/reswrit101

Types of Résumés


Photo #1: A workspace

Your **résumé** is an inventory of your education, work experience, job-related skills, accomplishments, volunteer history, internships, and more. It's a professional autobiography in outline form to give the person who reads it a quick, general idea of who you are, and what skills, abilities, and experiences you have to offer. With a better idea of who you are, prospective employers can see how well you might contribute to their workplace.

As a college student or recent graduate, though, you may be unsure about what to put in your **résumé**, especially if you don't have much employment history. Still, employers don't expect recent grads to have significant work experience. Even with little work experience, you may still have a host of worthy accomplishments to include. It's all in how you present yourself.

Work histories come in a variety of forms, as do **résumés**. Although career experts enjoy debating which style of **résumé** is the best, ultimately you must consider which fits your current situation. Which style will allow you to best package your work history, and convey your unique qualifications?

There are three different formats that we will discuss in this chapter: **a chronological resume**, a **functional (skills) resume**, and a **targeted (hybrid) resume**. For your job package assignment in RCM 200, we will use the **targeted résumé** approach, but it's important to know about the other options you have as well.

The **chronological résumé** is a traditional format whose principal section is the "Employment Experience" section. In the chronological résumé's "Employment Experience" section, jobs are listed in **reverse chronological order**, and achievements/skills are detailed underneath each position.

In contrast, a **functional (skills) résumé** features a well-developed "Skills & Achievements" section, in which skills are organized into categories. The functional résumé still includes an "Employment Experience" section, but it is streamlined to include only the basic information about each position held.

A **targeted (or hybrid) résumé** includes a well-developed "Skills & Achievements" section that highlights the candidate's most important and relevant skills, but it also includes select bullets under each job in the "Employment Experience" section. *This will be the type of résumé you will produce in RCM 200*.

There are many reasons to choose one format over another. In brief, the **chronological résumé** serves candidates with a long/uninterrupted work history, in fields where the company worked for is of paramount importance. On the other hand, the **functional résumé** serves candidates who are transitioning between fields, candidates shifting from a military to a civilian career, or candidates who have gained skills in a variety of different settings (workplace, academic, volunteer). The **targeted résumé** offers the best of both worlds.

Here are some examples of chronological, functional (skills), and hybrid résumé formats:

Chronological Résumé

A **chronological résumé** lists your job experiences in **reverse**

chronological order—that is, starting with the most recent job and working backward toward your first job. It includes starting and ending dates. Also included is a brief description of the work duties you performed for each job, and highlights of your formal education.

The reverse **chronological résumé** may be the most common and perhaps the most conservative résumé format. It is most suitable for demonstrating a solid work history, and growth and development in your skills. However, this format may not suit you if you are light on skills in the area you are applying to, or if you've changed employers frequently, or if you are looking for your first job.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=867#h5p-20

Note that the Chronological Résumé:

- Lists both work and education in **reverse chronological order** (starting with the most recent positions/schools and working backward)
- Lists job achievements and skills under each position
- Presents experience under headings by job title, company,

location, and dates of employment
- Allows employers to easily determine work performed at each company

Functional (Skills) Résumé

A **functional résumé**—also known as a **skills résumé—**is organized around your talents, skills, and abilities more so than work duties and job titles, as with the chronological résumé. It emphasizes specific professional capabilities, including what you have done or what you can do. Specific dates may be included but are not as important.

This means that if you are a new graduate entering your field with little or no actual work experience, the **functional résumé** may be a good format for you. It can also be useful when you are seeking work in a field that differs from what you have done in the past. It's also well suited for people in unconventional careers.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=867#h5p-21

Note that the Functional Résumé:

- Focuses on skills and experience, rather than on chronological work history
- Groups functions or skills under categories
- Describes responsibilities, accomplishments, and quantifiable achievements under categories in the skills section
- Typically opens with a *brief* summary/profile detailing strengths (one-three sentences)
- Demonstrates how you match the requirements of your potential job by including *relevant* achievements and accomplishments

Targeted (Hybrid) Résumé Format

The **targeted résumé**—also known as the **hybrid résumé**—is a format reflecting *both* the functional and chronological approaches. It's also called a combination résumé. It highlights relevant skills, but it still provides information about your work experience. With a **targeted résumé**, you may list your job skills as most prominent and then follow with a chronological (or reverse chronological) list of employers.

This **résumé** format is most effective when your specific skills and job experience need to be emphasized. Your job package assignment will follow this format.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=867#h5p-22

Note that the Targeted Résumé:

- A **targeted résumé** showcases your relevant skills and provides information about your work experience.
- This **résumé** format is best for emphasizing skills and job experience.

The Main Parts of a Résumé

An important note about formatting is that, initially, employers may spend only a few seconds reviewing each **résumé**—especially if there is a big stack of them or they seem tedious to read. That's why it's important to choose your format carefully so it will stand out and make the first cut.

Exercise #2: What Do Employers Expect From A Résumé?

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions:

- What do you think employers want to see in your **résumé**?
- What elements are the most important to them?

When you have an answer to both questions, watch the video below. In the video, several employers are asked those questions. Do their answers surprise you at all? If so, why? Is there anything that you didn't expect?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=867#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/resutips

Format is definitely an important component of a **résumé.** However, employers also have expectations for the content in your **résumé**. They expect it to be clear, accurate, and up to date (Bennet, 2005). This document represents you in your absence, and you want it to do the best job possible. You don't want to be represented by spelling or grammatical errors, since they may raise questions about your education and attention to detail. Someone reading your **résumé** with errors will only wonder what kind of work you might produce that will poorly reflect on their company. There is going to be enough competition that you don't want to provide an easy excuse to toss your **résumé** at the start of the process. Do your best work the first time.

Résumés have several basic elements that employers look for, including your contact information, objective or goal, education, work experience, and so on. Each **résumé** format may organize the information in distinct ways based on the overall design strategy, but all information should be clear, concise, and accurate (Simons & Curtis, 2004).

Contact Info

Create a header that includes your address, telephone number, professional email address, and possibly a Linkedin page.

The University of Saskatchewan offers an "email alias" you can use in place of your NSID email address if you like, but this is not required. For more information, go to this link.

Headline (Also called Summary, Profile, or Highlights of Qualifications)

Include a brief summary of your professional self to grab your reader's attention. Think of this section as your "elevator pitch," offering a quick impression of your personal brand. Include a few key (relevant) achievements/strengths (in bullets or sentences). Headline sections are especially useful for candidates with a long work history, or who have experienced job transitions.

Have you been starting your **résumé** with an objective statement? These days, most experts recommend leaving the objective off your **résumé** entirely. Objectives too often emphasize what you want from a job, rather than what you can offer an employer, and thus are generally seen as a waste of space.

Education

- Place your education section after the headline/summary section if it is recent and relevant, after the experience section if your stronger qualification is employment experience.
- List the most current degree/school attended first, and proceed in **reverse chronological order**.
- Include the following information for each educational item: the name of the school, the school's location, your graduation date or anticipated graduation date, the degree earned (and major if appropriate).
- DO NOT include high school if you are in college unless your high school work was outstanding or unique (like a trade/technology/arts high school).
- DO include trainings and certifications (e.g. first aid certifications, sales seminars, writing groups).
- Develop this section by adding educational accomplishments:
    - Relevant courses (if they prepared you for the job)
    - Special accomplishments (conferences, special papers/projects, clubs, offices held, service to the school)
    - Awards and scholarships (could also be separate section – Honours)

Employment Experience

List positions in **reverse chronological order** (most recent first).

- Include basic information for each job: job title, employer, dates employed, city/state (and country if outside of Canada) of employment.
- Include internships and skilled volunteer positions (but if you do, title the section “Experience” rather than “Employment”).
- Consider filtering work experience into “Related Experience” or “Relevant Experience” instead of one employment section to highlight most relevant jobs (and downplay less significant experience).

Skills/Achievements/Qualifications

- Use sub-headers to group skills into skill set headings (management skills, customer service skills, laboratory skills, communication skills, etc.). Use targeted headings based on the qualifications your potential employer is seeking.
- Include only the most relevant, targeted skills and achievements.
- Emphasize quantifiable achievements and results: skills, equipment, money, documents, personnel, clients, etc.- Use the active voice (supervised sixteen employees, increased profits, built websites) vs. the passive voice (was responsible for supervising or duties included...)
- See the “Building a Better Bullet” section below for more information on how to craft an effective “skill bullet.”

Optional Sections

- Volunteer Work: List skilled volunteer work (building websites, teaching classes) under skills, along with your other qualifications, but include general volunteer work (making meals for a soup kitchen, etc.) toward the end of your resume in its own section or under activities.
- Activities and Interests:
  - DO include interests that may be relevant to the position but aren't professional skills (sports for an opportunity at Nike, student groups for leadership, golfing for business jobs, game design/play for game design jobs, blogging for PR jobs). Market yourself in the best light.
  - DO include honours, awards, publications, conferences attended, languages spoken, etc. You may choose to include a separate honours section or fold these into your achievements section.

References

Do not list references on your **résumé**. Instead, give a separate sheet at the employer's request (page 3). Generally, three references are sufficient. The most important references are your superiors, but you can also use co-workers, clients, or instructors. Contact each person to verify his/her willingness to act as a reference for you. Your reference sheet should match the look of your cover letter and your **résumé**.

Résumé Guidelines

The following tips will help you write a **résumé** that adheres to the conventions employers expect while ditching fluff in favor of expertise.

Photo #2: A conference call

Using "Me" and "I"

The convention in a **résumé** is to write in **sentence fragments** that begin with active verbs. Therefore, you can leave out the subjects of sentences. Example: "I eliminated the duplication of paperwork in my department by streamlining procedures" would become "Eliminated paperwork duplication in a struggling department by streamlining procedures."

Quantifiable Skills

The more you can present your skills and achievements in detail, especially quantifiable detail, the more authoritative you will sound. This means including references to technologies and equipment you have used; types of documents you have produced; procedures you have followed; languages you speak; amounts of money you have handled; numbers of employees you have supervised or trained; numbers of students you have taught; technical languages you know; types of clients you have worked with (cultural backgrounds, ages, disability status – demographic information that might be relevant in your new workplace); graphic design, blogging or social media skills; and so on.

Filler Words (Fluff)

Avoid generic filler words that can be found on many resumes and don't suggest meaningful skills. Filler words include:

- team player
- results-oriented
- duties include
- fast-paced
- self-motivated

If you MUST use these phrases, find concrete examples to back them up. For example, instead of using "team player," include a time you collaborated with peers to earn a good grade on a project, save your company money, or put on a successful work event.

Results

In at least one place in your **résumé**, preferably more, make mention of a positive impact (or result) of your skills/achievements. How did you create positive change for your employer, coworkers or customers? Did you resolve a customer complaint successfully? Did you make a change that saved your employer money? Did you build a website that increased traffic to your client? Did you follow procedures safely and reduce workplace injuries?

Building a Better Bullet (Two Skill Bullet Formulas)

Each skill bullet may need to go through a few revisions before it shines. Here are two formulas to help you strengthen your bullets:

Formula 1: Verb + Details = Results

Start your bullet with an action verb describing a skill or achievement. Follow it with the details of that skill or achievement, and then describe the positive impact of your achievement. For example:

- Developed (VERB) new paper flow procedure (DETAILS), resulting in reduced staff errors and customer wait times (RESULT)
- Provided (VERB) friendly customer-focused service (DETAILS) leading to customer satisfaction and loyalty (RESULT)
- Organized (VERB) fundraising event (DETAILS) generating $xxx dollars for nonprofit (RESULT)
- Provided (VERB) phone and in person support for patients with various chronic and acute health issues (DETAILS & RESULT COMBINED)
- Supported (VERB) 8-10 staff with calendaring, files and reception (DETAILS), increasing efficiency in workflow (RESULT)

Formula 2: Accomplished [X] as measured by [Y] by doing [Z]

Develop your bullets by going into detail about how you accomplished what you have accomplished and why it matters to your potential employer. Compare the following three versions of the same skill bullet:

- **First Draft:** Participated in a leadership program
- **Second Draft:** Selected as one of 125 for year-long

professional development program for high-achieving business students
- **Final Draft:** Selected as one of 125 participants nationwide for year-long professional development program for high-achieving business students based on leadership potential and academic success

Note how the third version is not only the most specific, but it is the one that most demonstrates the "so what" factor, conveying how the applicant's skills will benefit the potential employer.

Keywords

Remember, use **keywords** you gathered in your pre-writing phase (from the job description, research into your field, and the "action verb" list presented earlier in the application preparation chapter). If your potential employer is using a résumé-scanning program, these keywords may make the difference between getting an interview or a rejection.

Length

Résumé length is a much-debated question, and guidelines change as the genre changes with time. In general, the length of a **résumé** should be no longer than two pages (and each page should be full — no 1.5 page **résumés**). Some fields, however, may have different length conventions (academic **resumes**, for example, which include publications and conference attendance, tend to be longer). If your **resume** is on the longer side, your work history should justify the length. Some experts recommend one page per ten years of work history; while that may be extreme, it is better to cut weaker material than to add filler.

Design

Résumé design should enhance the content, making it easy for the reader to quickly find the most significant and relevant information.

A few general guidelines:

- Templates are handy, but bear in mind that if you use a common template, your résumé will look identical to a number of others.
- Use tables to align sections, then hide the borders to create a neat presentation.
- Use ten-twelve point font.
- Don't use too many design features—be strategic and consistent in your use of capitalization, bold, italics, and underline.
- To create visual groupings of information, always use more space between sections than within a section. This way your reader will be able to easily distinguish between the key sections of your résumé, and between the items in each section.
- Use the same font in your résumé and your cover letter to create coherence.

Field-Specific Conventions

You may find that there are certain conventions in your field or industry that affect your choices in writing your **résumé.** Length, formality, design, delivery method, and key terms are just some of the factors that may vary across disciplines. Ask faculty or professional contacts in your field about employers' expectations, visit the University of Saskatchewan Career Services. or conduct web research to make informed field-specific choices.

Key Takeaways

- A **résumé** serves three distinct purposes:
    1. It represents your professional information in writing
    2. It demonstrates the relationship between your professional information and the problem (i.e., **rhetorical exigence**) that a potential employer hopes to solve or address.
    3. It gets you an **interview** by demonstrating that you meet the minimum qualification and professional background necessary to help the employer meet its goals.
- The format you choose for your **résumé** will depend on your needs and experience. A **chronological résumé** emphasizes work history, whereas a **functional résumé** emphasizes skills. For this class, you will create a **targeted résumé** which emphasizes both work history and skills.
- Employers are looking for any opportunity to throw out your **résumé**. To avoid this, ensure that your **résumé** has basic elements such as contact

info, a headline, education, employment experience, and skills/achievements.

- Also ensure that the writing conventions in your **résumé** are solid. Some of these include:
    - Avoid using "I" and "me" statements
    - Make sure you are discussing quantifiable skills
    - Remove all filler words
    - Mention the results you have achieved in at least one part of the document
    - Craft stronger bullet points

References

Bennett, S. (2005). *The elements of resume style: Essential rules for writing resumes and cover letters that work*. AMACOM.

Simons, W., & Curtis, R. (2004). *The Resume.com guide to writing unbeatable résumés*. McGraw Hill Professional.

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Chapter 21: Interview Strategies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain at least three strategies for preparing for an interview
- Explain how to best respond to interview questions
- Identify the required elements of a post-interview thank you note

Key Terms and Concepts

- interviewing
- thank-you note

Interviewing is the phase of the job search process where you go from being an applicant on paper to a real, 3-dimensional person. Essentially, you will be evaluated on your verbal communication skills through this face-to-face (or video or phone) interaction. Employers want to see whether you match up to the qualifications described in your **résumé**, and they want to see whether you have good interpersonal communication skills to get a sense of how you would function as part of their team.

> **"One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation." (Arthur Ashe)**

Interviews are often intimidating for job seekers who feel the pressure of being evaluated and feel uncomfortable with the **interview** format. While the nervousness may never go away, effectively preparing for the interview can make you feel more confident, and, with practice, you will be better able to stay in the moment and treat the interview like a conversation.

This chapter focuses on general interview preparation. Do bear in mind, though, that different disciplines and industries have different interviewing techniques. For instance, the technical interview or "code day" has become standard for many computer science-related fields. You should always do research on standard practices in your industry, but also keep in mind that interviews can be surprising. In fact, some employers try to surprise interviewees to get a sense of how they think and react in unfamiliar situations. Part of your challenge is to stay open-minded and relaxed so you can project confidence, even in unexpected or unfamiliar situations.

Preparing for the Interview

Good preparation before an interview is based on understanding who your **audience** is—understanding the employer and the industry. This is not the type of information that you can memorize the night before. Take as much time as you can to read and absorb information from a variety of sources to get a thorough sense of the company—not just the basic information you find on the "About" page of their website, but the tone and personality they broadcast in social media, their past and current projects, their achievements, their community involvement, etc.

Job Interview Types and Techniques

Every interview you participate in will be unique: the people you meet with, the interview setting, and the questions you'll be asked will all be different from interview to interview.

The various factors that characterize any given interview can contribute to the sense of adventure and excitement you feel. Nevertheless, it's also normal to feel a little nervous about what lies ahead. With so many unknowns, how can you plan to "nail the interview" no matter what comes up?

A good strategy for planning is to *anticipate* the type of interview you may find yourself in. Common formats for job interviews are described in detail below. By knowing a bit more about each type and being aware of techniques that work for each, you can plan to be on your game no matter what form your interview takes.

Screening Interviews

Screening interviews might best be characterized as “weeding-out” interviews. They ordinarily take place over the phone or in another low-stakes environment in which the interviewer has maximum control over the amount of time the interview takes. Screening interviews are generally short because they glean only basic information about you. If you are scheduled to participate in a screening interview, you might safely assume that you have some competition for the job and that the company is using this strategy to whittle down the applicant pool. With this kind of interview, your goal is to win a face-to-face interview.

For this first shot, though, prepare well and challenge yourself to shine. This type of interview should be treated like a real interview. This may mean dressing for the interview and having a resume in front of you so that it can be referred to. Another suggestion is to make sure your cell phone is fully charged and that the screening interview takes place in a location that is free of distractions. Try to stand out from the competition and be sure to follow up with a thank-you note.

Phone or Web Conference Interviews

If you are geographically separated from your prospective employer, you may be invited to participate in a phone interview or web conference interview, instead of meeting face-to-face. Technology, of course, is a good way to bridge distances. The fact that you’re not there in person doesn’t make it any less important to be fully prepared, though. In fact, you may wish to be all the more "on your toes" to compensate for the distance barrier. Make sure your phone or computer is fully charged and your internet works (if possible, use an ethernet connection instead of wifi). If you're at home for the interview, make sure the environment is quiet and distraction-free. If the interview is via web conference, try to make your background neat and tidy (ideally, the background should be a plain wall, but that isn't always possible). Avoid using a simulated background, as they often look fake and the employer may feel that you are trying to hide something.

One-on-One Interviews

Many job interviews are conducted with just you and a single interviewer—likely with the manager you would report to and work with. The one-on-one format gives you both a chance to see how well you connect and how well your talents, skills, and personalities mesh. You can expect to be asked such questions as, "Why would you be good for this job?" and "Tell me about yourself." Many interviewees prefer the one-on-one format because it allows them to spend in-depth time with the interviewer. Rapport can be built. As always, be very courteous and professional. Have handy a portfolio of your best work, and be sure to get their contact info so that you can send a follow-up email.

Panel Interviews

An efficient format for meeting a candidate is a panel interview, in which perhaps two to five coworkers meet at the same time with a single interviewee. The coworkers comprise the “search committee” or “search panel,” which may consist of different company representatives such as human resources, management, and staff. One advantage of this format for the committee is that meeting together gives them a common experience to reflect on afterward. In a panel interview, listen carefully to questions from each panelist, and try to connect fully with each questioner. Be sure to write down names and titles, so you can send individual thank-you notes after the interview.

Serial Interviews

Serial interviews are a combination of one-on-one meetings with a group of interviewers, typically conducted as a series of meetings staggered throughout the day. Ordinarily, this type of interview is for higher-level jobs when it’s important to meet at length with several major stakeholders. If your interview process is designed this way, you will need to be ultra prepared, as you will be answering many in-depth questions.

Lunch Interviews

In some higher-level positions, candidates are taken to lunch or dinner, especially if this is a second interview (a “call back” interview). If this is you, count yourself lucky and be on your best behavior, because even if the lunch meeting is unstructured and informal, it’s still an official interview. If all persons interviewing you are ordering an alcoholic drink, feel free to order one as well (know your tolerance!), along with a glass of water. Drink slower than the interviewer to show restraint and patience. You are not expected to pay or even to offer to pay, but, as always, you must send a thank-you note. Lastly, use your best table manners!

These are just some of the interview types that you may encounter. The video below covers more if you are interested.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=592#oembed-2

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/10interviewtypes

During the Interview

Once you have prepared mentally and gathered the information for your **interview**, it's time to prepare for the interaction **during** the interview.

Dress the Part

Let's keep this simple—*dress your best*. In most business cultures, dressing professionally is a sign of respect, conveying that you care about the position, that you want to make a good impression.

Here are the basics:

1. Wear your best professional clothing—this typically means a suit (and a tie, for men) and dress shoes (no open toes, no white socks).
2. Try on the complete outfit (including shoes) to make sure you're comfortable. Does it fit? Does it stay in place? Can you sit down, shake hands, and move comfortably? You don't want your clothing to distract you or the interviewer.
3. Clean and press your clothes and shoes. Prepare your outfit the night before and hang it up (no wrinkles!).

Even if you know the work environment is casual, you should dress “up” for the interview—more professionally than you would if you worked there. The exception would be if you are explicitly told not to—for instance, if the recruiter specifies that you should dress “business casual.”

Don’t Come Empty-Handed

Arriving at the interview with important documents and notes shows that you are prepared and thinking ahead. Organize all your materials in a nice folder or folio—presentation matters!

Print out several clean copies of your **résumé** and any other documents you might want to reference, like the job or internship description or your references. You should also bring a few samples of your work, if possible—documents you’ve prepared or artifacts from projects.

Make the most out of all of that research and preparation by bringing notes. A nice notebook or paper and a pen are perfectly acceptable for you to have in the interview and they can help you feel more focused by getting some of the information out of your head and organized on paper.

Follow these guidelines:

1. **Be organized.** Re-write or type and print your notes so you can easily find the information you need. You don’t want to be shuffling through scraps of paper.
2. **Keep it simple.** Write down keywords, brief phrases and ideas that will jog your memory, not a complete script.
3. **Prepare questions for the interviewer** (see examples below). You typically have the opportunity to ask these questions at the end of the interview, when it can be difficult to remember what you were going to ask.

Pro Tip: Take notes during the interview! The interviewer will likely reveal information to you during the conversation—write down anything that you want to remember for later or anything that you want to come back to later in the conversation.

Interview Questions

For most job candidates, the burning question is "What will I be asked?" There's no way to anticipate every single question that may arise during an interview. It's possible that, no matter how well prepared you are, you may get a question you just didn't expect. Not to worry! Prepare as much as you can—doing so will build your confidence in your answers and help you to be ready for unexpected questions. Think of the interview as a kind of impromptu speech.

To help you reach that point of sureness and confidence, take time to review common interview questions. Think about your answers. Make notes, if that helps. Conduct a practice interview with a friend, a family member, or a colleague. Speak your answers out loud. Below is a list of resources that contain common interview questions and good explanations/answers you might want to adopt.

	WEBSITE:	DESCRIPTION:
1	100 top job interview questions—be prepared for the interview (from Monster.com)	This site provides a comprehensive set of interview questions you might expect to be asked, categorized as basic interview questions, behavioral questions, salary questions, career development questions, and other kinds. Some of the listed questions provide comprehensive answers, too.
2	Interview Questions and Answers (from BigInterview)	This site provides text and video answers to the following questions: Tell me about yourself, describe your current position, why are you looking for a new job, what are your strengths, what is your greatest weakness, why do you want to work here, where do you see yourself in five years, why should we hire you, and do you have any questions for me?
3	Ten Tough Interview Questions and Ten Great Answers (from CollegeGrad)	This site explores some of the most difficult questions you will face in job interviews. The more open-ended the question, the greater the variation among answers. Once you have become practiced in your interviewing skills, you will find that you can use almost any question as a launching pad for a particular topic or compelling story.

The video below asks different hiring managers what they want to hear from candidates in interviews.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=592#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/answeringintqs

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

At the end of nearly every interview, applicants are often asked if they have any questions they would like to pose to the employer. Do you have a question ready to ask?

In addition to revealing your knowledge of the company, these questions are also an opportunity for you to figure out if the employer and the company culture is a good fit for you. Think carefully about what matters to you, what would allow you to do your best work, and try to ask questions that will give you insight into those factors.

- What are the primary tasks or responsibilities for a person in this position? What does a day in this job look like? Is travel required? Overtime?
- What is the orientation or training process?
- What are the goals/priorities for a person in this position? How will success be measured?
- What is the company's assessment and review process?
- Does the company support professional development activities?
- How does this position fit within the team/department? What is the reporting structure?
- Does this position function alone or within a team setting?
- How would you describe the company culture or team dynamic?
- What is this company's approach to management?
- What are the company's overall goals and priorities and how do those affect someone in this department/position?

NOTE: The end of the interview is not typically the best time to ask about salary and benefits. This is your opportunity to learn about the workplace and the position—the environment, how it's structured, employee support programs.

From Donnie Perkins, Chief Diversity Officer, College of Engineering. Learn more here.

Following are some **questions students may ask prospective employers about their diversity, inclusion and equity**. Company recruiters who can provide factual and reasonable responses to these questions are on a positive track advancing diversity and inclusion in ways that truly benefit employees, the company, customers, and community while promoting innovations, strategic thinking and active engagement.

- How does [Company] define diversity, inclusion, and equity? Provide an example of how diversity, inclusion, and equity benefits [Company].
- What are the racial, ethnic, and gender demographics of [Company's] company-wide, leadership, and manager levels?
- As a national and/or multinational company, describe your cultural competency training program for employees who will take assignments in [specific countries or continents where the company does business].
- Describe the role and responsibilities of women and persons of color on [Company's] leadership team.
- Give me an example of how [Company] values people of color, female, LGBTQ, veteran and employees with disabilities.

Body Language & Interaction

As a general rule, it's important to be observant and take your cues from the interviewer. Reflect their tone and pay attention to the dynamic they set—are they very formal and professional or more conversational? It's okay to make small talk, but you want to follow the lead of the interviewer.

Be conscious of your posture. You will want to sit up straight (no leaning or lounging) and avoid crossing your arms in front of your chest (it can seem defensive or withdrawn).

Make eye contact. Look at the interviewer while they ask you questions and give them non-verbal cues—smiling, nodding—when appropriate. Make it clear that you are listening and understand what they're saying.

Speak clearly and thoughtfully. Adjust your volume for the environment and make sure the interviewer can hear and understand you easily. Don't rush yourself and take time to deliver thoughtful responses. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.

Project calm. Fidgeting and extra movement can make you seem nervous even if you aren't. Be aware of your tendencies and try to minimize them. If you know you fidget, try to keep your hands folded and avoid clicking or tapping the pen. Don't wear jewelry that you will play with or that will make noise while you move. Wear your hair in a way that will not tempt you to touch or play with it constantly. If seated at a table, sit towards the front of the chair and plant your feet on the floor—it can help keep you steady.

Be yourself. With all of the previous tips in mind, you also need to feel comfortable and like yourself. If you are enthusiastic, if you talk with your hands, if you are shy, that's fine—you just need to be the most engaged, professional version of yourself you can be in order to show the interviewer what you are capable of in the workplace.

After the Interview

At the end of the interview, you will want to ask the interviewer what you can expect in terms of next steps or when they might make a decision about the position. This will help set your expectations and allow you to prepare for future interactions—they might have multiple rounds of interviews or they might have another week left of meeting with candidates, for instance.

Within 24 hours of the interview, you should send a **thank you note** to the interviewer(s). Email is a standard and expected vehicle for this message and you will likely have already been in contact with them via email or will have their business card from the interview.

The formula for this message is simple, but choose your words carefully and try to extend their good impression of your written communication here as well:

- Relevant subject line
- Gratitude for their time and the opportunity
- Your continued interest in the position
- Something specific from your conversation (this is where taking notes comes in handy!)
- Reminder of your qualifications
- Positive and forward-looking conclusion

You will want to reflect the overall **tone** of your interaction—try to make it consistent with the person they met the day before.

Subject: Design Engineer Internship – Thank you

Ms. Tanner,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you yesterday. I feel like I learned a lot about the Design Engineer Internship role at ABC Innovations and I remain very interested in the position.

After hearing about the project I would be assigned to, I did some further research on your prototyping process and I can see interesting connections with the work I did in my previous internship. It would be exciting to build on that knowledge with your team.

Please feel free to contact me via phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx or email if there is any additional information I can provide. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

J. Buckeye

Key Takeaways

- **Interviewing** is all about preparation. Never walk in blind to an interview. Spend some time before hand research the company and the position. This will help you better articulate how you will be a good fit for them. Additionally, review some common interview questions and have some stories in mind that you can use to answer them.
- Also come prepared with some questions of your own. Pick ones that are important to you as this will help you determine if the company is a good fit.
- After the interview is complete, send a **thank you note** to the person or people you met with. Keep in mind that this is an opportunity to emphasize your qualifications. If your thank you note has lots of grammatical errors, it will reflect poorly on you as a candidate.

Attributions

WRITING A REPORT

Chapter 22: The Rhetorical Nature of Reports

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define what a report is and identify the different forms that it can take.
- Identify how certain reports can be informal, formal, or somewhere in-between.
- Explain how you have already created several reports during your academic career.

Key Terms and Concepts

- report
- written report
- oral report
- informative report

- persuasive report

Over the next several chapters, we will be walking you through the process of creating **reports**. Reports are crucial deliverables in many technical professions. In fact, engineers can spend anywhere from 20% to 95% of their time writing reports (Leydens, 2008). That's a lot of writing! However, it's also important to remember that not all reports are written, as they can take an oral format as well. Before we go into the actual process of how to write a report or give a presentation, however, let's look at reports more generally.

What is a Report?

What comes to mind when you think of the word **report**? If you went to school in Canada, your first thought might be one of the many book reports you did for your English classes where you had to summarize and review a book you read recently. However, since you have been in this class for a couple weeks now, maybe you're thinking about **reports** in a professional/technical sense, like a business proposal or a research statement.

Before we get too ahead of ourselves, let's consider this definition for the word **report**:

> a transmission of any information

That definition is pretty basic, but what that tells you is that **reports** are happening around you all the time because, as we've already learned, communication is the transmission of information. This also means that a **report** doesn't just have to be written, since we also transmit information when we speak. Let's look at a more detailed definition.

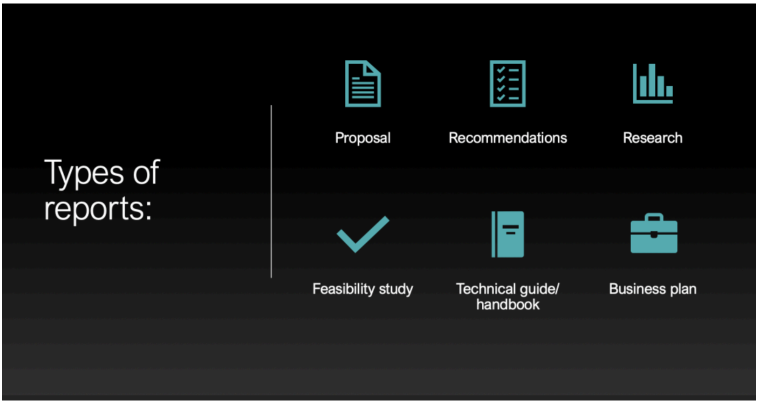
> an account of your investigation into a subject, presented in a written document or oral presentation that has conventional formatting.

Something has changed with this definition. Can you see what it is? Similar to our first definition, this new definition also describes **reports** as an exchange of information. The difference, though, is that there is a focus on *you*—the writer or speaker—to share that information in a way that is accessible and relatable to your **audience**.

We'll explain how to do that in just a moment, but let's first review the different forms a **report** might take in your professional career, as well as some **reports** you may have already done (possibly even without realizing it).

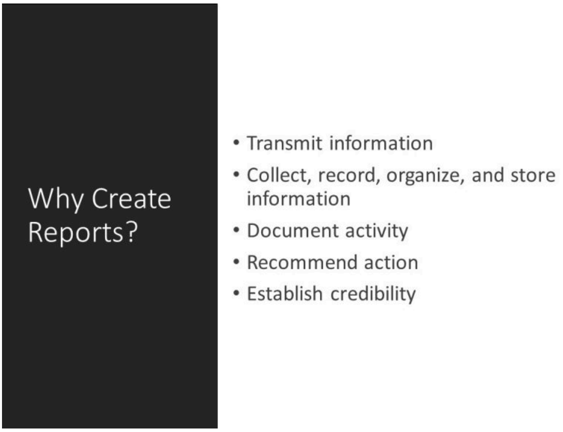
Types of Reports

Reports can take different forms. Here are few different types:



Depending on your career trajectory, you may have to do a several, if not all, of these **report** types.

The reason why you may be writing or presenting a report will depend on your career and need. As a result, there are a number of different reasons why you would create one:



Do any of those reasons sound familiar? They should! At their core, reports are a form of **rhetorical communication**, which we covered in the **first chapter**. Not only are they intentional, purposeful acts of communication, but they also involve making a connection with the **audience** in order to get them to change something. You'll need to accomplish both in the formal report and persuasive presentation you create for RCM 200.

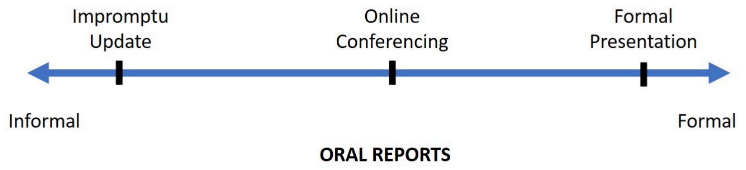
Composing a **report** may seem a bit overwhelming, but it's important to realize that you have already created several reports in your life. Of course, you may think, "That's not true. The whole reason I'm taking the class is so I can learn how to do that!" Trust us when we say you have more experience with **reports** than you think.

Kinds of Reports

To help you see how you have already been creating reports in other contexts, it is important to distinguish between the two types of **reports**.

As we have mentioned, **reports** can be presented either orally or in writing. However, within those two categories are range of different forms that a **report** can take. Not only that, it's important to recognize that **reports** can move on a spectrum from informal to formal.

Oral Reports



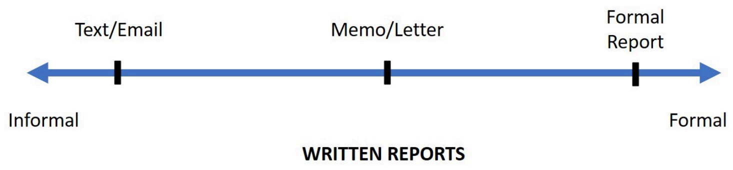
Can you think of any informal **oral reports** that you've done? Here is an example: if you meet with your team, and a colleague asks you about your portion of the research, you might tell them about some of the resources you have found and how you plan to use them. In this case, you would be providing an **impromptu** update. Does this sound familiar? If you bump into a friend in the hall and have a brief chat about your plans this weekend, this is also an impromptu update.

Online conferencing happens when you meet a supervisor, instructor, or team over a platform like Zoom or Webex. Usually, such meetings take place at a scheduled time, which means there are specific topics you need to discuss. It is far less casual than running into someone in the hallway. However, even an online conference can be less formal depending on the context. If you are video chatting with friends or family in another city, or province, or even country, odds are it will be far less formal, especially if you are just catching up!

If you have ever given a presentation in front of a class, you have given a formal presentation. In such assignments, you were likely being graded, which means there was more at stake for you. Similarly, if you are the leader of an on-campus club, you might occasionally have to speak in front of your club to discuss future plans and events. While this may be less stressful because you are not being graded, you are still operating in a professional capacity, which makes the presentation more formal.

These are just some of the ways you have already given **oral report**s in your life. Can you think of any other examples and whether they are informal or formal?

Written Reports



Like **oral reports**, **written reports** can take many forms that fall somewhere on the spectrum of informal and formal.

As we have discussed, text messages are generally very brief and are best kept short. As a result, they are an informal type of written report. If someone has asked you to text them when you leave, then they are asking for a **written report**. Emails can also fall into this informal category as well when they are being written to friends and family. However, emails become more formal when written to either a potential employer or co-worker. As you saw in the Job Package section of this textbook, formal writing is essential if you want to convince a potential employer to hire you.

Memos and letters tend to be more formal since they are used in official capacities. However, even those will only be seen by a small audience.

Formal reports are much more technical, and will likely be seen by a larger audience. Therefore, they are much more formal.

Reports and Rhetoric

Hopefully, you have a sense of how you are already creating reports in your daily life. Now, let's review some examples of reports you may be familiar with (and some you may not be) and discuss how that writing is rhetorical in nature. While all these examples are focused on written reports, you will see examples of a rhetorical oral report later on in this text.

Form Reports

A **form report** is what it sounds like: a form that you fill out to report something. These reports tend to be very dry and require only concise statements describing the facts. However, each still has a persuasive element.

- Taxes
  - If you have ever filed a tax return, you have submitted a form report to the government. This type of form report includes all of your sources of income and your eligible deductions. While most of this information is factual, you are still trying to persuade the government to accept your tax return because you do not want to provoke an audit. Ultimately, you are trying to convince the government that your information is credible.
- Incident Report

    - If you have ever worked at a job where safety was a large component, such as a lifeguard, you probably filled out incident reports. In these reports, you were not just describing the incident as you experienced it; rather, you were trying to present it in such a way that the reader will accept your account as true, complete, and unbiased.
- Expense Report
    - If you spent your own money for company business, and you wanted to get it back, then you needed to write an expense report that demonstrated your professionalism. Otherwise, the company would not reimburse you.

Even though all of the above examples may appear simple, all of them have a rhetorical element that must be considered when filling them out.

Other Reports

Of course, all **reports** aren't as dry and concise as tax forms. After all, only the most basic level of persuasion is required in order to inspire the Canadian Revenue Agency to accept how much money you owe them or for them to pay you money you that you are owed. Sometimes, however, a certain **report** will require you to focus more carefully on your persuasive skills in order to convince someone to do something with the facts.

- Job Application
    - Whenever you compose a job package to apply for a job, you are creating a **report**. This **report** describes the education, experiences, and skills that you can offer to a potential employer in the hope of

persuading them that your **report** is true and that your assessment of how you will be a good fit is valid.
- Application to Graduate School
    - Similarly, when applying to graduate school, you are trying to persuade the admissions board that you would be a good fit for their program and their school.
- Funding for Business Plan
    - If you plan to start your own business, you will write up a business plan. This is a **report** that you create in order to attain funding for your business. A bank will not give you a loan without a complete **report** or if they don't believe you are credible!

In summary, **reports** take many forms. You have already tried some, and others you have not. Regardless, it's okay if you are not an expert in any of them. This skill will come with time and plenty of practice. Our goal in this course is to give you the general skills you need to create effective, persuasive **reports** so that you can apply your knowledge to other situations.

Ultimately, in order to write a really effective report or give a stellar presentation, you will want to apply the rhetorical tools we have already discussed in this course.

How are Reports Rhetorical?

Reports (both written and oral) fall under two categories: **informative reports** and **persuasive reports**. Both try to achieve similar, though different, results. With an **informative report**, you want to establish your **credibility** so the audience accepts the facts. With **persuasive reports,** you want to audience to accept the facts, but you may also want to change their thinking and, therefore, their actions.

For this course, you will be creating two **reports**: a written formal research report and an oral persuasive presentation.

Since both of your **reports** will be rhetorical in nature, your ultimate goal is to persuade the audience to take action on a topic. The question is, then, how do you accomplish this in your reports? The best place is start with the rhetorical theory that we learned from Bitzer and Aristotle. By using rhetorical theory to assess the situation and to plan a report, your message will become more persuasive.

Over the next couple of chapters, we will walk you through how to apply that theory as you construct your own reports. To help you see how this theory is applied in practice, you will see two students Mei (she/her) and Hamid (he/him) go through their own processes. **Mei** is working on the **written report** for this course, and **Hamid** is working on the **persuasive oral presentation**. Before they can jump into using the theory, though, they'll need to come up with a focused topic for their **report**.

Key Takeaways

- **Reports** can take many forms. Whether **written** or **oral**, you already have experience creating a number different types of **reports** that range from informal to formal.
- This experience will be a big help to you in this course. What will probably be different for most of you, though, is that you will need to use the rhetorical theory we have discussed in this course to create your messages.

- Specifically, you will be using the theory of [Bitzer] and [Aristotle] to craft your reports so that they are **persuasive** in nature, *not* simply **informative**.

References

Leydens, J. (2008). Novice and insider perspectives on academic and workplace writing: Toward a continuum of rhetorical awareness. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, *51*(3), 242-263. https://doi.org/10.1109/tpc.2008.2001249

Chapter 23: Report Planning and Choosing a Topic

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Compare different strategies for developing a focused topic and use one to start off your report.
- Develop a focused topic and research question for your formal written report.

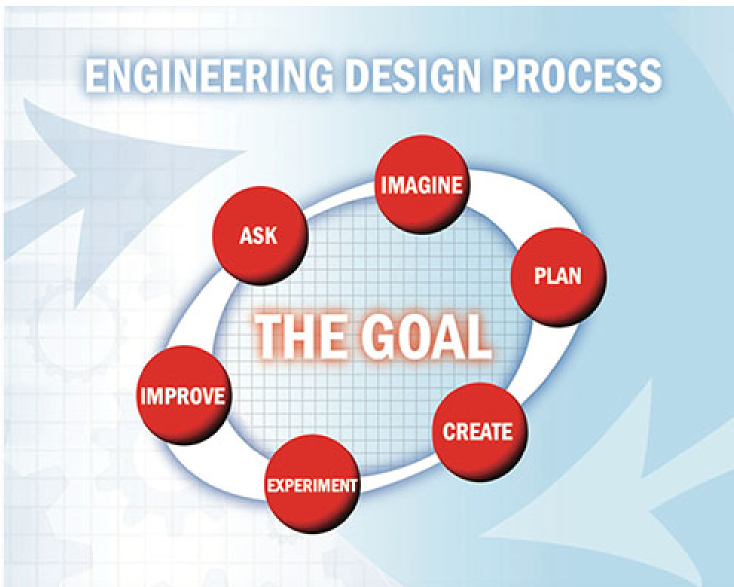
Key Terms and Concepts

- iterative process
- scope
- focused topic
- research question

Writing as Process

As a technical student, you are already familiar with the design process. Whether you're sketching a prototype or coming up with a pest management plan, most technical disciplines are already familiar with the cyclical nature of problem-solving.

A good example of this is the process used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The image below highlights their process. Does anything stand out to you?



NASA Engineering Design Process

The process is cyclical! In RCM 200, we contend that **technical communication** follows a similar repeating pattern. In the context of **report** writing, there are three stages that must be followed and revisited. These are:

1. Planning Your Message
2. Producing a Draft
3. Polishing the Draft

When looking at NASA's design process, we can see some similarities to the **plan** – **produce** – **polish** process of report writing. Both processes are **iterative**, or a process for calculating a desired result by means of a repeated cycle of operations. If you were to use the NASA design process to write a report, it might look something like this:

- **Ask**: identify a research problem
- **Imagine**: brainstorm potential solution, research ideas, identify what research has already been done
- **Plan**: choose the report format, outline report sections, analyze secondary sources
- **Create**: write the report using the proper format
- **Experiment**: proofread and edit your report
- **Improve**: ask for feedback and make changes

We have obviously simplified the steps a bit by using three categories instead of six, but keep in mind that each part is essential to creating a strong report.

If you would like to see another example of a report writing process, look at the planning tool found in the the Assignment Planner from the U of S Library. This website also breaks up the writing process into stages.

Choosing Your Topic

Often, when you are first given a project, or even when you have already identified a topic you wish to research, the problem you are solving is fairly general and open-ended. While you can approach the problem in a variety of ways at this stage, you'll need to do some work to decide which particular approach you will take. Most projects will require careful consideration of **scope**.

Who is your **audience**? What is your purpose? What are the limitations placed on what can be expected or achieved? What are the **constraints** you have to work within? All of these elements are rhetorical in nature and must be considered as you craft your message. This will be much easier once we come up with a **focused topic.**

A **focused topic** is what it sounds like: a report topic that is specific. You don't want to your topic to be too broad or general, otherwise you will have a hard time creating your report because there will be too much information to cover.

For example, let's say you want to do a report about climate change. You could argue that climate change is a specific topic within the environmental science field, but it's still quite broad. To help you narrow your focus, it is best to spend some time determining what you already know, or what you want to know, about the topic you are considering. In this way, you will be able to figure out where gaps in your knowledge are and places you may need to focus in your research. You will then be able to develop a **research question**.

Exercise: Strategies for Developing a Focused Topic

What strategies have you used when developing topics for you past research papers? Did you just pick a topic you were kind of interested in and casually search the internet to find some relevant information? That's certainly one way to do it, but that is a horribly inefficient approach! Using pre-writing strategies is a much better approach.

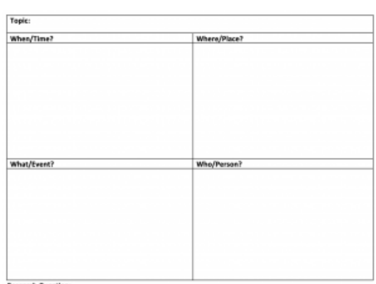
These strategies will help you figure out what you already know about a topic and what your knowledge gaps are. With this knowledge, you will be able to better utilize your research time.

The video below will walk you through one of these strategies:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=352#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/developingtopic

The video above highlights **Questioning** as one of the methods you can use to narrow the focus of your topic. Click on this link to download a copy of the "4-W" brainstorming table mentioned in the above video.



Here are some other topic brainstorming options you can try:

- **Free–writing**: write about the topic for 10 minutes straight without stopping or self-editing
- **Mind-mapping or Concept-mapping**: create a graphic organizer listing ideas and indicating how they are connected
- **Questioning**: who, what, where, when, why, how? What do I already know? What do I need to find out?
- **Brainstorming**: list all ideas without censoring or rejecting any, no matter how ridiculous they might seem at first.

Following one of these methods will help you narrow your focus. Clearly you won't be able to solve whatever topic or issue you pick in one paper or project. And no reasonable instructor or employer would expect you to. The ultimate aim is to narrow your topic enough to provide a specific question to guide your research and identify key words and terminology related to your topic.

A good **research question** should be somewhat open ended; that is, the answer should not be a simple "yes" or "no." The focus of your research question should allow you to provide a comprehensive answer that takes context into careful consideration.

Once you have your **focused topic** and a **research question**, you will ready to move on to using rhetoric to craft your message.

But before we do that, though, let's take a look at the two students mentioned in the previous chapter—**Mei** (she/her) and **Hamid** (he/him)— and how they both approach their topics. Remember, Mei is picking a topic for her written formal **report** and Hamid is picking a topic for his oral persuasive **speech**.

Mei – Picking Her Topic (Formal Report)

When Mei first came to the University of Saskatchewan, she knew she wanted to be a scientist. She just didn't know what *type* of scientist.

Originally, she was going to be a biologist, but that didn't feel right, so she switched to chemistry after her first semester. That didn't feel right either. It wasn't until she took a physics course and learned about nuclear energy that she finally realized her life's calling. She decided to become a nuclear physicist and started taking the appropriate classes.

When it is time to pick a topic for her RCM 200 formal report, Mei decides to write about **nuclear energy**, but she isn't sure what to say. She thinks about her past discussions with people about the topic, and she remembers that those conversations often end with her being told that nuclear energy is dangerous and should be phased out entirely. Maybe she'll write a report about that? However, to really get a sense of what she wants to say, she uses the Questioning method and generates the following form:

Topic: Nuclear Energy	
When/Time?	Where/Place?
the present (2021) and into the future	Canada
What/Event?	Who/Person?

using nuclear energy to combat climate change	the general public

Based off this exercise, Mei develops the following **research question** to help guide her research: *How can nuclear energy help reduce the impacts of Climate Change?*

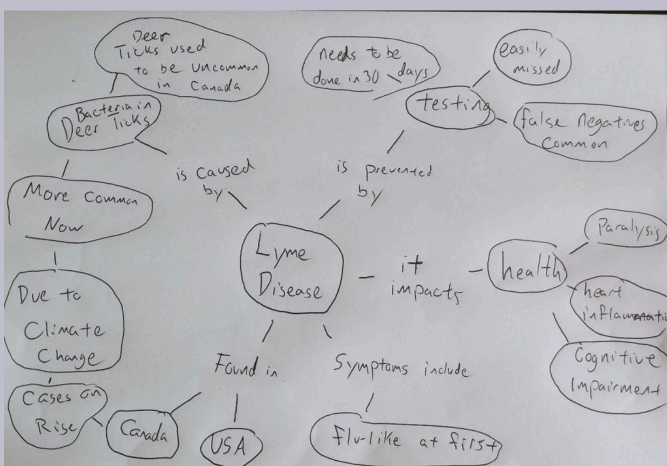
Now that she has a **focused topic** and a **research question** to help guide her research!

Hamid – Picking His Topic (Persuasive Speech)

A few months before taking RCM 200, Hamid went hiking with his family in Ontario. After a couple days, he noticed that he was developing a rash on his legs. He didn't think much of it though since he assumed he had brushed his legs up against something poisonous on the hike. A few days after that, however, he started feeling fatigued. His started having general aches all over his body, and would occasionally get severe headaches. Thinking he might have the flu, Hamid went to see his doctor.

The doctor told him that he did not have the flu: he had Lyme disease. Hamid was surprised because he thought Lyme disease only happened in the United States, not in Canada. The doctor informed him that deer ticks, which carry the disease, had been slowly migrating north to Canada over the years and the disease was becoming more common in Canada. The doctor also told Hamid that if he had not come in for treatment right away, the disease may have affected his central nervous system and potentially killed him.

When it was time to pick the topic for his RCM 200 persuasive speech, Hamid decided to speak about **Lyme disease** as his general topic. He decides to create a mind-map to help him decide what to speak about.



A sample mindmap on Lyme disease

After reviewing his mindmap, Hamid realizes that he wants to learn more about the disease itself, and he also wants to be able to explain to people why they should be concerned about it as well. With both of those things in mind, he comes up with the following **research question**: Why is Lyme Disease becoming more prevalent in Canada and how what steps should Canadians take to make sure the don't get it?

Hamid feels pretty good about the research focus he has come up with. But he also realizes that he may need to make adjustments along the way.

With their **focused topics** and **research questions** selected, Mei and Hamid can move on to the next step of the planning process: using rhetorical theory to craft their persuasive messages.

Key Takeaways

- **Technical communication** follows a repeating pattern where different stages are followed and revisited. For our course, we have three: (1) Planning your message, (2) Producing a draft, and (3) Polishing the draft. Following this **iterative** process will help you generate a more effective, polished message.
- The first thing you want to do is develop a **focused topic**. If you already have a general idea of the topic you want to use, that's great. Start by using a pre-writing strategy to help you

determine what you already know and what the gaps in your knowledge are.

- After you have your **focused topic,** write out a **research question** that you can answer through your research.
- Once you have both of those, you can move on to considering the **scope** of your project to get a sense of what the expectations and limitations are.

References

National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2018). Engineering Design Process [Image]. NASA. https://www.nasa.gov/audience/foreducators/best/edp.html

Attributions

Chapter 24: Using Rhetorical Theory to Write Your Report

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Design the message of your report by applying the rhetorical theory of Bitzer and Aristotle

Key Terms and Concepts

- rhetorical exigence
- rhetorical audience
- constraints
- pathos
- ethos
- logos

By now, you should already have a **focused topic** and **research question** for your report. Now it's time to craft your message.

As we said in a previous chapters, rhetorical theory will help you craft a persuasive message for your audience. This chapter will show you how to do that. Specifically, you will be using Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation" and the Aristotle's "Modes of Appeal" to help form a message around you focused topic and research question. Before we connect the theories to your report, we will briefly review the content in both. While both theories are distinct in the rhetorical issues they consider, when combined you will have a much stronger message. You will also notice that there is some overlap between the two in terms of what you need to consider. To help you see this in practice, you will continue to see how Mei and Hamid apply the theory to their own reports.

Please keep in mind that you are by no means locked into your f**ocused topic** and **research question** at this point. As you go through the theory below, you might realize that your topic is too broad or that you don't actually want to write about it. If you need to change or refine it, that's completely fine. What matters is that you go through this process early enough so you are realize these issues now instead of the night before the **report** is due.

"The Rhetorical Situation" (Bitzer)

In this earlier chapter we mentioned that Bitzer's theory was good for assessing the **context** of your communication situation. This is because "The Rhetorical Situation" is essentially a planning document. Before you even begin writing your message—that is, your written report or presentation—you need to consider the situation you are building your message for, by reviewing Bitzer's three constituents:

1. **Rhetorical Exigence:** What is the problem that your message will solve?
2. **Rhetorical Audience:** Who is your audience and how do they need to receive the information?
3. **Constraints:** What challenges will your message face (constraints)?

By considering Bitzer's three constituents of the **rhetorical situation**, you will analyze the situation before you begin to design your message and, as a result, start from a much stronger position. Let's look at how you might do that now.

Rhetorical Exigence

The first constituent is **rhetorical exigence**. This is something needing to be done (or a problem to be solved) that can be fixed, to some degree, with the cooperation of others.

In terms of reports, if you have to write an **informative report** it means you have an **audience** that needs information (which is something that needs to be done). An informative report answers that problem, but it also needs to provide information in such a way that the audience is persuaded to believe the information as credible. Keep in mind that it is not enough to just give them information; it must also be understandable.

When analyzing **rhetorical exigence** for your topic, do not simply stop at "the audience needs information." Go deeper! Think about the relational issues that go on with persuading an audience.

Mei – Rhetorical Exigence

When thinking about her report, Mei knows she should start with **rhetorical exigence** (the problem she wishes to solve). She thinks about her past conversations with people about nuclear energy, which she knows rarely go well.

But why? After some thought, she realizes it's because they already have negative ideas of what nuclear energy involves. Their preconceived notions of nuclear energy is what stops them from seeing it as a safe, reliable energy source. Her audience has some **constraints** she must consider in her report's argument.

Therefore, the problem she needs to solve is to change their opinion and have them understand that nuclear energy is actually safe and reliable. However, she knows she needs to go deeper than that.

- *What* preconceived ideas will she be going up against in her report?
- *How* will people be hesitant when reading her report?

She will need to keep these **constraints** in mind if she is going to change her audience's opinion.

Hamid – Rhetorical Exigence

Hamid is struggling with his topic. On the one hand, the problem is that Lyme disease is a medical issue that is becoming more prevalent in Canada; however, how does that help his **audience**? What can they do about it?

After some thought, he realizes that if he can get the audience to be more knowledgeable and take the disease seriously, then they could save their lives. He decides that his speech's **rhetorical exigence** will be to help his audience know what to look out for with Lyme disease, and the steps they can take to protect themselves.

Rhetorical Audience

The second constituent is **rhetorical audience**. This isn't just *any* audience who hears the message though. Instead, a rhetorical audience must meet two criteria. They must be:

1. able to make the needed change
2. open to being persuaded

In terms of a report, then, your **rhetorical audience** is the one who requires the information, and is open to being persuaded that the report is credible. However, when analyzing **rhetorical audience**, do not stop at just identifying who needs information. Go deeper! Ask yourself the question, “How does the audience need to receive the information so they can assess it as credible?”

Mei – Rhetorical Audience

Next, Mei considers her **rhetorical audience**. Since her formal written report is for RCM 200, Mei knows only a few people will read it (like her instructor and some of her peers). However, she also knows that she should take the assignment seriously. She considers the two criteria:

1. Can her audience make the needed change?
    - While this group may not be able to directly impact environmental energy policy and shift it towards a greater reliance on nuclear energy, she knows that she can at least change their opinion of its safety and viability as an alternative to burning coal and fossil fuels.
2. Is her audience open to being persuaded?
    - She believes they are. She knows that a lot of people in her program are concerned about climate change and are open to

discussing alternative means of energy production.

After going through those two questions, Mei is feeling pretty good. But she also must consider how the audience will receive her information so they can assess it as credible. Mei decides the best way to do this is by using reputable institutions that study nuclear energy to lay out a case for why it is safe and viable. She will also need to address concerns the audience has about reactor overloads and nuclear waste.

Hamid – Rhetorical Audience

Hamid thinks about his **rhetorical audience**. Unlike the formal report he wrote earlier in the term, his presentation will be in front of his entire class. That means a lot of people will see his presentation.

1. Can his audience make the needed change?
    - He believes so. As long as his list of strategies are simple and easy to do, Hamid believes his audience will be able to protect themselves from Lyme Disease.
2. Is his audience open to being persuaded?
    - This will be tricky. Most people he has

talked to think of Lyme Disease as an American problem that doesn't affect Canadians. To combat this issue, he will need to show in his speech how prevalent Lyme Disease is becoming in Canada. Otherwise, his audience may not take him seriously.

In order to show he is credible, Hamid knows that all of his sources will need to come from medical organizations and medical journals. Additionally, he realizes it may help if he also shares his own personal experience with the disease.

Constraints

The final constituent is **constraints. Constraints** always exist in any rhetorical situation. They are those elements that limit what the writer or speaker can effectively say.

As a result, when constructing your **report**, you need to consider *what* will limit how you present your information. Ask yourself these questions:

- How much background information does the audience need?
    - Is your audience new to the topic or are they very well-read in this area? If they are knowledgeable, then you would only have to present the bare minimum.
- How long is the report or presentation expected to be?
    - Are you sending a paragraph-long email or submitting

a 200 page research report? This will determine how much time and/or space you have to discuss your topic.

- Are credible sources of evidence available?
  - We will go into more detail about this in a future chapter, but we will briefly discuss it now. By "credible" we mean are the resources peer-reviewed? Can you find them in academic literature? Or at the very least, will the sources be seen as credible in the eyes of your audience? For example, if you are presenting to a group of high school students, and you only use information from Wikipedia, they may find that credible. However, if you are presenting to a group of scholars who are experts in their fields, they most certainly will not find Wikipedia credible.
- What are the design conventions (i.e. rules) for the style of report?
  - Conventions differ for each type of report. For example, the rules for writing an email are different from writing a report. If you have a 200 page report, what kind of graphics do you need to create, and how should you format them to meet the conventions of that report?
  - Also, keep in mind that conventions change from class to class, field to field and, sometimes, position to position. For example, for this course, we want you to use the American Psychology Association (APA) format when writing your report. This will affect how you format your citations, references and graphics. However, if you're an engineer, your field may have their own set of formatting conventions than another. One example of this is mechanical engineering versus electrical engineering, each of which have their own style guides.

Mei – Constraints

Mei considers all the **constraints** that will limit her formal report.

1. How much background information does the audience need?
    - Mei assumes that her audience has an idea what nuclear energy is, though they may not know the specifics of how it works. Since Mei is trying to convince her audience that nuclear energy is a safe and reliable source of energy, she decides to avoid going too deep into the technical process of fusion reactions. Instead, she wants to compare the energy outputs between coal/fossil fuel-fired power plants and nuclear power plants as well as show how both impact climate change. This means she will need to find data for both methods so she can compare them for the audience.
2. How long is the report expected to be?
    - Mei reviews the class handout for the formal report and finds that it should be between 1800 – 2400 words, double spaced. She knows that a double spaced page is roughly 500 words, so that means her paper will be roughly 5 pages of *written* text.

However, she also needs to include other elements like a title page and a graphic, so this means her report will be somewhere between 6-8 pages long.

3. Are credible sources of evidence available?
    - From her courses, Mei already knows a couple of organizations that focus on nuclear energy specifically. She makes a list of the ones she already knows, and searches online for some that focus on the environment generally. Her list includes the Canadian Nuclear Association and the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions. She doesn't know how to find peer-reviewed articles , so she stops by the Murray Library on campus and asks a librarian for help. The librarian directs her to articles in the peer-reviewed journals *Popular Science*, *Fusion Science and Technology*, and *Energy Policy*.
4. What are the design conventions (i.e. rules) for the style of report?
    - Mei pays close attention to format requirements for the assignment because she knows she'll lose points if she forgets any of them. In the written report, she will need to include at least one graphic (like a table, chart, or photograph). That seems easy enough. However, for the entire assignment, she also needs to include a

cover page, transmittal document, title page, table of contents, list of tables and figures, reference page, and appendices. She must also use APA format for all of her references and citations. That's a lot of content! She makes a checklist for herself so she doesn't forget anything.

Hamid – Constraints

Hamid considers all the **constraints** for his persuasive speech.

1. How much background information does the audience need?
    - Quite a bit, probably. While Hamid is sure that most of his audience has heard of Lyme disease, he doubts that most of them will know it's effects and just how serious it can become if untreated. He decides to break break up his speech into three parts: (1) an overview of Lyme Disease, (2) the challenges of testing for the disease, and (3) how the disease is becoming more common in Canada. Each section should provide enough information to help his audience

better understand the disease.

2. How long is the presentation expected to be?
    - Hamid reviews the class handout for the persuasive speech. The speech will only be 5 minutes long, which doesn't leave him a lot of time. If he assumes his introduction and conclusion will be about 30 seconds total, that leaves him only 4 and half minutes to discuss the three sections he came up with. This means he will need to make sure he doesn't have too much information. He also sees that his speech must be within a ten second window. This means it must not be shorter than 4:50, or longer than 5:10. Hamid will need to make sure he practices a lot to ensure his speech is just long enough.
3. Are credible sources of evidence available?
    - Hamid does a quick web search and finds a number of medical organizations that discuss Lyme Disease such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. He also searches for academic articles on the USask Library website and finds several. However, he is unable to find any articles specifically about the disease in Canada. He can't make it to campus, so he uses the USask Library Ask Us online chat service so he can talk to a librarian from his home. The librarian finds three articles for him, one of which is about

Lyme Disease spreading in the prairies. This is great news, because that article will help him better connect the disease to the lives of his audience in Saskatchewan.

4. What are the design conventions (i.e. rules) for the presentation?
    - After reading the assignment handout, Hamid sees that his speech needs to be in an extemporaneous style. The speech must also be based on an outline that he will create from the persuasive speech evaluation form that his instructor gave him. Additionally, he needs to ensure his speech is grounded in research, which shouldn't be too difficult to do since he has already found so many great sources. Unfortunately for Hamid though, he is not allowed to use PowerPoint or any kinds of slides to help him. Instead, he will only be able to use a single note-card.

"The Modes of Appeal" (Aristotle)

By now, you should have used Bitzer to determine the problem you are trying to solve, who is the audience that needs the information, and how you are going to get that information to them. Now it's time to put that message together. We can do so by considering Aristotle's **Modes of Appeal.** As a reminder, these are the strategies you can use to create a persuasive message (**ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**), which requires an assessment of:

1. the credibility of the **speaker** (ethos)
2. the needs and values of the **audience** (pathos)
3. the available arguments and evidence to decide how to present the most persuasive message possible. (logos)

All together, the **modes of appeal** work together to build a message that shows the **credibility** of both the speaker and their message to the audience. In this section, you'll notice discussion on sources and finding evidence. Again, we will go into more detail on that in next chapter.

Ethos

Ethos is defined as the credibility of the speaker as established in the message by demonstrating good will, good judgement, and good character. This means taking stock of yourself, your position, and understanding how that may affect your message either positively or negatively.

As you start designing your message, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does my content show awareness of the needs of the audience?
2. Am I meeting the conventions of the report or presentation?
3. Is the information presented fair and complete?

Mei – Ethos

Mei walks through the three questions to determine her **ethos**.

1. Does my content show awareness of the needs of the audience?
    - Mei believes it does. Climate change is a very important topic right now that has a lot of people worried. However, she also knows that people are often worried about the safety of nuclear energy. Therefore, she will need to address those concerns in her report by discussing recent nuclear crises like the Fukushima reactor in Japan. She knows that she could lose her credibility if she ignores the risks involved with nuclear energy because it will look like she didn't take her audiences concerns into consideration.
2. Am I meeting the conventions of the report?
    - This one is easy, since Mei already considered this while going over Bitzer's **constraints**. She already knows her audience (her instructor) will expect her report to have all of the required elements (table of contents, references, etc.). If she includes all of them, it will show the

instructor that she took the assignment seriously.

3. Is the information presented fair and complete?

    - Mei is unsure what to do here. She knows that ethos is about showing her credibility, but she also knows that she should not include her personal opinions in the report. Instead, the facts should do the talking. She asks her instructor for advice, and they explain to her that credibility will be shown by the types of information she selects. As long as she is picking from reputable organizations on both sides of the issue, and addresses the audience's concerns with that information, she will come off as credible. Mei is relieved, because that was already her plan after going through Bitzer!

Hamid – Ethos

Hamid walks through three questions to determine his **ethos**.

1. Does my content show awareness of the needs of the audience?

- In general, Hamid's presentation is about personal health and safety. From his research, he knows that Lyme disease can have a serious, negative impact on people's lives. In order to establish his credibility, he will need to show that concern through his tone, body language, and use of detail. He realizes that one way he can establish his **credibility** is by discussing his own close call with disease. This tactic will help him create a personal connection with his audience and help show why he thinks it is an important topic for them to be aware of.

2. Am I meeting the conventions of the presentation?

   - The main purpose of the presentation is to persuade the audience, but Hamid knows he will have to do more than persuade them that "Lyme Disease is a serious disease." That is too easy, and the professor will probably say he didn't go deep enough. That is why he will end his speech by discussing how his audience can take protective measures to stop themselves from catching the disease. If he can give them a list of actions to take, like checking for ticks when they go hiking, that will be much more actionable.

3. Is the information presented fair and complete?

- After thinking about his topic for some time, Hamid realizes he could easily use scare tactics to persuade his audience. He could do this by focusing only on the most severe consequences of Lyme Disease, like how it affects your central nervous system and can lead to paralysis. However, he also realizes that this is a pretty transparent tactic, and may turn his audience off his message. Instead, he decides to use a more balanced approach when describing the diseases impact. By explaining the range of health effects the disease can have, he will show his audience that he has done his research (making him appear more credible), and allow them to come to the conclusion that the disease is serious on their own.

Pathos

Pathos is defined as a connection of the message to the needs, values, expectations, and wants of the **audience**. Put another way, does your message help the audience understand why the content is important to them?

As you start designing your message, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the quality of my research meet the expectations of the audience?

2. Is the report designed to make it easy for the audience to understand?
3. Are claims supported by credible evidence?

Mei – Pathos

Mei walks through the three questions to determine her **pathos**. It should be easy; she's already determined her audience's needs by considering her rhetorical audience with Bitzer. However, she still goes through the questions just to be sure.

1. Does the quality of my research meet the expectations of the audience?
    - Mei is confident that it will. She's already found several reputable sources that she can integrate into her report, and there is a lot of strong, persuasive content. However, she knows that this will be only part of it. Yes, it's good to have strong sources, but she'll also need to make sure the writing itself is clear and well presented. The formatting will also be need to meet the audience's need, since they (the instructor) will be looking very closely at that.
2. Is the report designed to make it easy for the audience to understand?
    - This goes back to formatting. Once Mei

has written her report, she starts adjusting the formatting to meet the criteria for the class. She checks for consistency first. Are all the headings the same size? Is the font the same? She also checks to make sure that her page numbers and headings line up with the table of contents and list of tables. She also prints out a copy of her report so she can make sure the graphics and tables are easy to read.

3. Are claims supported by credible evidence?
    - While going through Bitzer's **constraints**, Mei found over 50 resources for her formal report. That's quite a lot, and definitely more than she needs. She starts evaluating the sources she found to ensure they are credible. Some of the resources are quite old, like from the 1980s, and she is not sure if that evidence is still valid today. Therefore, she decides to try and stick with evidence from this century. She also decides to only use with academic journals with peer-reviewed articles. This means getting rid of websites generated by the general public, not organizations. There are more steps she needs to take to evaluate her sources, but she'll get there in time.

Hamid – Pathos

Hamid walks through the three questions to determine his **pathos**. It should be easy, since he has already determined his audience's needs by considering his **rhetorical audience** with Bitzer and how he will establish his **credibility** with **ethos**. Regardless, he still goes through the questions just to be sure.

1. Does the quality of my research meet the expectations of the audience?
    - Hamid is already planning to use his first-hand experience with Lyme Disease as his hook to get his audience's attention. However, he doesn't want to focus solely on personal experience. He knows his audience will want to hear data about how Lyme Disease is spreading in Canada. Since he already has information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and several articles from medical journals, Hamid feels confident he will meet his audience's expectations.
2. Is the presentation designed to make it easy for the reader to understand?
    - After reviewing some of his resources, Hamid starts to feel a little overwhelmed.

Several of his sources, especially the ones from medical journals, have really detailed information about the disease and use terminology that he doesn't fully understand. He could definitely get detailed in his speech but then realizes he doesn't have that kind of time. His speech is only 5 minutes long, after all. Also, if he doesn't understand that level of detail, how will he be able to explain it to his audience? Hamid decides to focus just on the most basic information like where the disease comes from, how it impacts the body, and how the audience can protect themselves against it.

3. Are claims supported by credible evidence?
    - All of Hamid's evidence will come from reputable medical organizations and medical journals, so he's good there. However, how will he show this in his speech? Unlike a written report, there won't be a list of references at the end for his audience to see. This means he will have to mention the names of his sources his in speech. For example, he might say "The Public Health Agency of Canada provides the criteria for diagnosing and treating Lyme Disease." Mention the organizations or journals directly will help here. However, Hamid knows he'll have a hard time keeping all those names straight, so he makes sure to write them down on his notecard so he

doesn't forget.

Logos

Logos is defined as a well-organized, well-supported, and well-positioned argument.

As you start designing your message, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is the issue presented in a complete and balanced way?
2. Does the report or presentation organize sections in a logical way?
3. Is the argument positioned to recognize the audience's concerns?

When we talk about the "positioning of an argument," we are pointing to the importance of approaching the problem in a way that shows you understand why the audience should care. In other words, you must describe the problem and the solution in terms that are connected to the audience's concerns.

Mei – Logos

Mei is almost done, and she's feeling pretty confident in her **logos** appeals. She goes through the final three questions.

1. Is the issue presented in a complete and balanced way?
    - When evaluating her resources, Mei pays close attention to ones she will use to address her audience's concerns. She wants to make sure she is using the same types of resources (organizations, peer-reviewed academic journals, etc.) for her anti-nuclear energy information as her resources that are pro-nuclear energy, otherwise they will feel unbalanced. However, she also knows that this is still an argumentative report. This means that she should not have an equal number of resources that argue against her point. Otherwise, her report will be unclear and lack focus. What matters is that she uses the same quality of resources, even if that anti-argument will only take up a paragraph or two of her entire report.
2. Does the report organize sections in a logical way?
    - Mei thinks long and hard about this. She knows she is working against her audience's negative notions of what "nuclear power" entails, so her structure will be important if she is going to change their minds. After some outlining, she decides on five sections:

Introduction, Nuclear Energy and the Environment, Safety, Viability, and Conclusion. With this structure, she can start by discussing the topic broadly and get more and more specific with each section. After she gets a draft together though, she's feeling less confident. She decides to send her report over the USask Writing Centre for feedback. She's used the service before, and even though the report isn't done, she knows the tutors will let her know if she's on the right track.

3. Is the argument positioned to recognize the audience's concerns?

    - Mei is confident that it does. Each section poses a relevant concern that address the audience's concern and then provides a solution. For example, in the Safety section she acknowledges the three main nuclear disasters that people are aware of, but then counters that by discussing how newer, more modern nuclear technology fixes the problems that caused the three disasters in the first place. She doesn't want to concede any points, but she also wants to make sure she address her audience's concern.

Hamid – Logos

Hamid is almost done. He feels like his speech is really coming together. He goes through the final three questions to ensure his **logos** appeal is strong enough.

1. Is the issue presented in a complete and balanced way?
    - Obviously, nobody is going to say that Hamid should include an argument that is pro-Lyme Disease. That doesn't make sense. What matters here is that Hamid is neither diminishing the severity of the disease or overstating its effects. He also needs to make sure that he will be providing his audience with just enough information so that are knowledgeable, but not overwhelmed by the content.
2. Does the presentation organize sections in a logical way?
    - After considering Bitzer's constraints and using the speech outline provided by his instructor, Hamid feels he has a good structure for his speech. He knows he will open by briefly talking about his own close call with disease, then he will provide of an overview of the disease. He will follow this with explaining why testing for Lyme Disease is challenging, how the disease is spreading in Canada, and then provide his audience with a list of strategies for fighting the disease. It's a lot to fit into five minutes,

so Hamid is aware he will have to be very selective of what information he includes.

3. Is the argument positioned to recognize the audience's concerns?
    - Hamid knows from personal experience that medical issues can be pretty daunting. He doesn't want to scare his audience, and he also doesn't want them to be self-defeated by the end of his presentation. That is why his speech will end with a list of strategies they can take to protect themselves from the disease. By including that content, he will empower his audience.

Using Theory to Establish Credibility

Now, with both Bitzer and Aristotle at your side, you can begin to write a **report** that understands the **rhetorical problem** you are trying to solve, the **audience** that you are speaking to, and the message you need to design in a way that is persuasive to that particular audience (just like Mei and Hamid did).

Below you have two ways to try this out on your own. The first is a tool that will walk you through the process. By the end, you will be able to export your file to your computer. If you would rather take your time, you can download the Microsoft Word file and fill out

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from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=605#h5p-44

Microsoft Word File: Rhetorical Outline For Reports

When creating a rhetorical message, either when writing or when creating a speech, start with Bitzer. Use his work to analyze why the audience needs the information, what the audience already knows, and what form the report—or message—should take.

Follow up with Aristotle to establish your **credibility** in the report by designing a well-structured message that meets the audience's needs in a clear and complete way.

By using your knowledge of **rhetoric** to develop a message, you will be able to craft an effective message because you will know what its purpose is.

Key Takeaways

- Now that you have your **focused topic** and **research question** you can begin crafting your report.
- To do this, you will apply the theory found in Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation" and Aristotle's Modes of Appeal.
- Bitzer's three constituents (**rhetorical exigence**, **rhetorical audience**, and **constraints**) will help you assess the situation where you are presenting your report. This will start you off on much stronger **footing**.

- Once you have evaluated the Bitzer's constituents, you can move on to Aristotle's Modes of Appeal (**ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**). The three modes will help you craft a much more persuasive message.

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Chapter 25: Finding and Evaluating Research Sources

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between popular sources and scholarly sources
- Identify different types of sources that can be used for technical projects
- Evaluate research sources with a critical lens by considering their authority, content, and purpose

Key Terms and Concepts

- scholarly sources
- popular sources
- authority, content, and purpose

Finding and Evaluating Research Sources

While going through Bitzer and Aristotle's rhetorical theory, you will need to start looking up some sources you can use for your report. Perhaps you already know of some sources that you could pull from. But, if you don't have any sources in mind, or if you don't know how to even start looking for them, that's okay too. We'll talk more about strategies for conducting research in the next chapter. Right now, we want to make sure you know how to properly evaluate the sources you do find when you start your research.

Popular vs Scholarly Sources

In this "information age," when so much information is available at our fingertips on the Internet, it is crucial to be able to critically search through the reams of information in order to select credible sources that can provide reliable data to support your ideas and convince your audience. In the era of "fake news," deliberate misinformation, and "alternative facts," developing the skill to evaluate the credibility of sources is critical.

Sources can be broken up into two categories: popular and scholarly. How would you define the difference between the two? Can you come up with some examples of both? Ideally, when you think of both categories, you should think of items such as those in the figure below.

Figure #1 *Examples of Popular vs Scholarly Sources.*[1]

Why are **scholarly sources** more desirable than **popular sources**? Is it ever a good idea to use one source type over the other in the report writing process? Let's look at this a little more deeply.

Watch the video below to help distinguish between the two:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=613#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/scholarsource

Scholarly articles published in academic journals are usually required sources in professional communication; they are also

1. [2]
2. [1]

an especially integral part of engineering projects and technical reports. Since you are researching in a professional field and preparing for the workplace, there are many credible kinds of sources you will draw on in a professional context. How many can you list? Table #1 below lists several types of sources you may find useful in researching your projects.

Table #1: *Typical Research Sources for Technical Projects*

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=613#h5p-45

Download: Typical Research Sources for Technical Projects

Critically Evaluating Sources

Clearly, there are a lot of places where you can pull sources from. However—and this is a *big* however—it is essential that you critically evaluate your sources for **authority**, **content,** and **purpose**.

Anyone can put anything on the internet, and people with strong web and document design skills can make this information look very professional and credible, even if it isn't. Since a majority of research is currently done online, and many sources are available electronically, developing your critical evaluation skills is crucial to finding valid, credible evidence to support and develop your ideas. In fact, this has become such a challenging issue that there are sites like List of Predatory Journals that regularly update its online list of journals that subvert the peer review process and simply publish for profit.

When evaluating research sources and presenting your own research, be careful to critically evaluate the **authority**, **content**, and **purpose** of the material, using the questions in **Table #2.**

Table #2: *Evaluating the Authority, Content and Purpose of the Information*

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=613#h5p-46

Download: Evaluating the Authority, Content, and Purpose of the Information

Going through all those questions may seem like a tedious, unnecessary process, but it is essential that you consider these questions as you acquire sources for your reports. Not doing so can negatively impact your **credibility** as a professional.

Consider it this way: let's say you are presenting a **report** to a potential client. If they find out you used sources that lack authority, are not relevant or recent, or do not really serve their purpose, how will they view you? How will that affect their view of the company you work for?

Ultimately, critical thinking lies at the heart of evaluating sources. You want to be rigorous in your selection of evidence, because once you use it in your paper, it will either bolster your own credibility or undermine it.

Key Takeaways

- Not all sources are created equal when it comes to research. There are two main categories: **popular sources** and **scholarly sources**. Of the two, scholarly sources are more credible because they have to go through a peer-review process in order to be published.
- However, you still want to make sure you evaluate the sources your find for **authority**, **content**, and pu**r**pose regardless of where you found it.

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Attributions

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Chapter 26: Strategies For Conducting Research

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between primary research and secondary research and explain why it is important to include both in a persuasive document.
- Explain different methods and locations for conducting research online

Key Terms and Concepts

- primary research
- secondary research

You have arrived at the final part of the planning phase of your report: conducting the research. You've already done a lot to get here. So far, you have:

1. generated a **focused topic** and **research question** that you will address in your report
2. used the rhetorical theory found in Bitzer's **rhetorical situation** and Aristotle's **modes of appeal** to starting planning your message,

3. learned how distinguish between **popular** and **scholarly sources** and how to evaluate both

Now it's time to start doing the actual research!

In this chapter we will explain the two types of research—**primary research** and **secondary research—**that you should be doing for your report, and give you tips for conducting research online.

What is Research?

Research begins with questions. You've already started this process by going through Bitzer and Aristotle. Odds are, as you did so, more questions came up that you were not sure how to answer, and that's okay! Doing the actual research will help you answer those questions. However, as you start acquiring sources, it's important that you are mindful of the two types of research that can be conducted for a report.

Primary v. Secondary Research

There are two basic kinds of research: **primary research** and **secondary research**.

Primary research is often first-person accounts and can be useful when you are researching a local issue that may not have been addressed previously and/or have little published research available. You may also use **primary research** to supplement, confirm, or challenge national or regional trends with local information.

Primary research can include:

- Interviews
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Observations and analysis
- Ethnography (the study and description of people, cultures, and customs)

Secondary research is what many students are most familiar with. This type of research generally requires searching libraries and other research institutions' holdings. **Secondary research** requires that you read other peoples' published studies and research in order to learn more about your topic, determine what others have written and said, and then develop a conclusion about your ideas on the topic in light of what others have done and said.

Some examples of sources that might be used in **secondary research** include:

- Academic, scientific, and technical journal articles
- Governmental reports
- Raw data and statistics
- Trade and professional organization data

It is rare to see a persuasive argument that doesn't include both **primary** and **secondary research**. Let's look at an example. Say you are interested in using STEM knowledge to improve the quality of life for the homeless population in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The most successful project would use both **secondary** and **primary research**. The next two sections will demonstrate what this might look like.

Secondary Research in Action

First, the **secondary research** will help establish best or common practices, trends, statistics, and current research about homelessness broadly in Canada and Saskatchewan, and then more narrowly into Saskatoon.

Your brainstorming would likely lead to questions regarding the following:

- The major issues facing homelessness and combating homelessness in the Canada.
- The homeless population and demographics for Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.
- Services currently available for the homeless in Saskatoon
- Services available in other cities and the province.

The above information would likely be available through **secondary research** sources. Useful information would likely be available through city and state government agencies such as Health Canada or the Employment and Social Development Canada; local and national homeless advocacy groups such as the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, Carmichael Outreach, The Lighthouse Supported Living, and the Homeless Hub. You would also need to search relevant research databases—which are discussed below in the Where Do I Look? section—in subject areas such as engineering, sociology and social work, and government documents.

Primary Research in Action

Primary research, such as interviews or surveys, can provide a more in-depth and local bent to the numbers and details provided in secondary sources. Some examples of groups to interview or survey include local homeless advocates; shelter and outreach employees and volunteers; people currently or previously experiencing homelessness; and researchers or university-affiliated groups that conduct, compile, and apply research on homelessness.

Will all this research generate a lot of content for your report? Most definitely.

Do you need to include it all? Absolutely not.

What matters is that your strive to include both types of research in your reports. This is because the strongest research—and most persuasive arguments—blend **primary** and **secondary research.**

Where Do I Look?

Now that you can distinguish between **secondary research** from **primary research**, where do you find them?

In the 21st century, we generally turn to the internet when we have a question. For technical, scientific, and academic research, we can still turn to the internet, but where we visit changes. We will discuss a few different places where you can perform research including Google, Google Scholar, and your university library website.

Google and Google Scholar

The default research site for most students tends to be Google. Google can be a great starting place for a variety of research. You can use Google to find news articles and other popular sources such as magazine articles and blog posts. You can use Google to discover keywords, alternative terms, and relevant professional, for-profit, and non-profits business and organizations.

The most important thing to remember about using Google though is that search results are organized by popularity, *not* by accuracy. Further, because Google customizes search results based on a user's search history, searches performed by different people or on different browsers may provide slightly different results.

For many technical, scientific, and scholarly topics, Google will not provide access to the appropriate and necessary types of sources and information. Google Scholar, however, searches only academic and scientific journals, books, patents, and governmental and legal documents. This means the results will be more technical and scholarly and therefore more appropriate for much of the research you will be expected to perform as a student.

However, while Google Scholar will show academic and technical results, that does not mean that you will have access to the full-text documents. Many of the sources that appear on Google Scholar are from databases, publishers, or libraries, which means that they are often behind paywalls or password-protected. **Do not pay for these documents!** There is a good chance you will be able to access them through the University library. [for help on linking your university's library to the Google Scholar database, click here.]

University Libraries

The University of Saskatchewan Library has access to databases, peer-reviewed journals, and books that are generally the best choice for accurate and more technical information. A Google search might yield millions and millions of results and a Google Scholar search may yield tens or hundreds of thousands of results, but a library search will generally turn up only a couple thousands, hundreds, or even dozens of results.

You may think, "Isn't fewer results a bad thing? Doesn't that mean limiting the possibilities for the project?" The quick answer is yes, fewer results means fewer options for your project, but no, this does not mean using the library limits the possibilities for a project.

Overall, library resources are more tightly controlled and vetted. Anyone can create a blog or website and post information, regardless of the accuracy or usefulness of the information. Library resources, in contrast, have generally gone through rigorous processes and revisions before publication. For example, academic and scientific journals have a review system in place—whether a peer-review process or an editorial board. Both feature panels of people with expertise in the areas under consideration. Publishers for books also feature editorial boards who determine the usefulness and accuracy of information.

Of course, this does not mean that every peer-reviewed journal article or book is 100% accurate and useful all of the time. Biases still exist, and many commonly accepted facts change over time with more research and analysis. Overall, the process for these types of publications require that multiple people read and comment on the work, providing some checks and balances that are not present for general internet sources.

Common Types of Library Sources

- Databases: databases are specialized search service that provide access to sources such as academic and scientific journals, newspapers, and magazines. An example of a database would be Academic Search Complete.
- Journals: journals are specialized publications focused on an often narrow topic or field. For example, Computers & Composition is a peer-reviewed journal focused on the intersection of computers, technology, and composition (i.e. writing) classrooms. Another example is the Journal of Bioengineering & Biomedical Science.
- Books: also called monographs, books generally cover topics in more depth than can be done in a journal article. Sometimes books will contain contributions from multiple authors, with each chapter authored separately.
- Various media: depending on the library, you may have access to a range of media, including documentaries, videos, audio recordings, and more. Some libraries offer

streaming media that you can watch directly on the library website without having to download any files.

How Do I Perform a Search?

Research is not a linear process. It requires a back and forth between sources, your ideas and analysis, and the **rhetorical situation** for your research.

The research process is a bit like an eye exam. The doctor makes a best guess for the most appropriate lens strength, and then adjusts the lenses from there. Sometimes the first option is the best and most appropriate; sometimes it takes a few tries with several different options before finding the best one for you and your situation.

Once you decide on a **focused topic** and **research question**, you will need to determine keywords that you can use to search different resources.

It is important to have a wide range of keywords because not all terms will result in the same information. Developing a list of keywords can be aided by a quick Google search. A Google search may reveal more official language or terms; broader or narrower terms and concepts; or related terms and concepts. You can also search for the term + synonym to find other words you might use. Keep in mind, a synonym search will not work for all terms. For technical and scientific topics, though, Google may not be a lot of help for finding other terms.

You can use a couple different tricks to narrow your search. Using quotation marks around two or more words means the search results will contain those words only in that specific order. For example, based on the exercise above, a search for “homelessness in Saskatoon” would only provide results where these words appear in this exact order, with no words between them. A search for homelessness in Saskatoon without the quotation marks will search for those words, but also any sources that have the words homelessness and Saskatoon anywhere in the text.

If you still are not sure where to start, or if you hit a wall, the librarians at the University of Saskatchewan are here to help! You can go to any of the libraries on campus to ask for help, or you can use the Ask Us feature on their website to talk to them directly from your computer.

Determining a topic and finding relevant resources are only the beginning steps in the research process. Once you locate sources, you actually have to read them and determine how useful and relevant they are for your particular research context If you would like some tips on how to do that, please check out this page on Understanding and Documenting information in Appendix D.

The End of the Planning Phase

Congratulations! You have made it through the planning phase of your the report writing process! You have already done a lot! By now you should have a **focused topic** and **research question**, used rhetorical theory to assess your audience and determine how design your message, and you have found some sources to use. Now it's time to take all of that information and put it into a report! We will be covering different strategies for that in the following couple of chapters.

Key Takeaways

- The most persuasive research often includes both **primary research** and **secondary research.**
- **Primary research** typically includes first person accounts in the form interviews, surveys, and questionnaires.
- **Secondary research** can be found in sources such as as technical journals, government reports, and raw data.
- When searching for research, Google and Google scholar are a good place to start, but the best place to look is at the University of Saskatchewan Library website. If you ever get stuck finding sources for your report, reach out to the librarians on campus, or use the Ask Us feature and the library website.

Attributions

Chapter 27: Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Sources

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Integrate sources into your writing by using a lead-in, a source, and analysis
- Differentiate between direct quotes, paraphrase, and summary and explain when to use each integration method
- Edit direct quotes on the grammatical level by using the seamless integration method, signal phrase method, and colon method
- Apply the five-step process for paraphrasing to different texts to write your own paraphrases
- Apply the three-step process for summarizing to a piece of media that you enjoy

Key Terms and Concepts

- plagiarism
- direct quote
- paraphrase
- summary

We are now officially in the second stage of the report writing process: **producing** your report!

By now, you should be off to a good start with your formal research report. You have used rhetorical theory to plan out your message and you already have several sources that you want to use. The question we must now address is how you include those sources into your writing in a professional way?

Academic integrity plays a huge role here. You obviously don't want to copy a source's research word for word and claim it as your own. That would be **plagiarism**. However, you also don't want to only copy large chunks of the text and just put that in your paper either. That would be poor writing. Instead, you want to include a combination of both where you use the work of others to help support your arguments and ideas. This chapter will walk you through how to do this.

Integrating Materials Into Your Report

Exercise #1: Interactive Video

Let's begin with a video that provides an overview of the source integration process. Some of these practices are probably already be familiar to you.

After watching the video, you should be able to answer the four questions below.

1. What is the role of a thesis in a paper? How do sources help a thesis?
2. In what way is using sources in your paper like having a conversation?
3. What are the three ways you can present ideas from another source?
4. What must you always include each time you use an outside source?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=628#h5p-48

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/incinfo

One of the most important takeaways from the video is that it is *not enough* to simply present information from your sources in your paper. You must also draw your own conclusions**.** Otherwise you are simply restating someone else's work, and you are not furthering your argument. Many students forget this crucial step in writing reports. Thankfully, it's a relatively easy fix once you know what to do. We will first walk you through the structure you need to follow, and then show you how to use it to incorporate **direct quotes**, **paraphrase,** and **summary** in your report.

The Source Integration Structure

Read the example paragraph below. What is wrong with it?

People often have an inaccurate definition of communication. MacLennan (2009) explains that people tend to define communication incorrectly. “Most people, when asked to define communication, would produce something like the following definition: ‘the transmission of information by speaking, writing, and other means’” (p. 5). She goes on to say that this definition is not comprehensive enough. “While it may be easy to visualize and understand, this model of communication is ultimately inadequate, since it implies that communication is little more than an exchange of information” (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). Instead, she defines communication as “less like a process of information exchange than it is like a process of negotiation, which almost always involves the interplay of assumptions, values, ethics, public or professional status, self-definition, personal feelings, and social needs” (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). As we can see, the concept of communication is much more deep and involved than most people think.

A couple of things should stand out. The most obvious is that the paragraph is almost exclusively **direct quotes**. We have a little bit of the student’s input at the start and end of the paragraph, but there isn’t really anything substantial in-between the quotes.

Ultimately, the student didn’t incorporate all three elements for integrating sources that are recommended in the above video. As a reminder they are:

Presenting Ideas from an Outside Source: 3 Things to Include

Lead-in: May include source info, background info, and/or transition phrases.
Ideas from one or more sources: Can be a direct quote, paraphrase, or a summary.
Analysis of the ideas you've presented: Includes your response, interpretations, or arguments.

Let's look at the same paragraph again, but highlight the three elements we have discussed. This will show you visually how the paragraph is arranged. We will use the following colors:

Lead-in

Idea from a Source

Analysis

> People often have an inaccurate definition of communication. MacLennan (2009) explains that people tend to define communication incorrectly. "Most people, when asked to define communication, would produce something like the following definition: 'the transmission of information by speaking, writing, and other means'" (p. 5). She goes on to say that this definition is not comprehensive enough. "While it may be easy to visualize and understand, this model of communication is ultimately inadequate, since it implies that communication is little more than an exchange of information" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5).

Instead, she defines communication as "less like a process of information exchange than it is like a process of negotiation, which almost always involves the interplay of assumptions, values, ethics, public or professional status, self-definition, personal feelings, and social needs" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). As we can see, the concept of communication is much more deep and involved than most people think.

We do have some lead-in for the quotes, but almost no analysis is given. Yes, the quoted information may be relevant, but it is not immediately clear how it's relevant to the writer's main point because there is not enough analysis.

Students often mistakenly assume that their readers will figure out the relevance on their own, but that is *not the case*. It is not the reader's job to interpret your writing for you. It is up to you to be as explicit as possible by connecting your sources to your argument.

Let's look at a revised version of the above paragraph that does a better job incorporating a **lead-in**, a **source**, and **analysis**. We have color coded the three elements again so you can better see where they are in the paragraph:

Communication is a much more complex concept than people realize. Typically, the idea will be defined as "the transmission of information by speaking, writing, and other means" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). While this interpretation works at a basic level, it does not account for the larger complexities at play in communication. This is because communication is more than an exchange of information: it is a negotiation (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). A negotiation is always far more complex than an exchange, because, as MacLennan (2009) explains, "[it] always involves interplay of assumptions, values, ethics, public or professional status, self-definition, personal feelings, and social needs" (MacLennan, 2009, p. 5). As a result, when people communicate with each other, they must consider all the different elements that can both negatively and positively affect their message; otherwise, they risk being misunderstood and having their message corrupted.

See the difference? Applying this structure when you use **direct quotes**, **paraphrase**, or **summary** will greatly improve the quality of your writing. Now let's look at each method for incorporating sources in detail.

Direct Quotes, Paraphrasing, and Summary

When writing in academic and professional contexts, you are required to engage with the words and ideas of other authors. Therefore, being able to correctly and fluently incorporate other writers' words and ideas in your own writing is a critical writing skill. As you now know, there are three main ways to integrate evidence from sources into your writing:

1. **direct quotes**
2. **paraphrasing**
3. **summary**

One important note that we haven't mentioned is that you are required to include a citation anytime you are using another person's words and/or ideas. This means that even if you do not quote directly, but paraphrase or summarize source content and express it in your own words, you still must give credit to the original authors for their ideas. Your RCM 200 instructor will be making sure you do this when they read your formal written report.

You have already seen the use of citations in action throughout this textbook. Anytime we have integrated content from another source, you will have seen a citation that looks something like this:

(Smith, 2020)

These citations are done using the American Psychology Association (APA) style. You will be expected to use this citation style in your own paper. However, if you are not sure how to do APA citation correctly, don't worry. We will go into the specific mechanics of how to cite sources in the next chapter.

We will now walk you through each source integration method, giving you opportunities to practice each one. If at any point you're confused, or unclear, don't hesitate to ask your instructor for help. The University of Saskatchewan Writing Centre is also a great resource.

Direct Quotes

A **direct quote** is the word-for-word copy of someone else's words and/or ideas. This is noted by quotation marks (" ") around those words. Using quotations to support your argument has several benefits over **paraphrase** and **summary**:

- Integrating quotations provide direct evidence from reliable sources to support your argument
- Using the words of credible sources conveys your **credibility** by showing you have done research into the area you are writing about and consulted relevant and authoritative sources
- Selecting effective quotations illustrates that you can extract the important aspects of the information and use them effectively in your own argument

However, *be careful not to over-quote*. As we saw in the above example, if you over-quote, you risk relying too much on the words of others and not your own.

Quotations should be used sparingly because too many quotations can interfere with the flow of ideas and make it seem like you don't have ideas of your own.

When should you use quotations?

- If the language of the original source uses the best possible phrasing or imagery, and no paraphrase or summary could be as effective; or
- If the use of language in the quotation is itself the focus of your analysis (*e.g.,* if you are analyzing the author's use of a particular image, metaphor, or other rhetorical strategy).

How to Integrate Quotations Correctly

Integrating quotations into your writing happens on two levels: the argumentative level and the grammatical level.

The Argumentative Level

At the argumentative level, the quotation is being used to illustrate or support a point that you have made, and you will follow it with some analysis, explanation, comment, or interpretation that ties that quote to your argument.

As we mentioned earlier, this is where many students run into trouble. This is known as a "quote and run." *Never* quote and run. This leaves your reader to determine the relevance of the quotation, and they might interpret it differently than you intended! A quotation, statistic or bit of data cannot speak for itself; you must provide context and an explanation for the quotations you use. As long as you use the three steps we listed above for integrating sources, you will be on the right track.

The Grammatical Level

The second level of integration is grammatical. This involves integrating the quotation into your own sentences so that it flows smoothly and fits logically and syntactically. There are three main methods to integrate quotations grammatically:

1. **Seamless Integration Method:** embed the quoted words as if they were an organic part of your sentence. This means that if you read the sentence aloud, your listeners would not know there was a quotation.
2. **Signal Phrase Method:** use a signal phrase (Author + Verb) to introduce the quotation, clearly indicating that the quotation comes from a specific source
3. **Colon Method:** introduce the quotation with a complete sentence ending in a colon.

Let's see this in action. Consider the following opening sentence (and famous comma splice) from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, as an example:

> **"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."**
>
> Dickens, C. (2017). *A tale of two cities*. Alma Books Ltd. p. 5

Below are examples of the quote being integrated using the three methods.

1. **Seamless Integration:** embed the quotation, or excerpts from the quotation, as a seamless part of your sentence

> Charles Dickens (2017) begins his novel with the paradoxical observation that the eighteenth century was both "the best of times" and "the worst of times" (p. 5).

2. **Signal Phrase:** introduce the author and then the quote using a signal verb (scroll down to see a list of common verbs that signal you are about to quote someone)

> Describing the eighteenth century, Charles Dickens (2017) observes, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (p. 5).

3. **Colon:** if your own introductory words form a complete sentence, you can use a colon to introduce and set off the quotation. This can give the quotation added emphasis.

> Dickens (2017) defines the eighteenth century as a time of paradox: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (p. 5).

> The eighteenth century was a time of paradox: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" (Dickens, 2017, p. 5).

It's important that you not rely on any one grammatical method in your own writing. Instead, try to use a balance of methods to make your writing seem more dynamic and varied.

Editing Quotations

When you use quotation marks around material, this indicates that you have used the *exact* words of the original author. However, sometimes the text you want to quote will not fit grammatically or clearly into your sentence without making some changes. Perhaps you need to replace a pronoun in the quote with the actual noun to make the context clear, or perhaps the verb tense does not fit. There are two main ways to edit a quotation to make it fit grammatically with your own sentence:

- **Use square brackets**: to reflect changes or additions to a quote, place square brackets around any words that have been changed or added.
- **Use ellipses**: ellipses show that some text has been removed. They can have either three dots (. . .) or four dots (. . . .). Three dots indicate that some words have been removed from the sentence; four dots indicate that a substantial amount of text has been deleted, including the period at the end of a sentence.

Let's look at this in action using the quote below.

> “Engineers are always striving for success, but failure is seldom far from their minds. In the case of Canadian engineers, this focus on potentially catastrophic flaws in a design is rooted in a failure that occurred over a century ago. In 1907 a bridge of enormous proportions collapsed while still under construction in Quebec. Planners expected that when completed, the 1,800-foot main span of the cantilever bridge would set a world record for long-span bridges of all types, many of which had come to be realized at a great price. According to one superstition, a bridge would claim one life for every million dollars spent on it. In fact, by the time the Quebec Bridge would finally be completed, in 1917, almost ninety construction workers would have been killed in the course of building the $25 million structure”
>
> Petroski, H. (2012). The obligation of an engineer. In *To forgive design: Understanding failure* (pp. 175-198). Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674065437

You are allowed to change the original words, to shorten the quoted material or integrate material grammatically, but only if you signal those changes appropriately with square brackets or ellipses:

Example 1: Petroski (2012) observed that “[e]ngineers are always striving for success, but failure is seldom far from their minds” (p. 175).

Example 2: Petroski (2012) recounts the story of a large bridge that was constructed at the beginning of the twentieth century in Quebec, saying that "by the time [it was done], in 1917, almost ninety construction workers [were] killed in the course of building the $25 million structure" (p. 175)

Example 3: "Planners expected that when completed the … bridge would set a world record for long-span bridges of all types" (Petroski, 2012, p. 175).

In summary, there are a lot of ways you can approach integrating quotes. You can even change certain elements of your quote as long you indicate this with proper punctuation.

Exercise #2: Integrating a Quote at the Grammatical Level

Below is an excerpt from William Zinsser's "Simplicity." After you read the excerpt, write your own sentences using all three integration methods we have discussed. Don't forget, you can change the quotes slightly if you need to. Just ensure that you are using ellipses or square brackets to indicate this. Also, try to say something interesting about the words you are quoting. Don't just say "Zinsser (1980) says 'insert quote.'" Your sentence(s) should express your own ideas.

You'll notice that there is no page number associated with this quote. That is because this version comes from a website, which does not have page numbers.

Once you are done, compare them to the examples below. If your approach is different that's totally fine. If you're not sure that you did it correctly, please check with your instructor.

> "But the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb which carries the same meaning that is already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what – these are the thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence. And they usually occur, ironically, in proportion to education and rank."

Zinsser, W. K. (1980). Simplicity. In *On writing well: An informal guide to writing nonfiction*. Harper Perennial.

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Paraphrase and Summary

Unlike **direct quotes**, which use a source's exact wording, **paraphrase** and **summary** allow you to use your own words to present information. While the approach to using both methods is similar, the reason you will choose one over the other is different.

A **paraphrase** is typically more detailed and specific than a **summary**. It also retains the length of the original source.

A **summary**, on the other hand, is used when describing an entire source. For example, if you want to emphasize the main ideas of a source, but not go into a great detail, then a **summary** is usually best.

Paraphrase

Exercise #3: Interactive Video

Watch the interactive video below on **paraphrasing**. It will explain when **paraphrasing** is preferable over **direct quotes**, how to correctly **paraphrase** a source, and how to combine a **paraphrase** and **direct quote** in the same sentence.

The video will stop at different points to test your knowledge. Make sure you answer the questions. Additionally, take note of the 5 steps for **paraphrasing** as you watch.

An interactive H5P element has been

excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=628#h5p-51

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/paraprocess

As the video states, **paraphrasing** is when you put source text in your own words and alter the sentence structure to avoid using **direct quotes**. **Paraphrasing** is the preferred way of using a source when the original wording isn't important. This way, you can incorporate the source's ideas so they're stylistically consistent with the rest of your document and thus better tailored to the needs of your audience. Also, **paraphrasing** a source into your own words proves your advanced understanding of the source text. The video lists five steps for paraphrasing a source. They are:

1. Read the source material until you fully understand the author's meaning. This may take 3-4 readings to accomplish.
2. Take notes and list key terms that you can use in your paraphrase
3. Write your own paraphrase without looking at the source material. You should include the key terms that you wrote down
4. Check that your version captures the intent of the original and all important information
5. Provide in-text (parenthetical) citation

We will go through this in a bit more detail below. However, if you feel like you understand, feel free to skip down to the next part.

An In-Depth Look at Paraphrase

A **paraphrase** must faithfully represent the source text by containing the same ideas as the original in about the same length. Let's walk through the five steps mentioned in the video above to create a paraphrase for the following text:

> Students frequently overuse direct quotation [when] taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact

transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Lester, J. D. (1976). *Writing research papers: A complete guide*. Pearson Scott Foresman.

Step 1: Read the Source Material Until You Fully Understand It

What are these three sentences about? What information do they give us?

They discuss how students rely too much on **direct quotations** in their writing. It also explains just how much of a final paper should include **direct quotes**. Seems clear enough, so lets move on to the next step.

Step 2: Take Notes and List Key Terms for Your Paraphrase

The key terms you come up with for your **paraphrase** will depend on what information you want to convey to the reader. For our purposes, let's say you want to use Lester (1976) to highlight how much students over-quote in their papers. You may focus on the following key terms:

- 10%
- students
- research.

Notice that this is only 3 words from the original text, which has over 50 words! This may not seem like much, but it's definitely enough words for our **paraphrase**.

Step 3: Using Key Terms, Write Your Own Paraphrase Without Looking at Original

Let's try to put together a **paraphrase.** As a matter of good writing, you should try to streamline your **paraphrase** so that it tallies fewer words than the source passage while still preserving the original meaning. An accurate **paraphrase** of the original passage above, for instance, can reduce the three-line passage to two lines without losing or distorting any of the original points. Here's our attempt with the key terms highlighted in yellow:

> Lester (1976) advises against exceeding 10% quotation in your written work. Since students writing research reports often quote excessively because of copy-cut-and-paste note-taking, they should try to minimize using sources word for word (Lester, 1976).

This isn't necessarily a perfect example of a **paraphrase**, but it is certainly a good start! Time to move on to the next step.

Step 4: Compare Your Paraphrase to the Original

Here is the original text with our paraphrase:

Original: Students frequently overuse direct quotation [when] taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes.

Paraphrase: Lester (1976) advises against exceeding 10% quotation in your written work. Since students writing research reports often quote excessively because of copy-cut-and-paste note-taking, they should try to minimize using sources word for word (Lester, 1976).

Notice that, even though we only have three key terms, we didn't have to repeat any two-word sequences from the original. This is because we have changed the sentence structure *in addition to* most of the words. This can definitely take a couple of tries, so if you don't get it right away, that's okay. If you're still stuck, check in with your instructor or the University of Saskatchewan Writing Centre.

Step 5: Provide an In-Text Citation

We've already done this step twice in our paper: once at the start of our paper with "Lester (1976) advises..." and once at the end with "(Lester, 1976)." We'll talk about how to do this more in-depth in the next chapter.

Common Plagiarism Issues with Paraphrase

As we mentioned in the previous section, when **paraphrasing**, it is important to change both the words *and* sentence structure of the original text. However, many students struggle with the first part. They will typically only substitute major words (nouns, verbs, and adjectives) here and there while leaving the source passage's basic sentence structure intact. This inevitably leaves strings of words from the original untouched in the "paraphrased" version, which can be dangerous because including such **direct quotation** without quotation marks will be caught by the **plagiarism**–busting software that college instructors use these days.

Consider, for instance, the following poor attempt at a **paraphrase** of the Lester (1976) passage that substitutes words selectively. Like last time, we have included the original text with the incorrect **paraphrase.** We have also highlighted the unchanged words in yellow.

> **Original Quote**: Students frequently overuse direct quotation [when] taking notes, and as a result they overuse quotations in the final [research] paper. Probably only about 10% of your final manuscript should appear as directly quoted matter. Therefore, you should strive to limit the amount of exact transcribing of source materials while taking notes (Lester, 1976).
>
> **Poor Paraphrase:** Students often overuse quotations when taking notes, and thus overuse

them in research reports (Lester, 1976). About 10% of your final paper should be direct quotation. You should thus attempt to reduce the exact copying of source materials while note taking (Lester, 1976).

As you can see, several strings of words from the original are left untouched because the writer didn't change the sentence structure of the original. **Plagiarism**-catching software, like Turnitin, specifically look for this kind of writing and produce Originality Reports to indicate how much of a paper is plagiarized. In this case, the Originality Report would indicate that the passage is 64% plagiarized because it retains 25 of the original words (out of 39 in this "paraphrase") but without quotation marks around them.

Correcting this by simply adding quotation marks around passages such as "when taking notes, and" would be unacceptable because those words aren't important enough on their own to warrant **direct quotation**. The fix would just be to **paraphrase** more thoroughly by altering the words *and* the sentence structure, as shown in the **paraphrase** a few paragraphs above.

Exercise #4: Paraphrase Practice

Now try it on your own. Below are three pieces of original text from the McCroskey, MacLennan, and Booth readings from this course. Try writing your own

paraphrases for each one and compare them to the examples below. Note that the key words in the examples are highlighted. If your version is different that's okay as long as you follow the steps we listed out. If you're not sure if you're **paraphrase** is correct, check with your instructor.

(1) "Rhetorical communication is goal-directed. It seeks to produce specific meaning in the mind of another individual. In this type of communication there is specific intent on the part of the source to stimulate meaning in the mind of the receiver" (McCroskey, 2015, p. 22).

(2) "The successful professional must therefore be able to present specialized information in a manner that will enable non-specialist readers to make policy, procedural, and funding decisions. In order to do this, a technical specialist's communication, like that of any other professional, must establish and maintain credibility and authority with those who may be unfamiliar with technical subjects (MacLennan, 2009, p. 4)

(3) The common ingredient that I find in all of the writing I admire—excluding for now novels, plays and poems—is something that I shall reluctantly call the rhetorical stance, a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining in any writing situation a proper balance among the three elements that are at work in any communicative effort: the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker. I should like to suggest that it

is this balance, this rhetorical stance, difficult as it is to describe, that is our main goal as teachers of rhetoric (Booth, 1963, p. 141).

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=628#h5p-50

Summary

Summarizing is one of the most important skills in professional communication. Professionals of every field must explain to non-expert customers, managers, and even co-workers the complex concepts on which they are experts, but in a way that those non-experts can understand. Adapting the message to such audiences requires brevity but also translating jargon-heavy technical details into plain, accessible language.

Fortunately, the process for **summarizing** is very similar to **paraphrasing.** Like **paraphrasing,** a **summary** is putting the original source in your own words. The main difference is that a **summary** is a fraction of the source length—anywhere from less than 1% to a quarter depending on the source length and length of the summary.

A **summary** can reduce a whole novel or film to a single-sentence blurb, for instance, or it could reduce a 50-word paragraph to a 15-word sentence. It can be as casual as a spoken overview of a meeting your colleague was absent from, or an elevator pitch selling a project idea to a manager. It can also be as formal as a memo report to your colleagues on a conference you attended on behalf of your organization.

When **summarizing,** you will follow the same process as a **paraphrase,** but with a few additional steps:

1. Determine how big your **summary** should be (according to your audience's needs) so that you have a sense of how much material you should collect from the source.
2. Pull out the main points, which can usually be found in places like the summary portion of a report, the introduction, the abstract at the beginning of an article, or a topic sentence at the beginning of a paragraph.

    - Disregard detail such as supporting evidence and examples. These elements belong in a paraphrase, not a summary.
    - How many points you collect depends on how big your summary should be (according to audience needs).

3. Don't forget to cite your summary.

Exercise #5: Summary Practice

You have already had a lot of practice **summarizing** in your daily life. Any time you tell someone about a book, movie, or TV show you like, you are **summarizing**.

You are obviously not going to spend time going over every chapter, every scene, or every episode in excruciating detail. Instead, you will just talk about the main points, the number of which will depend how long your summary needs to be.

Here are some examples. Below are **summaries** for two very different sources: the Harry Potter franchise and the Nine Axioms reading you did a few weeks ago. There are three **summaries** for each source: one that is 45 words long, one that is 30 words long, and one that is 15 words long. What information is cut to make the **summaries** more succinct? Are there any important details lost between the different **summaries**?

What's Harry Potter about?

45 word summary: It's about a British boy named Harry Potter who finds out he is a wizard. He goes to a magic school called Hogwarts where he becomes friends with Ron and Hermione. Together, they learn how to cast spells and fight an evil wizard named Voldemort (Rowling, 2015).

30 word summary: It's about a boy named Harry Potter who finds out he is a wizard. He goes to a school called Hogwarts where he learns magic and fights an evil wizard (Rowling, 2015).

15 word summary: It's about a boy named Harry who attends a magic school and fights evil wizards (Rowling, 2015).

What are MacLennan's Nine Axioms?

45 word summary: The Nine Axioms of Communication are nine interconnected principles

that can help us design effective messages. They explain why communication works and, just as importantly, why it doesn't. More specifically, they are tools that will help us identify effective communication strategies and diagnose communication problems (MacLennan, 2009).

30 word summary: They are nine interconnected principles of communication that MacLennan (2009) wrote to help us understand how communication works. They also help us identify effective communication strategies and diagnose any communication problems.

15 word summary: They're nine principles that show how communication works, identify effective communication strategies, and diagnose problems (MacLennan, 2009).

Again, notice that neither summary goes into great detail about the topic. They just stress the main points. The Harry Potter summary doesn't go into all the adventures that happen in the books, and the Nine Axioms summary doesn't list out all Nine Axioms. Knowing what information to keep is essential in writing a good summary.

Now it's your turn. Pick a movie, TV show, or book that you really like. Write three summaries about the thing you selected: one that is 45 words long, one that is 30 words long and one that is 15 words long. You don't need to include a citation. For an extra challenge, try to make your **summaries** the exact number of words.

Once you are done, compare your three **summaries.**

What is different between them? How did the different length requirements affect your writing? What elements did you have to cut? Why were those elements not as important?

Key Takeaways

- Avoiding **plagiarism** should always be a concern when you are doing research for a **report**. Even in the professional world, it's important to make sure you are integrating your sources in an ethical way. Not doing so can result in fines and even termination from your job.
- Many students struggle with this on an organizational level. They tend to think they can just stack quotes on top of quotes and that will be enough, but it is definitely not!
- Instead, you should always use three things when integrating outside sources into your writing: a **lead-in**, the **source**, and **analysis**. Having a balance of all three will make your writing more persuasive.
- You can include ideas from a source in one of three ways: **direct quotes**, **paraphrase**, and **summary**.
- **Direct quotes** are best when the language of the original source is the best possible phrasing

or imagery and a paraphrase/summary could not be as effective. It is also preferable if you are planning to analyze the specific language in the quotation (such as a metaphor or rhetorical strategy).

- **Paraphrasing** is best when the original wording of a source is not important. This means that you can incorporate a source's ideas in such a way that they're stylistically consistent with the rest of your document. This allows you flexibility to better tailor your writing to the needs of your audience.
- A **Summary** is best when you want to focus on only the main ideas of a source. The length of your **summary** will depend on your needs, but it's not uncommon for a summary to be less than 1% to a quarter the length of the original source.

References

Dickens, C. (2017). *A tale of two cities*. Alma Books Ltd.

Lester, J. D. (1976). *Writing research papers: A complete guide*. Pearson Scott Foresman.

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Attributions

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Chapter 28: How to Use APA Style

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Explain how accurately citing sources can have an impact on your ethos as a professional communicator
- Identify the four parts of a reference: the author, the date, the title, and the source
- Differentiate between a parenthetical citation and narrative citation, and explain how they are examples of the author-date citation system
- Create narrative citations that use signal verbs to identify the rhetorical purpose of an author

Key Terms and Concepts

- APA Style
- ethos
- reference entry
- references page
- in-text citation
- parenthetical citation
- narrative citation

- author-date citation system
- signal verbs

It's time to talk about citing sources. You've seen citations in action throughout this text, and we mentioned it briefly in the previous chapter. Now it's time to go over how to put them in your paper. This chapter will focus on how you do that from a mechanical perspective. Specifically, we will look at how you can use **in-text citations** and create **reference entries** using the American Psychological Association Style Guide, better known as **APA Style**.

However, we want to be clear about something. **APA Style**—and all style guides for that matter—have rules about more than just how to cite sources. Specifically, they have rules around formatting papers such as where page numbers should go, how to create a title page, how to design headers, etc. You don't have to worry about that because we have our own formatting system in RCM 200 that we want you to follow. This will be covered in the next chapter. All we want you to focus on with **APA style** is how to cite your sources and create reference entries.

Why Did We Pick APA Specifically?

It's important to note that **APA style** is one of several citation styles that exist for students and professionals engaging in academic conversations. You may have already encountered these styles if you have taken classes in different departments at the University of Saskatchewan. For example, the English department uses the Modern Language Association (MLA) style, whereas the Indigenous Studies department uses the Chicago Manual of Style. Combined with **APA style**, these are the three most well-known citation styles used in North America.

Do you *have* to learn all the different styles in the world to be a successful student and professional? Depending on the the classes you take, and your career choice, you might. However, once you settle in to your upper division courses in your program, you will most likely only be using one style guide through out. However, what further complicates this issue is that, even within the same department, individual programs can have their own preferred citation style that you might have to learn. For example, the Mechanical Engineering program and the Electrical Engineering program each have their own preferred style that students in those programs will need to learn eventually.

For RCM 200, we have chosen to require the **APA style** for your reports because it is the most similar to how citation and referencing is done in scientific fields. You'll see what that means in a moment, but in general, this means if you can handle citation and referencing in **APA style**, you should be able to handle citations in your field, whether it's engineering, agriculture, kinesiology, or another field entirely.

One important note about all style guides is that they receive updates every couple of years. This means that the rules and expectations will change somewhat with each new edition. For our purposes, we are using the 7th of edition of the **APA style** guide, which came out in 2020.

Why do style guide publishers do this? It may seem like a hassle to have to relearn the rules every ten years or so, but there are two main reasons. The first is keep up with the evolution of research. For example, the first edition of the **APA style** guide came out back in 1953. Back then, researchers didn't need to worry about citing sources such as YouTube videos or websites or even Tweets. Now, in the latest edition, there are rules for how to do that.

The second reason is to keep up with the evolution of the English language. In previous editions there was no guidance around gender and preferred pronoun usage. Now, there is specific guidance on both of those topics in addition to how to avoid implying gender binaries in your writing.

Why Use a Style Guide At All?

Using **APA Style**, or any style guide for that matter, is important for establishing your credibility, or your **ethos**, as a professional communicator. Every **in-text citation** you use will correspond to an entry on the **references page** at the end of your **report**. This allows readers to quickly check the back of your report to see where your sources are from. In doing so, you are able to show that you have taken the report seriously be engaging with legitimate, professional sources in the field.

Additionally, style guides ensure that your report is **consistent**. You may think that having slight differences in how you use an **in-text citation** may seem like a non-issue, but people notice these things! If they see you are not paying attention to specific details, they may wonder where else you are not paying attention, and you will lose credibility.

As a professional communicator, it falls onto you to ensure you understand these guidelines and can apply them in your own writing.

Exercise #1: Citation Pre-Assessment

Let's begin with a quick pre-assessment. You probably already have some idea about how to cite sources already. Below are five multiple choice questions. At the top of each question, you will see the full reference entry for a source we have used in this text. Pick the example in-text citation that cites that source correctly. If you're not sure which is correct, that's okay. This is just for you to see what you already know.

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https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1531#h5p-58

How to Use APA

For the reminder of this chapter, we will discuss the mechanics of **APA style**. There will be two parts:

1. How to create a **references page**
2. How to add **in-text citations**to your paper

Before we go into each part, please note that rules we show you will be the basic requirements. Depending on the source, you may need to add more information to your **reference entry**, or adjust how you write the **in-text citation**. To learn more about all these differences, check out Purdue OWL. Their website provides a good overview, with examples, of the different ways to write your **references** and in-text citations.

If you would like some in-person feedback, or have questions, please visit the USask Writing Centre in the Murray Library. You can meet with someone in-person or online to discuss your questions.

References Page

Perhaps surprisingly, we are going to start with the **end** of your paper, the **references page**. This is because all **in-text citations** are based on this section of your report.

The **references page** allows your reader to easily find any work you cite in your paper. This is because all of your sources will be written up as **reference entries** on the page. These works should *only* be ones that you used in your paper. This means you must include entries for all the sources that support the ideas, claims, and concepts you are presenting.

Please note a **reference page** is different from a bibliography (which you may have had to create in high school). While both will include the sources you used to write your paper, a bibliography will *also* include works you used for background reading, even if they're not cited in your paper. Put another way, if you use a source for background research, but don't use the source's content to write your paper, then it doesn't go in your **references page**.

Again, please keep in mind that we will not be able to cover all the variations on how to do a **reference entry**, because there are just too many. Instead we will look at the basic principles. If you need help citing a specific resources, we highly recommend checking out the Purdue Owl, visiting the USask Writing Centre, or speaking with your instructor.

What's in a Reference Entry?

In **APA style**, a **reference entry** needs, at minimum, four elements. These elements tell the reader specific information about where you got your source. They are:

1. the author (who wrote the work?)
2. the date (how recent is the information you are using?)
3. the title (what is the name of the original source?)
4. the source (where can the reader find this work if they want to use it for their own research?)

Every **reference entry** you write should have these four elements. However, each type of **reference entry** (a book, a journal article, an online video, etc.) can have some slight variation on what those four elements look like.

Exercise #2: Identify the Four Elements of a Reference Entry

Take a look at the three **reference entry** examples below from sources we've used in this course. Can you find all four elements? How are all three **references** similar? How are they different?

(1) Book
MacLennan, J. (2009). *Effective communication for the technical professions*

(2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

(2) Journal Article
Booth, W. C. (1963). The rhetorical stance. *College Composition and Communication*, *14*(3), 139-145. https://doi.org/10.2307/355048

(3) YouTube Video
Wordvice Editing Services. (2018, April 1). *How to paraphrase in research papers (APA, AMA)* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VACN6X2eF0

You should notice that each source type is a little different from the others. For example, (1) and (2) use an author name, but (3) uses an organization name. The title for sources (1) and (3) are italicized, but not for (2). Instead, the name of the journal is italicized. There are other differences as well, but the point is that you realize that how you format a specific reference entry will depend on the source type.

This is because there are dozens of different source types, and one might be formatted slightly differently than another. To be clear, we don't expect you to know how to format every type of source. That's why there are citation managers and citation creator websites (more on that below). What we want you know is what information to include when you make your own **references page**, and know where to go when you have questions.

To make this easier on you, there are websites like CiteFast that will help you generate **reference entries.** There are also computer programs called Reference Managers that will automatically generate a **references page** for you once you put in the relevant information. The University of Saskatchewan library has a list of reference managers that they recommend using and offers workshops throughout the term on how to use them.

One word of caution though. Though these services make writing **reference entries** easier, they are not always perfect. Sometimes they make mistakes and it is up to you to check to make sure the **reference entry** is written and formatted correctly.

Formatting your References Page

The final step with a **references page** is making sure you format it correctly. A lot of students will skip over or ignore this element of the report, but it's important that you follow the formatting expectations regardless of the style guide you use. Let's show you what we mean.

Exercise #3: Comparing Reference Pages

Below are two examples of the same reference page.

One follows the correct formatting rules. The other does not. Can you tell which is better and why?

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Clearly, using proper format makes a huge difference, and using the correct citation format will add to your **credibility** as a researcher.

Fortunately, the two rules for formatting a **references page** are pretty simple they are:

1. Put references in alphabetical order by the author's last name or organization's name
2. If the reference runs over to multiple lines, make sure to indent each successive line in the reference.

In-Text Citations

An **in-text citation** is a mechanical way that a writer (you) acknowledges the work of others. That means, you should "cite the work of those individuals whose ideas, theories, or research have directly influenced your work" (American Psychological Association, 2019, p. 253). The information that follows the quote in the previous is an example of a citation.

If you went to high school in Canada, you are probably at least somewhat familiar with citations. You most likely did it in your high school English class.

APA style uses what is known as the **author-date citation system** for citing **references** in texts. This means that, at minimum, your citations will have:

1. the last name of the author (or authors)
2. the year the source was published

If you include a **direct quote**, such as the sentence above, you will also need to include the page number.

A Very Important Note

Typically, APA Style only requires you to include page numbers if you are using a direct quote in your writing. However, for RCM 200, your instructors want you to include page numbers every time you cite a source in your report. That means, whether you use a direct quote, paraphrase, or summary, include the page number. This will allow you more opportunities to practice your in-text citation skills.

An **in-text citation** is commonly found in the body of your report. However, they can also be found in tables, appendixes, and figures. They are important because they show the reader where your information comes from for the claims you are making. If the reader is interested in the source, they can then flip to your **references page** at the end of your **report** and learn more about the source.

Here are two versions of what an **in-text citation** can look like using the same information. The first one is known as a **parenthetical citation** and the second is a **narrative citation**:

1. A concept that will directly impact your relationship with someone is your footing**,** which is the “foundation upon which your credibility rests in a given interaction” (MacLennan, 2009, p. 10).

2. MacLennan (2009) explains that one concept

that will directly impact your relationship with someone is your footing, which is the “foundation which your credibility rests in a given interaction” (p. 10).

The first example, a parenthetical citation, is the one that most people are familiar with. The second one, a narrative citation, is probably unfamiliar, but it is not difficult to apply once you know how. Ideally, you should use a combination of both methods in your writing.

Parenthetical Citation

First, let’s start with **parenthetical citations** because they are the ones most students are already know. At it’s core, a **parenthetical citation** needs the surname of the author (or authors) that wrote the original source material you are using and the year the information is published.

For our RCM 200 course, you will need to also include the page number regardless of whether you are using a **direct quote**, **paraphrase**, or **summary**. It will look like this:

(MacLennan, 2009, p. 10)

If the information you are citing goes onto more than one page, the citation will look like this:

(MacLennan, 2009, pp. 10-11)

And that’s it.

Parenthetical citations are almost always placed at the end of the sentence. One thing that students often mistake is where to position the period in a parenthetical citation. Notice in example (1) in the previous section that the period goes *after* the citation. Not before the closing quotation mark, which is where most students want to put it. Some students will also try to put a period before the quotation mark *and* after the citation, but this is wrong! You only need one period, and it goes after the citation.

One important note is that the content of your citation will change depending on the number of authors and if the there is a group author like an organization. The year will also change slightly if you are citing the same author who published multiple papers in the same year. This page from Purdue OWL provides guidelines on how to format these situations.

Narrative Citation

A **narrative citation** uses the same **author-date citation system** as a **parenthetical citation**. The difference is that instead of the citation occurring at the end of the text, it occurs in the text itself. The author’s name will be in the text and this is immediately followed by the publication year in parenthesis. The page number will come at the **end** of the sentence:

Bashar (2009) explains...communication (p. 10).
Jones (1994) advocates...theory (p. 41).
Tanaka (2020) agrees... study (pp. 245-246)

Using Signal Verbs

You probably noticed that a verb followed the three narrative citation examples above. These are known as **signal verbs**. They are special verbs that help you tell the reader how someone is expressing their ideas. **Signal verbs** are typically more active and descriptive than other verbs like “says” or “writes” or “discusses.”

Read the three examples below. What do the different verbs indicate about the author?

(1) Smith (2020) challenges…
(2) Smith (2020) illustrates…
(3) Smith (2020) verifies…

Each verb provides different information about the rhetorical purpose of the author. It's your job as a writer to make sure you capture that purpose accurately.

When choosing a **signal verb**, ask yourself: what is the author *doing* in the passage I'm citing? Is the author *describing* something? *Explaining* something? *Arguing*? *Giving examples*? *Estimating*? *Recommending*? *Warning*? *Urging*? Be sure the verb you choose accurately represents the intention of the source text. For example, don't use "concedes" if the writer isn't actually conceding a point. Look up any words you don't know and add ones that you like to use.

Table #1 below shows different signal verbs you can use in your own writing

Table #1: Commonly Used Signal Verbs

Making a claim	Recommending	Disagreeing or Questioning	Showing	Expressing Agreement	Additi Signal Verbs
argue	advocate	challenge	illustrates	agree	respon
assert believe claim emphasize insist remind suggest hypothesize maintains	call for demand encourage exhort implore plead recommend urge warn	complicate criticize qualify counter contradict refute reject deny question	conveys reveals demonstrates proposes points out exemplifies indicates	admire endorse support affirm corroborate verify reaffirm	assum spec es deba estin es expla impl uses

How Do I Choose Which Citation To Use?

One thing to keep in mind is that you will never mix **parenthetical citations** and **narrative citations** in the same sentence. You will only use **one**.

But how do you know which one to use? There are several reasons why you would use one of the other, but here are the main two:

1. If you want to highlight the author, use a **narrative citation**. You might do this because the author is well-known in your field and you want to add some authority to your own argument. Alternatively, if you are arguing against something the author is saying, you may want to mention them directly
2. If you want to highlight the information, use a **parenthetical citation**. You might do this if you are trying make a point about the topic or provide some general information. Also, if you want to focus in on the argument a source is making, and not who made the argument, you

would use this form.

Key Takeaways

- When writing a report, it is important to establish your **ethos** by consistently and accurately citing your sources. Using a style guide can help you do this.
- For RCM 200, we want you to APA style for your **reference entries**, **references page**, and **in-text citations**, but not for formatting.
- A **references page** is a list of all the all source you are citing in your paper. Each individual source is turned into a **reference entry**.
- The **in-text citations** go into the body of your report. Anytime you use information that is not yours, you must cite it either using a **parenthetical citation** or a **narrative citation.** Though both types of citations are formatted and implemented differently, both follow the **author-date citation system**.
- For our course, every **in-text citation** you include should have the author, date of publication, and page number (if available).
- A **parenthetical citation** goes at the end of a sentence, with the author and date and page number in parenthesis. For example: (MacLennan, 2010, p. 10).
- A **narrative citation** is embedded in the text. The author's name is combined with the date of publication followed by a **signal verb**. For

example: MacLennan (2010) demonstrates...

Chapter Attributions

References

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

Chapter 29: Formatting the Report

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between the three parts of your written report: the front matter, the report body, and the back matter
- List out the 12 elements that are present within a written report
- Identify the different requirements found in a summary and introduction

Key Terms and Concepts

- front matter
- report body
- back matter

We've spent a lot of time on how to generate the content of your formal written **report**. However, it's time to take a step back and look at how you will format the report.

Like any kind of project, technical reports have specifications. These specifications can be for a number of different things such as the report's layout, organization, and content; how to format the headings and lists; and how to label graphics and tables. The advantage of a required format for written reports is that you or anyone else can expect them to be designed in a familiar way.

If someone hands you a report, and you want to read the **summary** section first, you will know exactly where to look. This is why different academic programs and career fields use style guides like APA. Reports are usually read in a hurry because readers want to quickly get the information they need, and a standard report format helps them achieve that.

For our purpose in RCM 200, you need to think of your formal written report as having three distinct parts: a **front matter**, the **report body** and the **back matter**. Within those three parts are twelve elements you will need to include in your report.

In order, these elements are:

1. The **Front Matter**
    - Cover Page
    - Transmittal Document
    - Title Page
    - Summary
    - Table of Contents
    - List of Tables and Figures
2. The **Report Body**
    - Introduction
    - Discussion
    - Conclusion

3. The **Back Matter**
    - Recommendations
    - References
    - Appendix

Ensuring you have all of the correct elements present in your report—and that you write and format them correctly—is key if you wish to create a professional report and receive a good grade. We will now go into each element in detail. At the very bottom of this page, you will be able to see an example formal research report that includes most of these elements.

Front Matter

The first part of your report is the **front matter.** This combination of elements, such as the title page and table of contents, will be the first thing your reader sees of your report. These elements are relatively easy to make, but if they are completed sloppily, these elements can negatively impact the reader's view of the **credibility** of your work before they even read it.

Cover/Cover Page

It's not uncommon for formal reports to be bound. In these cases, there is a usually a cover, like with any book, and on that cover is the title of the report. If the report is produced by a company, the cover will have the company's name and logo.

You are not required to bind your formal research report though. However, you *will* need a cover page. At minimum, you will need to include the title of your report centered on the page. If you want, you can also include the author name. However, that is not required.

Transmittal Document

A transmittal document can either be a **letter** or **memo**. The format you choose will depend on the **audience** who is receiving the **report**, but ultimately the goal of this element is to maintain goodwill with the client by adding a personal component to the report.

If you need a refresher on writing a memo or letter, revisit this chapter from our text.

For RCM 200 purposes though, your letter/memo should:

- describe the topic
- make a brief statement of the report's major findings while also acknowledging who helped form the report
- express appreciation to the client and offer to provide follow-up with the report

Title Page

The title page is similar to the cover page. The main difference is that the title page includes more detail.

Your title page must have three things:

1. the name of the report
2. the name and title of the author
3. the date of submission

In certain circumstances, a title page can also include the name and title of the person who commissioned the report.

Despite this being the third page that your reader will see in in your report, the title page is considered to be page Roman numeral **i** for numbering purposes. Often this page is left unnumbered in the report.

Summary

The **summary** gives the reader an **overview** of the report. It allows them to quickly see what the content of your paper is without having to read the entire document.

In a professional context, you might have to search through dozens, if not hundreds of reports to find information for your own research. You obviously wouldn't have time to read all of them, so looking at just the report's summary section would help you quickly sort through your potential research materials.

In a long **report**, like the one you are writing for this course, the summary should be about 10% of the length of the entire report. It should condense the information that is already in the main document. This includes information like the report's recommendations, justifications, and conclusions.

The page number of this report (if numbered) would be Roman numeral **ii**.

Table of Contents

A table of contents (TOC) lists out the sections of a report. This means that the primary headings for each section are included along with the page numbers where they appear. If your report has secondary or lower headings, those should be included too.

Make sure your organization is consistent. A TOC must properly reflect the organization of your report. For example, you wouldn't put the summary (which comes at the top of your report) as the last entry of your TOC. Additionally, you must proofread to ensure that the headings are worded the same in the body of the report and the TOC.

List of Tables and Figures

The List of Tables and Figures operates similarly to the TOC. It presents an organized list of all the graphics that you created for your report with the page numbers where they are found. This list will be a separate page that comes after your TOC, which means that it needs to be in the TOC. Don't forget to include it!

Report Body

The second part of your formal research report is the **report body.** This is the main portion of the **report** that you have already been working on with your research.

You are probably familiar with the traditional five-paragraph essay—which has an introduction, body, and conclusion. For those kinds of essays, the introduction and conclusion are only one paragraph long. That is not the case for written reports where both of those elements can have multiple paragraphs. Similarly, the discussion can be broken up into multiple sub-sections, each with their own specific focus and multiple paragraphs. The number of paragraphs for all three parts will ultimately depend on the information you are trying to convey.

Students often are unclear about the distinctions between the **Summary** and Introduction sections of the report, so we will spend a little more time on both of those parts.

Introduction

Your introduction sets the **tone** and expectations for your report.

First and foremost, your introduction is where you are trying to demonstrate your good judgement and good character to your reader through the use of rhetorical theory.

To accomplish this, you must provide your reader with an understanding of the purpose and scope of your report. Additionally, you must illustrate why your topic is important by describing the size and impact of the problem (the **rhetorical exigence**) that you are analyzing. The inclusion of these details will help establish your **pathos** appeal.

Lastly, an introduction will provide essential context that is required to understand the organization, language, and approach you are using to produce the report. This context contributes to your **logos** appeal and extends good will.

Summary vs Introduction

It's important to mention that many students will confuse the purpose of a report's summary and introduction. The main difference is that a summary provides an **overview** of the report as a whole. This means that it include the results and conclusions of the report. The introduction does not do this. Instead, it's purpose is to **prepare the reader** by providing background information to help ease the reader into the topic.

Below is a representation of the differences in a table format:

Summary	Introduction
• condenses information that is already present in the main document	• introduces the report and explains it in brief
• can exist separately from the main document	• prepares reader for report that follows
• written for a general audience	• covers the basic background information, justifies why report is being written
• includes report's recommendations, justification, and conclusions	• written in an engaging manner clearly shows the writer's aims and objectives
• sources not needed	• sources used to back claims

Exercises

Below is an example of former student's summary and introduction for their report. Read through both documents without clicking on the hotspots. After you are finished, see if you can answer the following questions. Once you have answered them, you may click on the hotspots to help break down both sections.

Please keep in mind as you read that these are just examples, and your summary and introduction may look different from these.

1. What differences do you see between the two sections?
2. Based off the **summary**, what do you think the report is about? What topics will it cover?
3. Based off the **summary**, what recommendations will this report make?
4. Based off the **introduction**, what specific topics will the report cover?
5. What sources are used to back up claims in the **introduction**? How do they help establish credibility?
6. What is the background information in the **introduction**? How does it justify the report being written?

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Discussion

The discussion is the main part of your report. This is where you are defining the problem that you want to resolve. You do this by laying out your argument and presenting the information needed to support your conclusion. As a result, the discussion section will have the most detailed information. It it typically divided into multiple sections, each labeled with a heading that establishes the structure of the argument.

Conclusion

By the end of the discussion section, your reader should have a clear understanding of the problem you are addressing. The conclusion explains why it's important. It answers the **"so what?"** question that a reader will ultimately have by this stage of your report. Put another way, after reading your report, the reader will have all this new information you provided them — "so what" are they supposed to do with it?

To answer this question, you must start by summarizing, section by section, the main claims of your report. You shouldn't be adding any new information at this point, or going into great detail. Rather, you are briefly explaining each point in the order they come up in your report and explaining how they connect to your main argument.

Do not tell the reader what you think they should do at this stage. That's for the recommendations section, which comes next.

Back Matter

Congratulations! You are now done with the **report body**! Just one more part to go.

The third, and final, part of the report is made up of the **back matter**. This is where the reader can find information that helps them learn more about your topic. Specifically, this is where you will put your recommendations, references page, and appendix.

Keep in mind that, for your formal written report for RCM 200, the recommendations and appendix are *optional*. However, you must include a **references page**.

Recommendations

This is where you will tell the reader how they should act based on the conclusions you have come to in your report.

Pay close attention to your **tone** here. Don't make it sound like you are commanding or ordering the reader to do something. Instead, try to recognize that the choice is up to the reader to decide whether to take the recommended action.

References Page

We've already talked a bit about the **references page** in the chapter on APA Style, so we will just review here. A references page includes a full **reference entry** for each work you cite in your report. These entries allow your reader to find the original sources for the information you are using if they want them.

Keep in mind that every source in your reference page must appear in the body of your report as an **in-text citation**.

Appendix

The appendix section is for anything that needs to be attached to a report.

In general, a piece of content goes into the appendix if it is too long or complex to include in the discussion. However, don't just put anything in the appendix. The information should help the reader more fully understand your topic by supplementing the material in the body of the report.

Each appendix item should contain only **one** type of material. For example, all images should be under one heading, all tables should be under a different heading, etc. Don't forget to include appendix items in the table of contents!

A Sample Report

We just went through twelve different elements that you will need to include in your formal **report**. That's a lot!

To help you visual what your final RCM 200 formal research report might look like, check out the example below.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=630#h5p-42

Key Takeaways

- Using a consistent format for your written reports is essential for establishing your **credibility** as a writer. If your paper's format is inconsistent or missing key elements, a reader may assume you are not taking the report seriously and question the reliability of your work.
- A written report is made up of three parts: the **front matter**, the **report body**, and the **back matter**. Between these three parts, there are a total of 12 different elements that can be present in a **report**.
- The **front matter** is the first thing your reader will see. This part sets the stage for what is to come because it presents an outline of your report.
- The **report body** is the main portion of your report. This is where the majority of the research on your topic goes. Here is where you will be implementing all the rhetorical strategies you have learned in order to inform your audience.
- The **back matter** is where your reader can learn more about the topic. If they want to look up a citation you used or review extra material you couldn't get in the **report body,** they will go here.
- In terms of the 12 elements, most students struggle with differentiating between the summary and introduction sections. In brief, the summary provides an **overview** of the entire

report. This means it includes the report's conclusions and, if needed, its recommendations. The introduction, on the other hand, **provides background information** for the reader in order to help ease them into the topic.

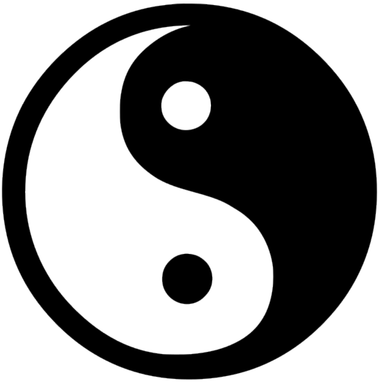
Chapter 30: Graphics, Tables, and Images

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Determine which type of graphic is best for the information you are trying to present
- Evaluate the quality of different graphics using the five rules for integrating graphics into a document
- Explain how graphics can be manipulated to benefit the writer/speaker and why this is ethically problematic

The more formal the report you are writing, the more likely the need for non-textual material such as tables, graphs, charts, maps, drawings, and photographs. Keep in mind that you are **required** to use at least one type of graphic, correctly cited, in your formal research report for RCM 200.



These visual elements can take many different forms, but they all have the same basic purpose: to help clarify information presented in the report. They also help break up a text-heavy report, making it more visually appealing.

The key concept to remember here is that visuals *clarify*, *illustrate,* and *augment* your written text. They are *not* a replacement for written text. Similar to when you present facts from an outside source to the reader in your writing, you are responsible for interpreting your graphics for your reader.

The old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words" does not hold true in technical writing, but adding visuals may save you a hundred words of additional explanation and clarification. If you have visual elements in your document, they must be based on and supplement your written content. Throwing in "gratuitous graphics" just to decorate or take up space can confuse your reader.

It is important to choose the right kind of visual to convey the story you want your reader to understand. If visuals are poorly chosen or poorly designed for the task, they can actually confuse the reader and have negative consequences. For example, it's very likely that the first thing you noticed when you opened this page was the image above. Did you wonder why it is there? Has it distracted you? Our eyes are naturally drawn to visuals that stand out, so make sure the ones you pick for your reports are essential to your purpose.

Deciding Which Graphics to Include

As you review your research and consider possible visuals to include in your **report**, the first step is to think about which graphics are most appropriate given the data you wish to convey.

Table #1 below provides some general guidelines on the kinds of graphics most suitable for different types of information:

Table #1: General Guidelines for Graphics

Information to Convey	**Visual Type**
Numbers, percentages, categories	Tables, charts
Processes	Flow charts
Geographic data	Maps
Chronological or prioritized lists	Numbered lists
Non-chronological lists	Bulleted lists

For more specific reasoning for using individual types of graphics, see table #2 below:

Table #2 Common Types of Illustrative Graphics

Type of Visual		Description and Purpose
Tables		Place detailed data/information in categories formatted into rows and columns for comparison; use when exact figures are important. Label column headings (box heads) and/or rows (stubs).
Graphs	**Bar Graph**	Compare and contrast two or more subject as the same point in time, or compare change over time.
	Column Graph	Reveal change in a subject at regular intervals of time.
	Line Graph	Show the degree and direction of change relative to two variables; compare items over time, show frequency or distribution, or show correlations.
Charts	**Pie Chart**	Display the number and relative size of the divisions of a subject; show relation of parts to a whole (parts must sum to 100% to make sense).
	Org. Chart	Map the divisions and levels of responsibility or hierarchy within an organization.
	Flow Chart	Show the sequence of steps in a process or procedure
	Gantt Chart	Indicates timelines for multi-stepped projects, especially used in proposals and progress reports.
Illustrations	**Diagram**	Identify the parts of a subject and their spatial or functional relationship; emphasize detail or show dimensions.
	Photo	Show what a subject looks like in realistic detail or show it being used.
	Animation	Simulate a process, operation, or incident.
	Film Clip	Depict a process, operation, or incident in realistic detail,

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Formatting Graphics

Once you have selected the correct graphic for your **report**, you will need to create it. Unfortunately, there is no universal way to format graphics. However, your employer may have an in-house style guide that you are expected to use.

For the purposes of our RCM 200 class, you are expected to use the rules outlined in [APA Style (7th Edition)](#) for formatting your tables and figures.

The key takeaway here is to always aim of **consistency**—especially if you are ever in a situation where you do not have a style guide. This means that elements such as titles, numbers, and headings should be formatted the same across the entire document. Small inconsistencies may not seem like a big deal, but they can imply to a supervisor or client that you are not thorough or detail-oriented.

Placement and Context

As you develop visuals for your **report**, you will want to also consider two things:

1. where the visuals should be placed
2. what information you need to provide in your report to adequately prepare your readers for the message within that graphic

While there are different requirements depending on the visual you choose, there are five main rules you should follow to integrate your graphics:

Five Rules For Integrating Graphics into your Document

1. Give each visual a numbered caption that

includes a clear descriptive title

2. Refer to the caption number within the body text and discuss its content
3. Label all units (x and y axes, legends, column box heads, parts of diagrams, etc.)
4. Provide the source of the data and/or visual image if you did not create it yourself
5. Avoid distorting the data or image.

In addition, visual elements should also be surrounded with sufficient passive space to emphasize the image and enhance its readability. If copying and pasting an image, make sure all elements are clear and the print size is readable. A visual that has been shrunk down to an unreadable size does not help the reader understand your ideas.

Exercise #1: Examine and Compare the Figures

Examine Figure #1.1 below. Do you understand what the information conveys? What is missing? Use the five rules above to determine where this figure goes wrong.

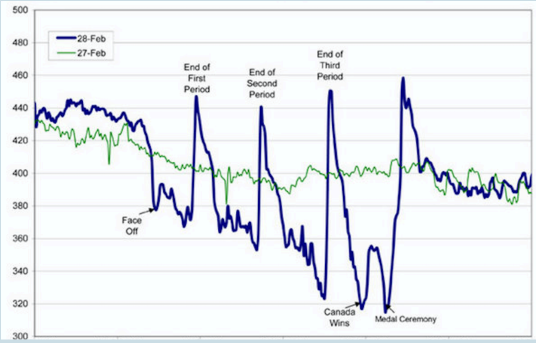


Figure #1.1

If you look carefully, you might be able to guess what story the graph above is telling. However, the lack of a descriptive caption and labeling of axes makes it impossible to know for sure.

Compare that figure to Figure #1.2 below using the same five rules.

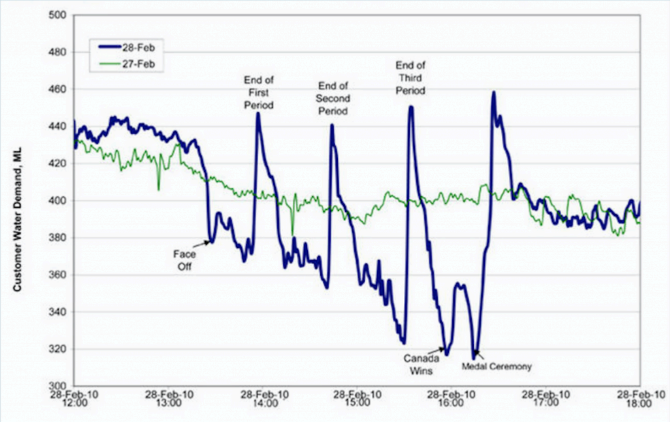


Figure #1.2 Water Consumption in Edmonton during the 2010 Gold Medal Hockey Game (Flowingdata).

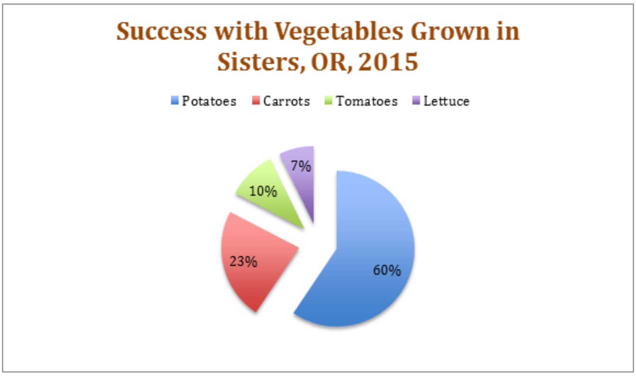
Figure #1.2 has a numbered caption, a descriptive title, and it has properly labelled x and y axes and legends. It also cites the source the graph was retrieved from in the caption using an in-text citation. The original image has not been distorted in any way. Thus, it follows the five key rules listed above.

Putting Graphics in Context

The following examples show how you can introduce, present and discuss a graphic in your paper. The first example is a pie chart created with information the writer obtained from an interview. Notice that the writer provides a name for the visual, includes introductory sentences to provide context for the graphic, lists source information at the bottom of the chart, and finally, includes some closing remarks to tie it all together.

Not all gardeners will experience success with growing vegetables in Central Oregon, and the town of Sisters is especially challenging because of the varied temperatures all year long and the chance of frost or even freezing temperatures during any month of the year. Central Oregon and Sisters resident, Jane Doe, had the greatest success with the following vegetables in the year 2015 as noted in the pie chart below.

Table 1: Vegetables grown in 2015



Source: Interview with Master Gardener, Jane Doe, 2 May 2016.

It is important to note that depending on the hardiness zone of the city, some vegetables may do better than others. Doe also commented that she protected her tomatoes either inside a green house or under a hoop house.

Here is a second example. This simple table conveys information about plant hardiness zones for growers in Central Oregon. Notice again that the table isn't simply inserted and left on its own for readers to interpret; the writer introduces the table with some remarks and also provides follow-up commentary after the table.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture publishes a Plant Hardiness Zone Map which growers and gardeners use to help determine which plants, including vegetables and trees, will be most successful at a particular location. The table below shows the hardiness zone for four cities in Central Oregon and includes the annual minimum winter temperature—important information to keep in mind when determining not only which vegetables to plant but how long the growing season may be.

Table 1: Hardiness Zones in Central Oregon

Central Oregon City	**Hardiness Zone**	**Winter Temperature Range**
Sisters	6a	-10 to -5 (Fahrenheit)
Bend	6b	-5 to 0 (Fahrenheit)
Redmond	6b	-5 to 0 (Fahrenheit)
Tumalo	6b	-5 to 0 (Fahrenheit)

Source information: "United States Department of Agriculture." *USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map*. 2012. Web. 05 May 2016.

Before purchasing any plants or vegetables for your own garden, make sure you look at the hardiness number on the label to be sure that item will grow successfully in your climate zone.

Now that you have had a chance to learn about strategies for creating effective graphics and have examined some strong examples, let's look at a few that could use some revision.

Exercise #2: Evaluating Graphics for Revision

As you look at the following visuals, note the possible strengths and weaknesses of each one. Consider what advice you might give the writer on how to improve these graphics. You can use the five rules for integrating graphics as a guide. The five rules are below:

1. Give each visual a numbered caption that includes a clear descriptive title
2. Refer to the caption number within the body text and discuss its content
3. Label all units (x and y axes, legends, column box heads, parts of diagrams, etc.)
4. Provide the source of the data and/or visual image if you did not create it yourself
5. Avoid distorting the data or image.

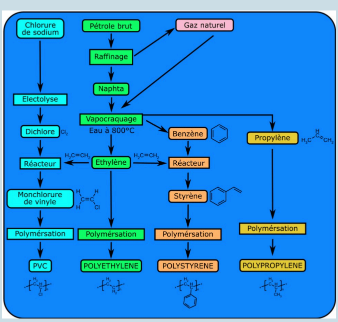


Figure #2: A Chemical Flowchart

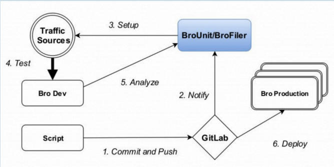


Figure #3

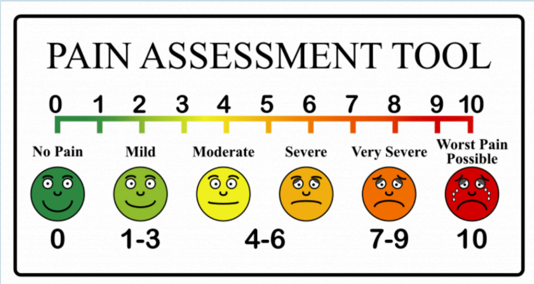


Figure #4: An Example of a Pain Assessment Tool

Using Graphics Ethically

Like with everything we've discussed up to this point, the graphics you use can have an impact on your **modes of appeal**. If the graphics are misleading in any way, and your audience realizes this, it can negatively impact how **credible** or trustworthy they consider you.

Exercise #3: The Ethics of Graphics

Watch the video below on misleading graphics. After watching, answer the following questions:

- Why might a person trying to persuade you toward their point of view use a graph to present information?
- How can graphs present an opinion?
- List three methods of "cherry picking data" and the advantages each provides.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=644#oembed-1

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/spotbadgraphs

The next time that you feel persuaded by a graphic representation of data, check the labels, numbers, scales and context and ask yourself what story the picture is trying to tell. As you edit your own **report**, check to make sure your own use of graphics is **ethical** and complete.

Key Takeaways

- Graphics can take many different forms, but they all have the same purpose: to help clarify information. They also can make reports more visually appealing by breaking up the text.
- Graphics should always clarify, illustrate, and augment your written text or presentation. They should always be explained to your audience in some capacity.
- There are five rules for integrating graphics into your document or presentation:

    1. Give each visual a numbered caption that includes a clear descriptive title
    2. Refer to the caption number within the body text and discuss its content
    3. Label all units (axes, legends, column and row headings, parts of a diagram, etc.)
    4. Provide the source of the data and/or graphic if you did not create it yourself
    5. Avoid distorting the data or image

- Not following the five steps above can negatively impact your **credibility**. If the audience believes you have falsified your graphics, or it seems like you are misleading them, they are less likely to trust you.

Attributions

This chapter is adapted from "Technical Writing

References

Flowingdata. (2010, March 9). *Canada: The country that pees together stays together*. https://flowingdata.com/2010/03/09/canada-the-country-that-pees-together-stays-together/

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Chapter 31: The Rhetorical Nature of Public Speaking

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain why presentations are important in professional practice
- Describe how the modes of appeal can impact your presentation and make it more persuasive
- Differentiate between your formal written report and your extemporaneous speech

Key Terms and Concepts

- extemporaneous speech
- modes of appeal
- ethos
- pathos

- logos

Public Speaking in the Technical Professions

As a professional, you will be making many speeches throughout your career, whether in meetings to coworkers and supervisors or in pitches to potential clients. You probably will not be surprised to see that there are many reasons why public speaking is such an important aspect of professional practice:

Do you notice what all of those bullet points have in common? Here's a hint: the primary concern is not about the need to transmit information.

All of these points emphasize the importance of how we forge a relationship with our **audience**. In a professional context, this **relational element** is key. Of course we want to pass on information, but when we are giving speeches, we need to do so in a way that allows us to connect with our audience and make them care about or relate to our topic. The **modes of appeal** are one of the ways to do this.

A previous section of the textbook taught you about the **Plan – Produce – Polish** process of designing a formal **research report**. The next few chapters will walk you through the same **Plan – Produce – Polish** process, but this time for an **extemporaneous speech** that you will give to your classmates. In the following chapters, we look at how we can design and deliver presentations in order to engage our audience most effectively.

Your research report is meant to demonstrate your accomplishments in the use of **written** rhetoric; the 5-minute speech is now your chance to sharpen your **oral** rhetorical skills.

In summary:

The Modes of Appeal & Your Speech

How can rhetorical theory help you connect with your audience and make them care about your topic? Once again, we will use the three **modes of appeal** (**ethos**, **pathos**, and **logos**) to help answer that question. Aristotle considered these three modes the most important elements in a speaker's arsenal. We will briefly review them now.

In this chapter you will also see the example we used earlier in the rhetoric and report writing chapter: Hamid's speech on Lyme disease. Hamid's example is here to serve as a reminder of how you might address the three **modes of appeal** when designing your own speech.

Ethos

Recall that **ethos** refers to the speaker's character and expertise. When you use **ethos** correctly, you are showing the **audience** that you are **credible** and that they can believe what you say. To cover this element in your speech, tell the audience why they should listen to you. You can do this by demonstrating your authority on your topic.

For example, you could begin a persuasive speech on the dangers of drinking and driving with a short story about how you helped implement a "designated driver" program. This way the audience will understand your relationship to the message and form a positive perception of you. If you are trying to persuade the audience to donate blood, your credibility on the subject may come from your studies in the medical field or from having volunteered at a blood drive.

Hamid – Ethos

Hamid walks through three questions to determine his **ethos**.

1. Does my content show awareness of the needs of the audience?
    - In general, Hamid's presentation is about personal health and safety. From his research, he knows that Lyme disease can have a serious, negative impact on people's lives. In order to establish his credibility, he will need to show that concern through his **tone**, body language, and use of detail. He realizes that one way he can establish his credibility is by discussing his own close call with disease. This tactic will help him create a personal connection with his audience and help show why he thinks it is an important topic for them to be aware of.
2. Am I meeting the conventions of the presentation?
    - The main purpose of the presentation is to persuade the audience, but Hamid knows he will have to do more than persuade them that "*Lyme Disease is a serious disease*." That is too easy, and the professor will probably say he didn't go deep enough in

his argument. That is why he will end his speech by discussing how his audience can take protective measures to stop themselves from catching the disease. If he can give them a list of **actions** to take, like checking for ticks when they go hiking, that will be much more persuasive.

3. Is the information presented fair and complete?

    - After thinking about his topic for some time, Hamid realizes he could easily use scare tactics to persuade his audience. He could do this by focusing only on the most severe consequences of Lyme Disease, like how it affects your central nervous system and can lead to paralysis. However, he also realizes that this is a pretty transparent tactic, and may turn his audience off his message. Instead, he decides to use a more balanced approach when describing the disease's impact. By explaining the range of health effects the disease can have, he will show his audience that he has done his research (making him appear more credible), and allow them to come to the conclusion that the disease is serious on their own.

Pathos

As you may recall, the term **pathos** refers to the use of emotion as a persuasive element, in addition to how a speaker connects to the audience. You have probably seen commercials on television for charities trying to raise funds for sick children or mistreated animals, complete with sad images and music; this is **pathos** at work. We don't always make decisions based only on clear thinking. We can be moved by words, by a video clip, or by a piece of music, which is also an effective way of persuading the audience to take a particular action.

Hamid – Pathos

Hamid walks through the three questions to determine his **pathos**. It should be easy, since he has already determined her audience's needs by considering her **rhetorical audience** with Bitzer and how he will establish his credibility with ethos. Regardless, he still goes through the questions just to be sure.

1. Does the quality of my research meet the expectations of the audience?
    - Hamid is already planning to use his first-hand experience with Lyme Disease as his hook to get his audience's attention. However, he doesn't want to focus solely on personal experience. He knows his audience

will want to hear data about how Lyme Disease is spreading in Canada. Since he already has information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and several articles from medical journals, Hamid feels confident he will meet his audience's expectations.

2. Is the presentation designed to make it easy for the reader to understand?
    - After reviewing some of his resources, Hamid starts to feel a little overwhelmed. Several of his sources, especially the ones from medical journals, have really detailed information about the disease and use terminology that he doesn't fully understand. He could definitely get really detailed in his speech but then realizes he doesn't have that kind of time. His speech is only 5 minutes long, after all. Also, if he doesn't understand that level of detail, how will he be able to explain it to his nonexpert audience? Hamid decides to focus just on the most basic information like where the disease comes from, how it impacts the body, and how the audience can protect themselves against it.
3. Are claims supported by credible evidence?
    - All of Hamid's evidence will come from reputable medical organizations and

medical journals, so he's good there. However, how will he show this evidence in his speech? Unlike a written report, there won't be a list of references at the end for his audience to see. This means he will have to mention the names of his sources his in speech. For example, he might say "The Public Health Agency of Canada provides the criteria for diagnosing and treating Lyme Disease." Mention the organizations or journals directly will help here. However, Hamid knows he'll have a hard time keeping all those names straight, so he makes sure to write them down on his notecard so he doesn't forget.

Logos

As we discussed earlier, the term **logos** refers to in part to your message's logic. To win your audience over using logic, your speech must be carefully organized and present facts and evidence. Depending on the general purpose of your speech, particularly if its goal is to persuade, you may need to present an argument. To do this, **logos** is key. Think about what prosecutors do during a trial—particularly during closing arguments. This is the place for facts and reason. Prosecutors will argue that the scenario they have presented is the only logical interpretation of the evidence. To use **logos** effectively, incorporate expert testimony, statistics, and other reliable data, and order your points carefully.

Hamid – Logos

Hamid is almost done. He feels like his speech is really coming together. He goes through the final three questions to ensure his **logos** appeal is strong enough.

1. Is the issue presented in a complete and balanced way?
    - Obviously, nobody is going to say that Hamid should include an argument that is pro-Lyme Disease. That doesn't make sense. What matters here is that Hamid is neither diminishing the severity of the disease or overstating its effects. He also needs to make sure that he will be providing his audience with just enough information so that are knowledgeable, but not overwhelmed by the content.
2. Does the presentation organize sections in a logical way?
    - After considering Bitzer's constraints and using the speech outline provided by his instructor, Hamid feels he has a good structure for his speech. He knows he will open by briefly talking about his own close call with disease, then he will provide of an overview of the disease. He will follow this with explaining why testing for Lyme

Disease is challenging, how the disease is spreading in Canada, and then provide his audience with a list of strategies for fighting the disease. It's a lot to fit into five minutes, so Hamid is aware he will have to be very selective of what information he includes.

3. Is the argument positioned to recognize the audience's concerns?

    - Hamid knows from personal experience that medical issues can be pretty daunting. He doesn't want to scare his audience, and he also doesn't want them to be self-defeated by the end of his presentation. That is why his speech will end with a list of strategies they can take to protect themselves from the disease. By including that content, he will empower his audience.

Exercise: The Modes of Appeal and Your Speech

As a review, watch the video below on how the modes of appeal can be used to plan your speech. Afterwards, answer the questions below:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1602#oembed-1

1. What specific **ethos** appeals will you use in your speech? How will these appeals establish your good will, good judgement, and good character?
2. What specific **logos** appeals will you use to persuade your audience? What research do you need to do to have sufficient evidence to support your claims? What structure will be the most persuasive?
3. What specific **pathos** appeals will you use to connect your audience to your topic and to the action? To what needs, values, and expectations of the audience will you appeal? What emotional appeals will you use?

How is your Speech Different from your Report?

Does all this sound familiar at all? It should, since we already made the same points (and used similar examples) about the

modes of appeal [when discussing your formal written report](). Though the format and purpose is completely different, harnessing the same rhetorical concepts and implementing them in your speech will make you successful.

Below are two graphics that indicate how your **speech's** purpose is different from the **formal report:**

Speech vs. Report

	Speech assignment	Formal report assignment
Audience	Your group members (and instructor)	Your instructor
Purpose	To persuade your audience to take a specific and concrete action that will help solve your rhetorical exigence	To provide a credible, coherent, and organized overview of the research on your topic, by synthesizing research sources to form your own argument
Format	5 minute extemporaneous, persuasive, proposal speech	Formal report format using SIDCRA structure with formal "front matter"

Key Takeaways

- You will give many oral presentations throughout your career. However, these presentations should do more than just transmit information. They should also connect with an audience and make them care about or relate to a topic.
- In this course, you will give an **extemporaneous speech**. While the format and structure of this speech will be different from your formal written report, you will still apply rhetorical theory (the **modes of appeal**) to make sure your speech is persuasive in nature.

Attributions

Chapter 32: Methods of Speech Delivery

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Distinguish between four methods of speech delivery: the impromptu speech, the manuscript speech, the memorized speech, and the extemporaneous speech
- List the advantages and disadvantages of the four types of speeches
- Explain why an extemporaneous is the preferred delivery style when using rhetorical theory

Key Terms and Concepts

- impromptu
- manuscript
- memorized

- extemporaneous

We have established that presentations involve much more than the transfer of information. Sure, you *could* treat a presentation as an opportunity to simply read a report you've written out loud to a group, but you would fail to both engage your audience and make a connection with them. In other words, you would leave them wondering exactly why they had to listen to your presentation instead of *reading* it at their leisure.

The Four Methods of Speech Delivery

One of the ways to ensure that you engage your audience effectively is by carefully considering how best to deliver your speech. Each of you has sat in a class, presentation, or meeting where you didn't feel interested in the information the presenter was sharing. Part of the reason for your disengagement likely originated in the presenter's method of **speech delivery**.

For our purposes, there are four different methods—or types—of speech delivery used in technical communication:

- **Impromptu**
- **Manuscript**
- **Memorized**
- **Extemporaneous**

Exercise #1: The Four Methods of Speech Delivery

What comes to mind when you think about the four methods of speech delivery? How do you think they are different from one another? Have you given a speech using any of these methods before?

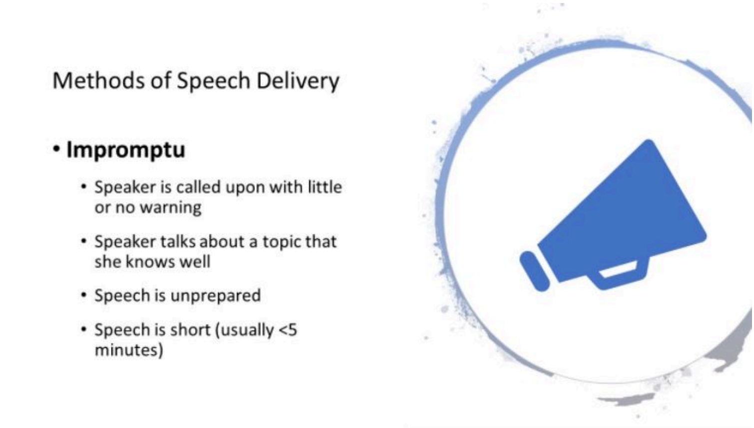
Watch the video below for a brief overview of each one. After you are finished, answer the questions below:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-1

1. Which method are you *most* comfortable with? Why?
2. Which method are you the *least* comfortable with? Why?
3. Which method do you think is the best for connecting with your audience? Why?

The public speaking section of this course will require you to deliver a speech using an **extemporaneous** style, but let's take a look at how all four differ in approach:

Impromptu Speeches



Impromptu speaking is the presentation of a short message without advanced preparation. You have probably done **impromptu** speaking many times in informal, conversational settings. Self-introductions in group settings are examples of impromptu speaking: "*Hi, my name is Shawnda, and I'm a student at the University of Saskatchewan*."

Another example of **impromptu** speaking occurs when you answer a question such as, "What did you think of the movie?" Your response has not been pre-planned, and you are constructing your arguments and points as you speak. Even worse, you might find yourself going into a meeting when your boss announces to you, "I want you to talk about the last stage of the project" with no warning.

The advantage of this kind of speaking is that it's spontaneous and responsive in an animated group context. The disadvantage is that the speaker is given little or no time to contemplate the central theme of their message. As a result, the message may be disorganized and difficult for listeners to follow.

Here is a step-by-step guide that may be useful if you are called upon to give an impromptu speech in public:

1. Take a moment to collect your thoughts and plan the main point that you want to make (like a mini thesis statement).
2. Thank the person for inviting you to speak. Do not make comments about being unprepared, called upon at the last moment, on the spot, or uneasy. In other words, try to avoid being self-deprecating!
3. Deliver your message, making your main point as briefly as you can while still covering it adequately and at a pace your listeners can follow.
4. If you can use a structure, use numbers if possible: "Two main reasons. . ." or "Three parts of our plan. . ." or "Two side effects of this drug. . ." Past, present, and future or East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast are pre-fab structures.
5. Thank the person again for the opportunity to speak.
6. Stop talking. It is easy to "ramble on" when you don't have something prepared. If in front of an audience, don't keep talking as you move back to your seat.

Impromptu speeches are generally most successful when they are brief and focus on a single point.

We recommend practicing your **impromptu** speaking regularly. Do you want to work on reducing your vocalized pauses in a formal setting? Great! You can begin that process by being conscious of your vocalized fillers during informal conversations and settings.

Exercise #2: Impromptu Speech Example

Below are two examples of an **impromptu** speech. In the first video, a teacher is demonstrating an impromptu speech to his students on the topic of strawberries. He quickly jots down some notes before presenting.

What works in his speech? What could be improved?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-3

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/impromptuteacher

In the above example, the teacher did an okay job, considering how little time he had to prepare.

In this next example, you will see just how badly an impromptu speech can go. It is a video of a best man speech at a wedding. Keep in mind that the speaker is the groom's brother.

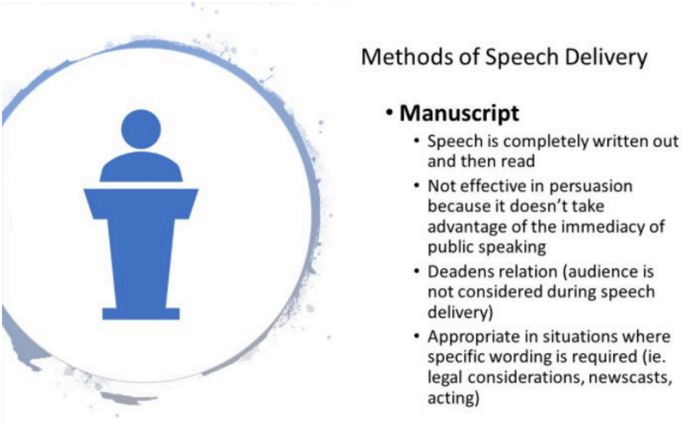
Is there anything that he does well? What are some problems with his speech?

One or more interactive elements has

— *been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-4*

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/badimpromptubestman

Manuscript Speeches



Manuscript speaking is the word-for-word iteration of a written message. In a **manuscript** speech, the speaker maintains their attention on the printed page except when using presentation aids.

The advantage to reading from a **manuscript** is the exact repetition of original words. This can be extremely important in some circumstances. For example, reading a statement about your organization's legal responsibilities to customers may require that the original words be exact. In reading one word at a time, in order, the only errors would typically be the mispronunciation of a word or stumbling over complex sentence structure. A **manuscript** speech may also be appropriate at a more formal affair (like a funeral), when your speech must be said exactly as written in order to convey the proper emotion the situation deserves.

However, there are costs involved in **manuscript** speaking. First, it's typically an uninteresting way to present. Unless the speaker has rehearsed the reading as a complete performance animated with vocal expression and gestures (well-known authors often do this for book readings), the presentation tends to be dull. Keeping one's eyes glued to the script prevents eye contact with the audience.

For this kind of "straight" **manuscript** speech to hold audience attention, the audience must be already interested in the message and speaker before the delivery begins. Finally, because the full notes are required, speakers often require a lectern to place their notes, restricting movement and the ability to engage with the audience. Without something to place the notes on, speakers have to manage full-page speaking notes, and that can be distracting.

It is worth noting that professional speakers, actors, news reporters, and politicians often read from an autocue device such as a teleprompter. This device is especially common when these people appear on television where eye contact with the camera is crucial. With practice, a speaker can achieve a conversational tone and give the impression of speaking extemporaneously and maintaining eye contact while using an autocue device.

However, success in this medium depends on two factors:

1. the speaker is already an accomplished public speaker

who has learned to use a conversational tone while delivering a prepared script, and
2. the speech is written in a style that sounds conversational.

Exercise #3: Manuscript Speech Example

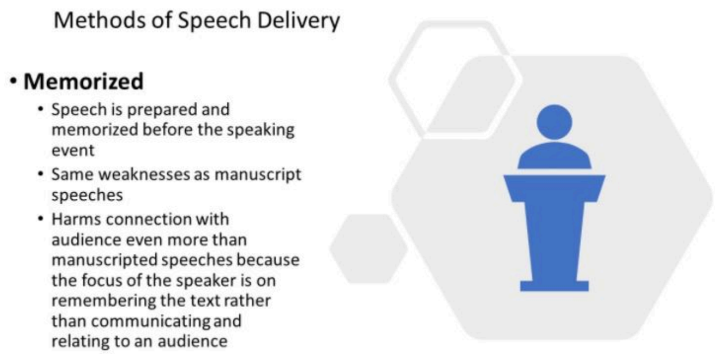
Below is a video that shows an example of a manuscript speech. In the video, US Presidential Historian, Doris Kearns Goodwin, gives a speech about different US presidents.

What works in her speech? What could be improved?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-5

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/goodwindepauw

Memorized Speeches



Memorized speaking is reciting a written message that the speaker has committed to memory. Actors, of course, recite from memory whenever they perform from a script in a stage play, television program, or movie. When it comes to speeches, memorization can be useful when the message needs to be exact and the speaker doesn't want to be confined by notes.

The advantage to memorization is that it enables the speaker to maintain eye contact with the audience throughout the speech. Being free of notes means that you can move freely around the stage and use your hands to make gestures. If your speech uses presentation aids, this freedom is even more of an advantage.

Memorization, however, can be tricky. First, if you lose your place and start trying to ad lib, the contrast in your style of delivery will alert your audience that something is wrong. If you go completely blank during the presentation, it will be extremely difficult to find your place and keep going. Obviously, memorizing a typical seven-minute classroom speech takes a great deal of time and effort, and if you aren't used to memorizing, it is very difficult to pull off.

Exercise #4: Memorized Speech Example

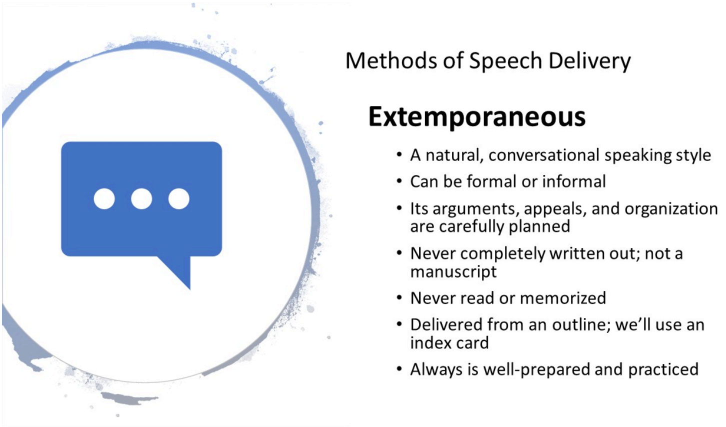
Below is a video that shows an example of a **memorized** speech. In the video, former Louisiana governor, Bobby Jindal, responds to Barack Obama's State of the Union address back in 2009.

What works in his speech? What could be improved?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-6

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/jindalresponse2009

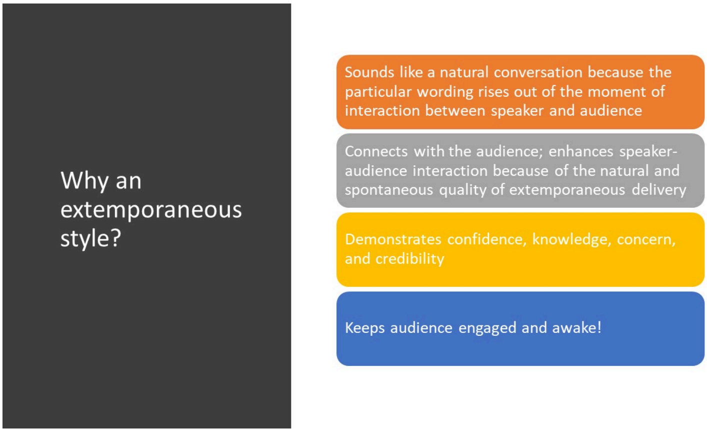
Extemporaneous Speeches



Extemporaneous speaking is the presentation of a carefully planned and rehearsed speech, spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes.

Speaking **extemporaneously** has some advantages. It promotes the likelihood that you, the speaker, will be perceived as knowledgeable and credible since you know the speech well enough that you don't need to read it. In addition, your audience is likely to pay better attention to the message because it is engaging both verbally and nonverbally.

By using notes rather than a full manuscript (or everything that you're going to say), the **extemporaneous** speaker can establish and maintain eye contact with the audience and assess how well they are understanding the speech as it progresses. It also allows flexibility; you are working from the strong foundation of an outline, but if you need to delete, add, or rephrase something at the last minute or to adapt to your audience, you can do so. The outline also helps you be aware of main ideas vs. subordinate ones.



Compared to the other three types of speech delivery, an **extemporaneous** style is the best for engaging your audience and making yourself sound like a natural speaker.

The video below provides some tips on how to deliver a speech using this method:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-2

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/deliverextempres

The slide below provides a brief overview of tips for preparing your **extemporaneous** presentation:

Exercise# 5: Extemporaneous Speech Example

Below is a video that shows an example of an **extemporaneous** speech. In the video, a former University of Saskatchewan student tries to persuade her peers to spend more solo time outside.

What works in her speech? What could be improved?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=501#oembed-7

Link to Original Video: tinyurl.com/rcm401speech

Key Takeaways

- When designing any speech, it's important to consider how you will deliver that speech. In technical communication, there are four different types of speech delivery, each with their advantages and disadvantages. They are: **impromptu**, **manuscript**, **memorized**, and **extemporaneous**.
- An **impromptu** speech can take many forms such as a toast at a wedding, being asked to give a project update at a meeting, or even simply meeting someone for the first time. While this type of speech can be spontaneous and responsive, the speaker generally has little to no warning that they will need to speak.
- A **manuscript** speech is completely written out and read word for word. It is often a good style when you want to nail the specific wording and do not want to make an error. However, this type of speech is not very persuasive because it does not take advantage of the immediacy of public speaking. It also completely removes audience relation from the process.
- A **memorized** speech is when a speaker commits an entire speech to memory. This style also harms relation with the audience because the speaker is more focused on remembering the text of the speech rather than communicating with the audience. Additionally, if you lose your

place and need to ad lib, it may be obvious to your audience.

- An **extemporaneous** speech is done in a natural, conversational speaking style. While it is carefully planned, it is never completely written out like a **manuscript.** It is also not read or **memorized**. Instead, an **outline** is used to help guide the speaker. As a result, more attention can be paid to the audience, allowing the speaker to better connect with them and make adjustments as necessary. This is the style we want you to use for your presentation assignment in RCM 200.

Attributions

Chapter 33: Speech Structure

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Create a preparation outline and speaking outline for your extemporaneous speech
- Use keywords from your outline to develop a 3×5 cue card

Key Terms and Concepts

- outline
- preparation outline
- speaking outline
- connective statements

As you saw in the last chapter, we want you to use an **extemporaneous** style for your speech delivery. Many of you may feel a bit uncomfortable with this idea if you are used to using a **manuscript** or **memorized** style. However, we want to stress that you are not going to go into your presentation unprepared. This chapter will show you how to outline your speech and give you several different elements you can use while designing it.

Outlining Your Speech

An **outline** provides a visual structure where you can compile information into a well-organized document. The amount of information you include will depend on your needs. For our course, we want you to use a **preparation outline**, which is a comprehensive form of **outline** that includes all of the information in your speech. If someone were to read your **preparation outline**, there should be enough depth to provide a general idea of what will be accomplished.

Generally, we recommend starting from this **outline** format:

Sample Speech Outline

I. Introduction
  a. Attention Getter / Hook
b. Credibility Statement
c. Exigence
d. Action
e. Survey: Forecast of Speech Points

II. Main body

1. First Main Point
   a. Evidence
2. Second Main Point
   a. Evidence
3. Third main Point
   a. Evidence

III. Conclusion

a. Summary: Review of Main Points
b. Restate Thesis
c. Clincher

This is just a start as you will need to make adjustments to fit your needs. For example, each main point may have more than one piece of evidence. In preparation for your extemporaneous speech, you will need to complete a **preparation outline** for your Speech Strategy Report assignment.

You should think of the **outline** as the blueprint for your speech. It is not the speech—that is what comes out of your mouth in front of the audience. The **outline** helps you prepare and, as such, they are a living document that you can adjust, add, and delete. We recommend beginning to add information right away. However, keep in mind that you will not have the whole document with you during your speech. Instead, you'll use a **speaking outline** that you write on your 3×5 index card.

A **speaking outline** is a keyword outline used to deliver an extemporaneous speech. The notes you use to speak can aid or hinder in an effective delivery. A keyword outline on your 3×5 card—which you'll use to rehearse and deliver—will allow greater embodiment and engagement with the audience. As you practice, you will be able to summarize the full **preparation outline** down to more usable notes. In those notes, create a set of abbreviated notes for the actual delivery. The more materials you take up with you to speak, the more you will be tempted to look at them rather than have eye contact with the audience, reducing your overall engagement.

Your speaking notes should be in far fewer words than the preparation, arranged in key phrases, and readable for you. Your **speaking outline** should provide cues to yourself to "slow down," "pause," or "change slide." Our biggest suggestion is to make the notes workable for you. More information on structuring your cue card is included in the next section.

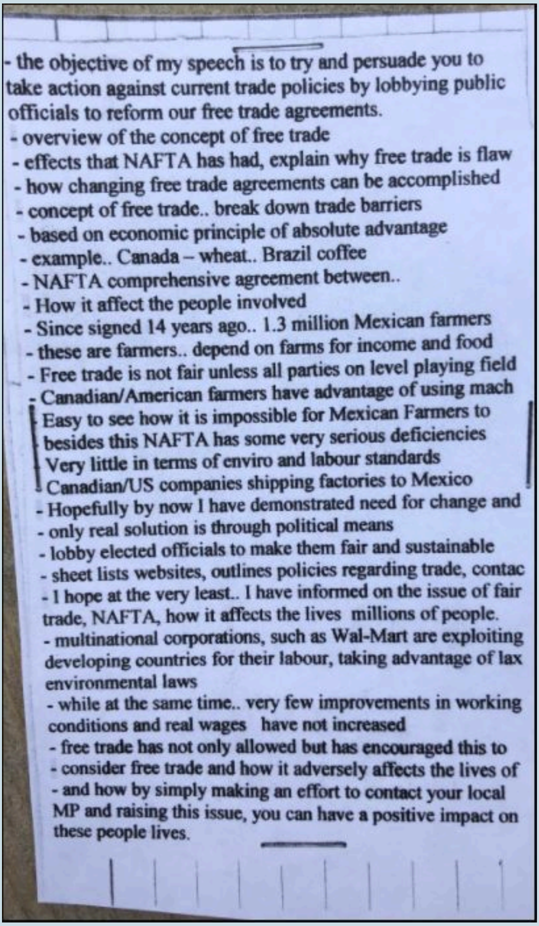
Using Cue Cards

An **extemporaneous speech** is a presentation that is carefully planned and practiced ahead of time. A tool that can help you in your speech is to use a 3.5×5 card effectively. Your card is meant to help prompt you as you give your speech, and to keep you on track. It is NOT meant to be a transcript where you write out your speech.

Exercise: Evaluate Cue Cards

Below are images of three cue cards. Look at Image #1. Do you think this person's speech was successful according to the **constraints** of an extemporaneous speech? Why or why not?

Image #1


- the objective of my speech is to try and persuade you to take action against current trade policies by lobbying public officials to reform our free trade agreements.
- overview of the concept of free trade
- effects that NAFTA has had, explain why free trade is flaw
- how changing free trade agreements can be accomplished
- concept of free trade.. break down trade barriers
- based on economic principle of absolute advantage
- example.. Canada – wheat.. Brazil coffee
- NAFTA comprehensive agreement between..
- How it affect the people involved
- Since signed 14 years ago.. 1.3 million Mexican farmers
- these are farmers.. depend on farms for income and food
- Free trade is not fair unless all parties on level playing field
- Canadian/American farmers have advantage of using mach
- Easy to see how it is impossible for Mexican Farmers to
- besides this NAFTA has some very serious deficiencies
- Very little in terms of enviro and labour standards
- Canadian/US companies shipping factories to Mexico
- Hopefully by now I have demonstrated need for change and
- only real solution is through political means
- lobby elected officials to make them fair and sustainable
- sheet lists websites, outlines policies regarding trade, contac
- I hope at the very least.. I have informed on the issue of fair trade, NAFTA, how it affects the lives millions of people.
- multinational corporations, such as Wal-Mart are exploiting developing countries for their labour, taking advantage of lax environmental laws
- while at the same time.. very few improvements in working conditions and real wages have not increased
- free trade has not only allowed but has encouraged this to
- consider free trade and how it adversely affects the lives of
- and how by simply making an effort to contact your local MP and raising this issue, you can have a positive impact on these people lives.

Obviously, Image #1 is an example of what *not* to do when using a cue card. Keep in mind that your card is a tool for you to consult while you speak. You do **not** need to write everything on it that you would like to say.

Now let's look at two more cue cards (Images #2 and #3). What is it that makes these two cards better? How are they different from Image #1?

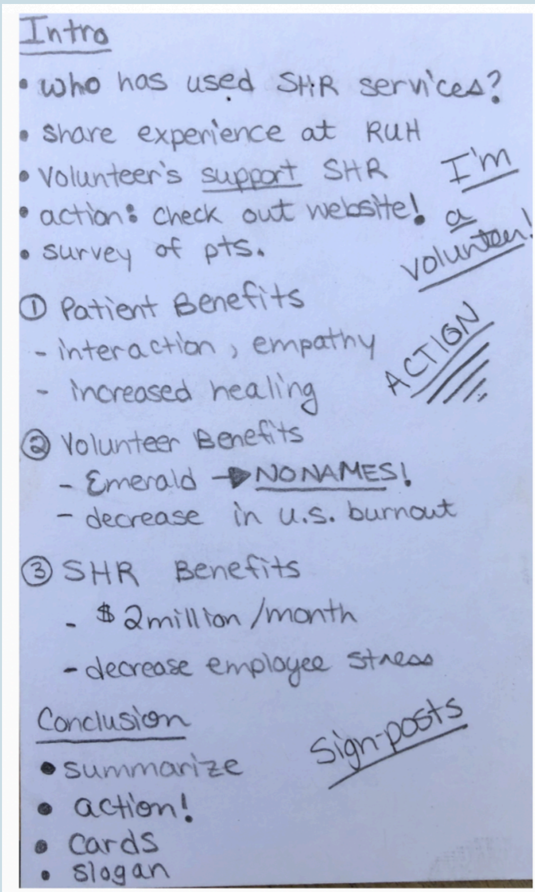
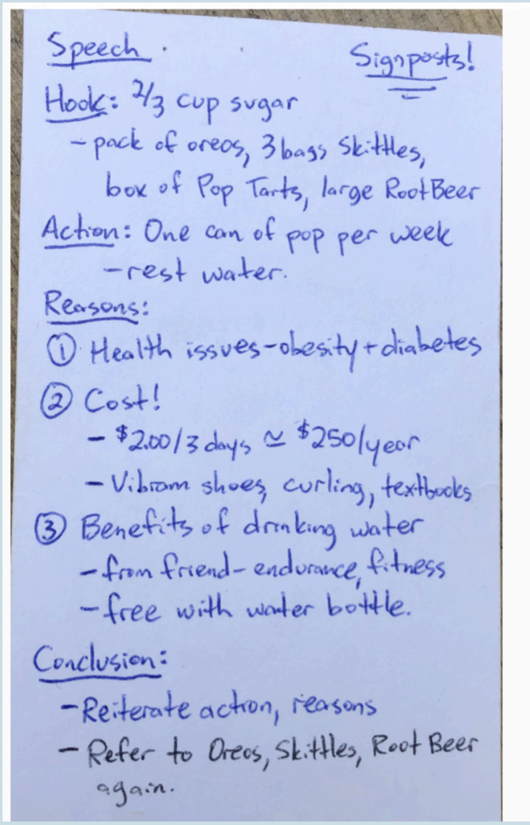


Image #2



Speech Signposts!

Hook: 2/3 cup sugar

- pack of oreos, 3 bags Skittles, box of Pop Tarts, large Root Beer

Action: One can of pop per week

- rest water.

Reasons:

1. Health issues - obesity + diabetes
2. Cost!
   - $2.00/3 days ≃ $250/year
   - Vibram shoes, curling, textbooks
3. Benefits of drinking water
   - from friend - endurance, fitness
   - free with water bottle.

Conclusion:

- Reiterate action, reasons
- Refer to Oreos, Skittles, Root Beer again.

Image #3

Your card is meant to be recognized by you (the speaker), and you alone—so you can use abbreviations (similar to the 'SHR' used in Image #2 above) or have shorthand notes that will help to jog your memory. Recognize that you probably will NOT need to write as much on your cue card as you may think you need to.

As you practice, make sure to practice using the same card.

Setting Up Your Speech

Introductions and **conclusions** serve to frame the speech and give it a clearly defined beginning and end. They help the audience see what is to come in the speech, and then let them mentally prepare for the end. In doing this, introductions and conclusions provide a "preview/review" of your speech as a means to reiterate to your audience what you are talking about. Because speeches are auditory and live, you need to make sure that audiences remember what you are saying.

The general rule is that the introduction and conclusion should each be about 10% of your total speech, leaving 80% for the body section. It can be tempting to have longer introductions, but that often leaves less time to introduce key research and warrant your ideas through the main points. Since your speech for this course is five minutes long, that means your introduction and conclusion should each be about 30 seconds.

Structuring the Introduction

Many speakers struggle with how to start their speech because they're often worried that their words won't be memorable, attention-capturing, and clever enough to get their audience interested. This is a problem for many of us because the first words you say, in many ways, set the tone for the rest of your speech. There may not be any one "best" way to start a speech, but we can provide some helpful guidelines that will make starting a speech much easier.

Common Errors to Avoid in Introductions

- rambling and meandering; not getting to the point;
- starting with a vocalized pause;
- saying the specific purpose statement first;
- beginning to talk as you approach the platform;.
- reading your introduction directly from your notes;
- talking too fast.

With that in mind, there are five basic elements that you will want to incorporate into your introduction and speech outline.

Element 1: Get the Audience's Attention—the Hook

The first major purpose of an introduction is to gain your audience's attention and make them interested in what you have to say. The first words of a speech should be something that will perk up the audience's ears. Starting a speech with "Hey everybody. I'm going to talk to you today about soccer" has not tried to engage the individuals in the audience who don't care about soccer.

To create interest, the key is selecting an option that's appropriate and relevant to your specific audience. You will also want to choose an attention-getting device appropriate for your speech topic. Ideally, your attention-getting device should have a relevant connection to your speech. Below are a number of possibilities for crafting an attention getter.

Anecdotes and Narratives

An anecdote is a *brief* account or story of an interesting or humorous event. Notice the emphasis here is on the word "brief." An example of an anecdote used in a speech about the pervasiveness of technology might look something like this:

> In July 2009, a high school girl named Miranda Becker was walking along a main boulevard near her home on Staten Island, New York, typing in a message on her cell phone. Not paying attention to the world around her, she took a step and fell right into an open construction hole.

Notice that the anecdote is short and has a clear point. From here the speaker can begin to make their point about how technology is controlling our lives.

A personal story is another option here. You may consider starting your speech with a story about yourself that is relevant to your topic. Some of the best speeches are ones that come from personal knowledge and experience. If you are an expert or have firsthand experience related to your topic, sharing this information with the audience is a great way to show that you are credible during your attention getter.

Startling Statement/Statistic/Fact

Another way to start your speech is to surprise your audience with startling information about your topic. Often, startling statements come in the form of statistics and strange facts. The goal of a good startling statistic is that it surprises the audience and gets them engaged in your topic. For example, if you're giving a speech about oil conservation, you could start by saying:

A Boeing 747 airliner holds 57,285 gallons of fuel.

You could start a speech on the psychology of dreams by noting:

The average person has over 1,460 dreams a year.

A strange fact, on the other hand, is a statement that does not involve numbers but is equally surprising to most audiences. For example, you could start a speech on the gambling industry by saying:

There are no clocks in any Las Vegas casino.

Although startling statements are fun, it is important to use them ethically. First, make sure that your startling statement is factual. Second, make sure that your startling statement is relevant to your speech and not just thrown in for shock value.

A Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question to which no actual reply is expected. For example, a speaker talking about the history of Mother's Day could start by asking the audience:

> Do you remember the last time you told your mom you loved her?

In this case, the speaker does not expect the audience to shout out an answer, but rather to think about the questions as the speech goes on.

Quotation

Another way to capture your listeners' attention is to use the words of another person that relate directly to your topic. Maybe you've found a really great quotation in one of the articles or books you read while researching your speech. If not, you can also use a number of Internet or library sources that compile useful quotations from noted individuals. Quotations are a great way to start a speech, so let's look at an example that could be used during the opening of a commencement address:

> The late actress, fashion icon, and social activist Audrey Hepburn once noted that, "Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm possible'!"

Element 2: Establish or Enhance Your Credibility

Whether you are informing, persuading, or entertaining an audience, they will expect you to know what you're talking about. The second element, then, is to let your audience know that you are a knowledgeable and credible source for this information, in other words, you must establish your **ethos**. To do this, you will need to explain how you know what you know about your topic.

For some people, this will be simple. If you are informing your audience about a topic that you've researched or experienced for years, that makes you a fairly credible source. You probably know what you are talking about. Let the audience know! For example:

> I've been serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last two years.

However, you may be speaking on a subject with which you have no history of credibility. If you are just curious about when streetlights were installed at intersections and why they are red, yellow, and green, you can do that. But you will still need to give your audience some sort of reason to trust your knowledge. Since you were required to do research for this assignment, you are at least more knowledgeable on the subject that anyone else in the class.

Element 3: Establish Relevance through Rapport

Next, you must establish rapport with your audience. Rapport is basically a relationship or connection you make with your audience, similar to incorporating **pathos** appeals in your speech. In everyday life, we say that two people have a rapport when they get along really well and are good friends. In your introduction, you will want to explain to your audience why you are giving them this information and why it is important or relevant to them. You will be making a connection through this shared information and explaining to them how it will benefit them.

Element 4: State your Thesis

After you get the audience's attention, you must reveal the purpose of your speech to your audience. Have you ever sat through a speech wondering what the basic point was? Have you ever come away after a speech and had no idea what the speaker was talking about? An introduction should make the topic, purpose, and central idea clear. Remember **rhetorical exigence** from previous chapters? This is essentially what your thesis is doing: you are addressing a problem that your audience has and showing them you have the answer.

When stating your topic in the introduction, be explicit with regard to exactly what your topic is. Spell it out for them if you have to. If an audience is unable to remember all your information, they should at least be able to walk away knowing that the purpose of your presentation was. Make sure your **logos** appeals are solid.

Element 5: Preview Your Main Points—the Survey

Just like previewing your topic, previewing your main points helps your audience know what to expect throughout the course of your speech. In RCM 200, we call this part of your speech the speech's **survey**. Your preview of main points should be clear and easy to follow so that there is no question in your audience's minds what they are. Long, complicated, or verbose main points can get confusing.

Be succinct and simple in your survey:

> Today, in our discussion of Abraham Lincoln's life, we will look at his birth, his role a president, and his assassination.

From that there is little question as to what specific aspects of Lincoln's life the speech will cover. However, if you want to be extra sure they get it, you can always enumerate them:

> In discussing how to make chocolate chip cookies,
> <u>first</u> we will cover what ingredients you need,
> <u>second</u> we will talk about how to mix them, and
> <u>third</u> we will look at baking them.

What these five elements do is prepare your audience for the bulk of the speech (i.e. the body section) by letting them know what they can expect, why they should listen, and why they can trust you as a speaker. Having all five elements starts your speech off on much more solid ground that you would get without having them.

The Body: Connecting Your Points Using Signposts

At this point, you may be realizing that preparing for public speaking does not always follow a completely linear process. In writing your speech, you might begin outlining with one organizational pattern in mind, only to re-craft the main points into a new pattern after more research has been conducted. These are all okay options.

Wherever your process takes you, however, you will need to make sure that each section of your speech outline uses **connective statements or signposts**. A **Connective statement**—also called "signpost"—is a broad term that encompass several types of statements or phrases. They are generally designed to help "connect" parts of your speech to make it easier for audience members to follow. Connectives are tools for helping the audience listen, retain information, and follow your structure.

Signposts perform a number of functions:

- Remind the audience of what has come before
- Remind the audience of the central focus or purpose of the speech
- Forecast what is coming next
- Help the audience have a sense of context in the speech—where are we? (this is especially useful in a longer speech of twenty minutes or so)
- Explain the logical connection between the previous main idea(s) and next one, or previous subpoints and the next one
- Explain your own mental processes in arranging the material as you have
- Keep the audience's attention through repetition and a sense of movement

Signposts can include internal summaries, numbering or internal previews. Each of these terms all help connect the main ideas of your speech for the audience, but they have different emphases and are useful for different types of speeches.

Types of connectives and examples

Signposts emphasize the physical movement through the speech content and let the audience know exactly where they are. Signposting can be as simple as “First,” “Next,” “Lastly” or using numbers such as “First,” “Second,” Third,” and “Fourth.” Signposts can also be lengthier, but in general signposting is meant to be a brief way to let your audience know where they are in the speech. It may help to think of these like the mile markers you see along interstates that tell you where you are or like signs letting you know how many more miles until you reach your destination.

Internal summaries emphasize what has come before and remind the audience of what has been covered.

> So far I have shown how the designers of King Tut’s burial tomb used the antechamber to scare away intruders and the second chamber to prepare royal visitors for the experience of seeing the sarcophagus.

Internal previews let your audience know what is coming up next in the speech and what to expect with regard to the content of your speech.

> In this next part of the presentation I will share with you what the truly secret and valuable part of the King Tut's pyramid: his burial chamber and the treasury.

Transitions serve as bridges between seemingly disconnected (but related) material, most commonly between your main points. At a bare minimum your transition is saying,

> Now that we have looked at (talked about, etc.) X, let's look at Y.

Connectives are an important way to assist the audience in understanding a) where you're going, b) where you are, and c) where you've been. We recommend labeling them directly in your outline to make sure that they're integrated and clear.

Wrapping up: The Summary

Similar to the introduction, the conclusion has three specific elements that you will want to incorporate in order to make it as strong as possible.

Common Errors to Avoid in Conclusions

- signal the end multiple times. In other words, no "multiple conclusions" or saying "As I close" more than once;
- ramble; if you signal the end, end;
- talk as you leave the platform or lectern;
- indicate with facial expression or body language that you were not happy with the speech.
- conclude with an abrupt "thank you.

Given the nature of these elements and what they do, these should generally be incorporated into your conclusion in the order they are presented below.

Element 1: Review Main Points

Remember, introductions preview your main points; **the conclusion provides a review.** One of the biggest differences between written and oral communication is the necessity of repetition in oral communication. Your audience only has <u>one</u> opportunity to catch and remember the points you are trying to get across in your speech, so the review assists in repeating key ideas that support your thesis statement.

Because you are trying to remind the audience of your main points, you want to be sure not to bring up any new material or ideas. For example, if you said, "There are several other issues related to this topic, such as…but I don't have time for them," that would make the audience confused and perhaps wonder why you did not address those in the body section. The hardcore facts and content are in the body.

Element 2: Restate the Thesis

Make sure to restate your thesis because this is the main argument that you're leaving the audience with. While this may come before or after the review of your main points, it's important because it often directs the audience and reminds them why they're present. Concluding without reiterating your thesis statement requires the audience to remember an idea from the introduction—which can feel like a long time ago.

Element 3: Clincher

The third element of your conclusion is the clincher, or something memorable with which to conclude your speech. The clincher is sometimes referred to as a concluding thought. These are the very last words you will say in your speech, so you need to make them count.

In many ways the clincher is the inverse of the attention-getter. You want to start the speech off with something strong, and you want to end the speech with something strong. To that end, similar to what we discussed above with attention getters, there are a number of ways you can make your clincher strong and memorable.

Strategies for Effective Concluding Thoughts

Conclude with a Challenge	A challenge is a call to engage in some kind of activity that requires
Conclude with a Quotation	Select a quotation that's related to your topic
Visualize the Future	Help your audience imagine the future you believe can occur.
Conclude by Inspiration	Use inspiration to stir someone's emotions in a specific manner.
Conclude with a Question	Ask a rhetorical question that forces the audience to ponder an idea.
Refer to the Introduction	Come full circle by referencing an idea, statistic, or insight from the attention getter
Conclude with a Story	Select a brief story aimed at a strong emotional appeal

For the conclusion, make sure your purpose—informative, persuasive, entertaining—is honored.

Key Takeaways

- The organization and **outlining** of your speech may not be the most interesting part to think about, but without it, great ideas will seem jumbled and confusing to your audience. To help you prepare for your presentation, you will need to create a **preparation outline**.
- Use keywords from your **speaking outline** to create a cue card. This piece of paper will help guide you through your speech; however, it

should serve as more of a reminder of your points instead of a resource you keep going back to.

- Your introduction is what gets your audience interested in your topic. You can do this by getting their attention with a hook, establishing your credibility, establishing rapport, stating your thesis, and **survey** your main points.
- In your body, good **signposts** or **connective statements** will ensure your audience can follow you and understand the logical connections you are making with your main ideas, introduction, and conclusion.
- The conclusion provides a review of what you just talked about. Ideally, the conclusion should remind your audience what you talked about and why it matters to them. You can do this in your **summary** by reviewing the main ideas, restating the thesis, and ending the speech in a memorable way with a clincher.

Attributions

Chapter 34: Delivery

Learning Objectives

- Distinguish between visual delivery and verbal delivery
- Utilize specific techniques to enhance vocal delivery
- Describe the importance of nonverbal delivery in public speaking
- Highlight common non-verbal pitfalls
- Utilize specific techniques to enhance non-verbal delivery

Key Terms and Concepts

- visual delivery
- verbal delivery
- verbal communication
- nonverbal communication
- projection
- vocal enunciation
- rate

- vocal pauses

You've done the research. You've written the information down into an outline, and transferred all of that onto a 3×5 cue card using keywords. Now it's finally time to practice.

By now, you should recognize that a presentation—like all communication—is more than just transferring information from one person to another. It's all about *how* you communicate that information. Ultimately, your delivery is going to be a big part of that. More specifically, your **visual delivery** and **verbal delivery** will have a huge impact on how your message is received and the overall experience of your audience. Rather than a check-list of skillsets, we invite you to read these as a series of inter-related behaviors and practices.

Visual Delivery

Have you played charades? Many of you have likely "acted out" a person, place, or a thing for an audience, using only your body and no words. Charades, like many games, demonstrates the heightened or exaggerated use of **nonverbal communication**—through acting out, the game highlights how powerful this communication method can be.

When speaking, similar to charades, your job is to create a captivating experience for your **audience** that leads them to new information or to consider a new argument. Nonverbals provide an important part of that experience by accentuating your content and contributing to an aesthetic experience.

As we discussed earlier, public speaking is embodied, and your nonverbals are a key part of living and communicating in and through your body. Here are the nonverbals that we will discuss in this section:

- eye contact
- facial expressions
- attire
- gestures and hands
- feet and posture
- moving in the space

All of the above enhance your message and invite your audience to give their serious attention to it—and to you. Your **credibility**, your sincerity, and your knowledge of your speech become apparent through your nonverbal behaviors.

Eye Contact

Imagine bringing in two qualified applicants for a job opening that you were responsible to fill. Each applicant will sit directly across from you and three other colleagues who are assisting.

While answering questions, Applicant 1 never breaks eye contact with you. It's likely that, as the interview progresses, you begin to feel uncomfortable, even threatened, and begin shifting your own eyes around the room awkwardly. When the applicant leaves, you finally take a deep breath but realize that you can't remember anything the applicant said.

Applicant 2 enters and, unlike the first, looks down at their notes and never makes direct eye contact. As you try to focus on their answers, they seem so uncomfortable that you aren't able to concentrate on the exchange.

Both approaches are common mistakes when integrating eye contact into a speech. We have likely all seen speakers who read their presentation from notes and never look up. It's also common for a speaker to zoom in on one audience member (such as the teacher!) and never break their gaze.

The general rule is that 80% of your total speech time should be spent making eye contact with your audience. When you're able to connect by using eye contact, you create a more intimate, trusting, and transparent experience.

It's important to note that you want to establish genuine eye contact with your audience, and not "fake" eye contact. There have been a lot of techniques generated for "faking" eye contact, and none of them look natural. For example, these approaches aren't great:

- ***Three points on the back wall*** – One technique says you can just pick three points on the back wall and look at each point. What ends up happening, though, is you look like you are staring off into space and your audience will spend the majority of your speech trying to figure out what you are looking at. This technique may work better for a larger audience, but in a more intimate space (such as the classroom), the audience is close enough to be suspicious. Put simply: we can tell you aren't looking at us.
- ***The swimming method*** – This happens when someone is reading their speech and looks up quickly and briefly, not unlike a swimmer who pops their head out of the water for a breath before going back under. Eye contact is more than just physically moving your head; it is about looking at your audience and establishing a connection.

Instead, work to maintain approximately three seconds of eye contact with audience members throughout the room. You are, after all, speaking to them, so use your eyes to make contact. This approach may also reduce some anxiety because you can envision yourself speaking directly to one person at a time, rather than a room full of strangers.

Facial Expressions

Picture being out to dinner with a friend and, as you finish telling a story about a joke you played on your partner, you look up to a grimacing face.

"What?" you ask.

"Oh, nothing," they reply. But their face says it all.

Realizing that their face has "spilled the beans" so to speak, your friend might correct their expression by shrugging and biting their lip—a move that may insinuate nervousness or anxiety. You perceive that they didn't find your story as humorous as you'd hoped.

Facial expressions communicate to others (and audiences) in ways that are consistent or inconsistent with your message. In the example above, your friend's feedback of "oh, nothing" was inconsistent with their facial expressions. Their words didn't trump their facial expressions, however, and their nonverbal feedback was part of the communication.

In the context of your speech, your facial expressions will matter. Your audience will be looking at your face to guide them through the speech, so these expressions are an integral part of communicating meaning to your audience.

In fact, if your facial expressions seem inconsistent with or contradictory to the tone of the argument, an audience may go so far as to feel distrust toward you as a speaker. Children might, for example, say, "I'm fine" or "It doesn't hurt" after falling and scraping their knee, but their face often communicates a level of discomfort. In this case, their facial expression is inconsistent with their verbal message. If you're frowning while presenting information that the audience perceives to be positive, they may feel uneasy or unsure how to process that information. So, consistency can increase your **ethos**.

Similarly, your facial expressions, like the soundtrack of a movie or commercial, can assist in setting the aesthetic tone;

they are part of developing **pathos**. Given the amount of information that we all encounter daily, including information about global injustices, it's often insufficient to merely state the problem and how to solve it. Audience members need buy-in from you as the speaker. Using facial expressions to communicate emotions, for example, can demonstrate your commitment to and feelings about an issue.

To be clear, facial expressions, like other forms of **nonverbal communication**, can greatly impact an audience member's perception of the speaker, but not all audiences may interpret your expressions the same.

Attire

What you wear can either enhance or detract from the audience's experience. Like facial expressions, you want your attire to be consistent with the message that you're delivering. Context is important here, since the purpose and audience will inform appropriate attire.

We recommend considering two questions when selecting your attire:

First, what attire matches the occasion? Is this a casual occasion? Does it warrant a more professional or business-casual approach? If you're speaking at an organization's rally, for example, you may decide to wear attire with the organization's logo and jeans. Other occasions, such as a classroom or city council meeting, may require a higher level of professional attire.

Second, ask yourself, "have I selected any attire that could be distracting while I'm speaking?" Certain kinds of jewelry, for example, might make additional noise or move around your arm, and audiences can focus too much on the jewelry. In addition to noise-makers, some attire can have prints that might distract, including letters, wording, or pictures.

Your attire can influence how the audience perceives you as a speaker—that is, your credibility—which, as we've discussed, is key to influencing listeners.

Movement

When you (and your body) move, you communicate. You may, for example, have a friend who, when telling exciting stories, frantically gestures and paces the room—their movement is part of how they communicate their story. They likely do this unconsciously, and that's often how much of our informal movement occurs.

Many of us, like your friend, have certain elements of movement that we comfortably integrate into our daily interactions. In order to determine how to integrate movements most effectively into your speech, ask yourself, "how can I utilize these movements (or put them in check) to enhance the audience's experience?" In this section, we will introduce how and why movement should be *purposefully* integrated into your speech. We'll focus on your hands and your feet, and consider how to move around the space.

Not sure what nonverbals you commonly use when communicating? Ask a friend! Your friends are observant, and they can likely tell you if you over-gesture, look down, stay poised, etc. Use this inventory to determine areas of focus for your speeches.

Gestures and Hands

Everyone who gives a speech in public gets scared or nervous. Even professionals who do this for a living feel that way, but they have learned how to combat those nerves through experience and practice. When we get scared or nervous, our bodies emit adrenaline into our systems so we can deal with whatever problem is causing us to feel that way. In a speech, that burst of adrenaline is going to try to work its way out of your body and manifest itself somehow. One of the main ways is through your hands.

Three common reactions to this adrenaline rush are:

- ***Jazz hands!*** It may sound funny, but nervous speakers can unknowingly incorporate "jazz hands"—shaking your hands at your sides with fingers opened wide—at various points in their speech. While certainly an extreme example, this and behaviors like it can easily becoming distracting.
- ***Stiff as a board***. At the other end of the scale, people who don't know what to do with their hands or use them "too little" sometimes hold their arms stiffly at their sides, behind their backs, or in their pockets, all of which can also look unnatural and distracting.
- ***Hold on for dear life!*** Finally, some speakers might grip their notes or a podium tightly with their hands. This tendency might also result in tapping on a podium, table, or another object nearby.

It's important to remember that *just because you aren't sure what your hands are doing does not mean they aren't doing something*. Fidgeting, making jazz hands, gripping the podium, or keeping hands in pockets are all common and result in speakers asking, "did I really do that? I don't even remember!"

Are you someone who uses gestures when speaking? If so, great! Use your natural gestures to create purposeful aesthetic emphasis for your audience. If you were standing around talking to your friends and wanted to list three reasons why you should all take a road trip this weekend, you would probably hold up your fingers as you counted off the reasons ("First, we hardly ever get this opportunity. Second, we can…"). Try to pay attention to what you do with your hands in regular conversations and incorporate that into your delivery. Be conscious, though, of being over the top and gesturing at every other word. Remember that gestures highlight and punctuate information for the audience, so too many gestures (like jazz hands) can be distracting.

Similarly, are you someone who generally rests your arms at your sides? That's OK, too! Work to keep a natural (and not stiff) look, but challenge yourself to integrate a few additional gestures throughout the speech.

Feet and Posture

Just as it does through your hands, nervous energy might try to work its way out of your body through your feet. Common difficulties include:

- ***The side-to-side.*** You may feel awkward standing without a podium and try to shift your weight back and forth. On the "too much" end, this is most common when people start "dancing" or stepping side to side.
- ***The twisty-leg.*** Another variation is twisting feet around each other or the lower leg.
- ***Stiff-as-a-board.*** On the other end are speakers who put their feet together, lock their knees, and never move from that position. Locked knees can restrict oxygen to your brain, so there are many reasons to avoid this difficulty.

These options look unnatural, and therefore will prove to be distracting to your audience.

The default position for your feet, then, is to have them shoulder-width apart, with your knees slightly bent. Since public speaking often results in some degree of physical exertion, you need to treat speaking as a physical activity. Public speaking is, after all, a full body experience. Being in-tune and attuned to your body will allow you to speak in a way that's both comfortable for you and the audience.

In addition to keeping your feet shoulder-width apart, you'll also want to focus on your posture. By focusing on good posture over time, it will eventually become habitual.

Moving in the Space

We know that you're likely wondering, "Should I do any other movement around the room?"

Unfortunately, there isn't an easy answer. Movement depends on two overarching considerations:

1) What's the space?
2) What's the message?

First, movement is always informed by the space in which you'll speak. Consider the two following examples:

- You'll be a giving a presentation at a university where a podium is set up with a stable microphone.
- You're speaking at a local TedTalk event with an open stage.

Both scenarios provide constraints and opportunities for movement.

In the university space, you must stay planted behind the microphone to guarantee sound. While somewhat constraining, this setup does allow a stable location to place your notes and a microphone to assist in **projecting**, and it allows you to focus on other verbal and nonverbal techniques.

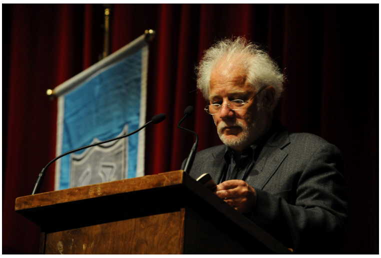


Image #1: Using a lectern provides nonverbal opportunities and constraints

In the TedTalk example, you are not constrained by a stable microphone and you have a stage for bodily movement. The open stage means that the entire space becomes part of the aesthetic experience for the audience. However, if you are less comfortable with movement, the open space may feel intimidating because audiences may assume that you'll use the entire space.

Once you have knowledge of the speaking space and speech content, you can start using movement to add dimension to the aesthetic experience for your audience.

One benefit of movement is that it allows you to engage with different sections of the audience. If you are not constrained to one spot (in the case of a podium or a seat, for example), then you are able to use movement to engage with the audience by adjusting your spatial dynamic. You can literally move your body to different sides of the stage and audience. Such a use of space enables each side of a room to be pulled in to the content because you close the physical distance and create clear pathways for eye contact.

Image #2: Some speech stages allow, even expect, movement

Without these changes, sections of the audience may feel lost or forgotten. Consider your role as a student. Have you experienced a professor or teacher who stays solitary and does not move to different sides of the room? It can be difficult to stay motivated to listen or take notes if a speaker is dominating one area of the space.

Changing the spatial dynamics goes beyond moving from side-to-side. You can also move forward and backward. This allows you to move closer to the audience or back away depending on what experience you're trying to create.

In addition to engaging with the audience, movement often signals a transition between ideas or an attempt to visually enunciate an important component of your information. You may want to signal a change in time or mark progression. If you're walking your audience through information chronologically, movement can mark that temporal progression where your body becomes the visual marker of time passing.

When you speak, moving in the space can be beneficial. As you plan your purposeful movement, be aware of the message you're providing and the space in which you're speaking.

Verbal Delivery

Humans are communicators. We rely on communication processes to make sense of our world, and we rely on others' communicating with us to create shared meaning. Through symbols, we use and adapt language with one another and our communities.

The same is true for speeches, but what symbols you select and how you portray them—what we'll call **verbal delivery**—are dependent on your audience and how they experience or comprehend what you say.

For example, consider your favorite podcaster or podcast series. We love crime podcasts! Despite being reliant on **verbal delivery** only, the presenters' voices paint an aesthetic picture as they walk us through stories around crime, murder, and betrayal. So, how do they do it? What keeps millions of people listening to podcasts and returning to their favorite verbal-only speakers? Is it how they say it? Is it the language they choose? All of these are important parts of effective **verbal delivery**.

Below, we begin discussing **verbal delivery**, looking at the following topics:

1. projection
2. vocal enunciation
3. rate
4. vocal pauses

Projection

"Louder!"

You may have experienced a situation where an audience notified a speaker that they couldn't be heard. "Louder!" Here, the audience is letting the speaker know to increase their volume, or the relative softness or loudness of one's voice. In this example, the speaker needed to more fully project their vocals to fit the speaking-event space by increasing their volume. In a more formal setting, however, an audience may be reluctant to give such candid feedback, so it is your job to prepare.

Projection is a strategy to vocally *fill the space*; thus, the space dictates which vocal elements need to be adapted because every person in the room should comfortably experience your vocal range. If you speak too softly (too little volume or not **projecting**), your audience will struggle to hear and understand and may give up trying to listen. If you speak with too much volume, your audience may feel that you are yelling at them, or at least feel uncomfortable with you shouting. The volume you use should fit the size of the audience and the room.

Vocal Enunciation

Vocal enunciation is often reduced to pronouncing words correctly, but enunciation also describes the expression of words and language.

Have you ever spoken to a friend who replied, “Stop that! You’re mumbling.” If so, they’re signaling to you that they aren’t able to understand your message. You may have pronounced the words correctly but had poorly enunciated the words, leading to reduced comprehension.

One technique to increase **enunciation** occurs during speech rehearsal, and it’s known as the “dash” strategy: *e-nun-ci-ate e-ve–ry syll–a–bal in your pre-sen-ta-tion*.

The dashes signify distinct **enunciation** to create emphasis and expression. However, don’t go overboard! The dash strategy is an exaggerated exercise, but it can lead to a choppy **vocal delivery**.

Instead, use the dash strategy to find areas where difficult and longer words need more punctuated emphasis and, through rehearsal, organically integrate those areas of emphasis into your presentational persona.

Rate

The **rate** is how quickly or slowly you say the words of your speech. A slower **rate** may communicate to the audience that you do not fully know the speech. "Where is this going?" they may wonder. It might also be slightly boring if the audience is processing information faster than it's being presented.

By contrast, speaking too fast can be overly taxing on an audience's ability to keep up with and digest what you are saying. It sometimes helps to imagine that your speech is a jog that you and your friends (the audience) are taking together. You (as the speaker) are setting the pace based on how quickly you speak. If you start sprinting, it may be too difficult for your audience to keep up and they may give up halfway through. Most people who speak very quickly know they speak quickly, and if that applies to you, just be sure to practice slowing down and writing yourself delivery cues in your notes to maintain a more comfortable rate.

You will want to maintain a good, deliberate rate at the beginning of your speech because your audience will be getting used to your voice. We have all called a business where the person answering the phone mumbles the name of the business in a rushed way. We aren't sure if we called the right number. Since the introduction is designed to get the audience's attention and arouse interest in your speech, you will want to focus on clear vocal rate here.

You might also consider varying the rate depending on the type of information being communicated. While you'll want to be careful going too slow consistently, slowing your rate for a difficult piece of supporting material may be helpful. Similarly, quickening your rate in certainly segments can communicate an urgency.

Although the experience might seem awkward, watching yourself give a speech via recording (or web cam) is a great way to gauge your natural rate and pace.

Vocal Pauses

The common misconception for public speaking students is that pausing during your speech is bad, but **vocal pauses** can increase both the tone and comprehension of your argument. This is especially true if you are making a particularly important point or wanting a statement to have powerful impact: you will want to give the audience a moment to digest what you have said. You may also be providing new or technical information to an audience that needs additional time to absorb what you're saying.

For example, consider the following statement:

> Because of issues like pollution and overpopulation, in 50 years the earth's natural resources will be so depleted that it will become difficult for most people to obtain enough food to survive.

Following a statement like this, you want to give your audience a brief moment to fully consider what you are saying.

Use audience nonverbal cues and feedback (and provide them as an audience member) to determine whether additional pauses may be necessary for audience comprehension. Audiences are generally reactive and will use facial expressions and body language to communicate if they are listening, if they are confused, angry, or supportive.

Of course, there is such a thing as pausing too much, both in terms of frequency and length. Someone who pauses too often may appear unprepared. Someone who pauses too long (more than a few seconds) runs the risk of the audience feeling uncomfortable or, even worse, becoming distracted or letting their attention wander.

Pauses should be controlled to maintain attention of the audience and to create additional areas of emphasis.

Key Takeaways

- How you communicate your speech—and how the audience interprets the information—will be depend on your **visual delivery** and **verbal delivery**.
- Your **visual delivery** will depend on the nonverbal elements of your speech, which include eye contact, facial expressions, attire, and movement.
- Your **verbal delivery** will depend on how you say the words themselves. Are you speaking loud enough? Clear enough? How fast are you speaking? Are you pausing enough to let your words resonate with audience? All of these things will impact how the audience interprets and retains what you say.

Attributions

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Chapter 35: Speech Feedback and Evaluation

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- Identify strategies for managing stress and anxiety before and during your presentation
- Utilize techniques for handling unexpected mistakes and surprises during your presentation
- Reflect on your presentation to determine your strengths and areas you can improve
- Provide feedback to other presenters using non-verbal and verbal cues

Key Terms and Concepts

- non-verbal feedback
- verbal feedback

It’s finally here: presentation day! Hopefully, you are feeling confident because you have already prepared so much; however, maybe you’re still feeling anxious at the idea of speaking in front of your peers. That’s okay! Feeling anxious is perfectly normal.

In this chapter, we will discuss ways to manage that anxiety and how to adapt when things don’t go according to plan. We will also talk about how you can provide feedback to other presenters as well as help you reflect on the presentation process as a whole.

During the Presentation

We want to stress that it is okay to be nervous. It’s a very common response to public speaking. Fortunately, there are many strategies for dealing with your anxiety.

Managing Anxiety

Studies have been done to assess how nervous or stressful people typically get during presentations by examining people’s physiological responses at three intervals:

- one minute before the presentation
- the first minute of the speech
- the last minute of the speech.

They found that nervousness usually peaked at one of these intervals. Which one do you think it is?

They discovered that nervousness usually peaked at the anticipation stage that occurs **one minute** before the presentation. They also found that as the speech progresses, nervousness tends to go *down*. If you find yourself feeling this way right before your speech, here are some things you can try:

- Practice/rehearse in similar conditions/setting as your speech
- Be organized
- Think positively
- Analyze your audience
- Adapt your language to speaking style

During the presentation itself, there are four main areas where you can focus attention to manage your anxiety:

1. Observing your body's reaction
2. Interacting non-verbally with the audience
3. Keeping a sense of humour
4. Using common stress management techniques

Observing your Body's Reaction

Physical movement helps channel some of the excess energy that your body produces in response to anxiety. If at all possible, move around the front of the room rather than remaining imprisoned behind the lectern or gripping it for dear life (avoid pacing nervously from side to side, however). Move closer to the audience and then stop for a moment. If you are afraid that moving away from the lectern will reveal your shaking hands, hold on to your note card. This will give your hands something to do. Other options include performing vocal warm-ups right before your speech, having water (preferably in a non-spillable bottle with a spout) nearby for dry mouth, and doing a few stretches before going on stage.

Deep breathing will also help to counteract the effects of excess adrenaline. Like we saw in our note card examples, you can place cues or symbols in your notes, such as "slow down" or ☺ that remind you to pause and breathe during points in your speech. It is also a good idea to pause a moment before you get started to set an appropriate pace from the onset. Look at your audience and smile. It is a reflex for some of your audience members to smile back. Those smiles will reassure you that your audience members are friendly.

Interacting Non-verbally with the Audience

During your speech, make a point of establishing direct eye contact with your audience members. By looking at individuals, you establish a series of one-to-one contacts similar to interpersonal communication. An audience becomes much less threatening when you think of them not as an anonymous mass but as a collection of individuals.

A gentleman once shared his worst speaking experience: right before starting his speech, he reached the front of the room and forgot everything he was supposed to say. When asked what he saw when he was in the front of the room, he gave a quizzical look and responded, "I didn't see anything. All I remember is a mental image of me up there in the front of the room blowing it." The moral of this story is that speaking anxiety becomes more intense if you focus on yourself rather than concentrate on your audience and your material.

Keeping a Sense of Humour

No matter how well we plan, unexpected things happen. That fact is what makes public speaking so interesting. When the unexpected happens to you, do not let it rattle you.

Here's an example. At the end of a class period late in the afternoon of a long day, a student raised her hand and asked the professor if he knew that he was wearing two different coloured shoes, one black and one blue. He looked down and saw that she was right; his shoes did not match. He laughed at himself, complimented the student on her observational abilities, and moved on with the important thing, the material he had to deliver. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself.

Stress Management Techniques

Even when we use positive thinking and are well prepared, some of us still feel a great deal of anxiety about public speaking. When that is the case, it can be more helpful to use stress management than to try to make the anxiety go away.

Here are two main tools that can help:

- Visualization: imagining the details of what a successful speech would look and sound like from beginning to end; a way of hypnotizing yourself into positive thinking by using your mind's eye to make success real.
- Systematic desensitization: Gradual exposure to the thing that causes fear—in this case, giving a speech—can ultimately lead to decreased anxiety. Basically, the more practice you get speaking in front of people, the less fear and anxiety you'll have about public speaking. Organizations like Toastmasters that help people confront their fears by providing a supportive environment to learn and practise is a good option if you have a true phobia around presenting or public speaking. There's even a student club you can join at the University of Saskatchewan!

A Note about Microphones

If you are using a microphone during your speech, there are a few potential issues to be aware of. First, make sure you do a sound check and that you know how the microphone works—how to turn it on and off, how to mute it, and how to raise or lower it. If possible, have it positioned to the height you need before you go onstage. Make sure the microphone does not block your face.

If you will be using a clip-on microphone (called a lavaliere mic), you'll need to wear something with a lapel or collar that it can be clipped to. Make sure your hair and jewelry are out of the way to avoid rustling noises, and place the microphone 8 to 10 inches below your chin.

Finally, do not get too close to the microphone. Many people stand too close to the mic and end up hunched over it, creating bad posture and an uncomfortable position. If you get too close, the mic will pick up your breathing as well as your words and can also create that screeching feedback that will make your audience jump in their seats. Doing a sound check and getting comfortable with the equipment before you go onstage will prevent the majority of errors when using a microphone.

Coping with Mistakes and Surprises

Even the most prepared speaker will encounter unexpected challenges from time to time. Here are a few strategies for combating the unexpected in your own presentations.

Speech Content Issues

What if a note card goes missing or you unintentionally skip important information at the beginning of your speech? While situations like these might seem like the worst nightmare of a novice public speaker, they can be easily overcome. Pause for a moment to think about what to do. Is it important to include the missing information, or can it be omitted without hindering the audience's ability to understand your speech?

If it needs to be included, does the information fit better now or in a later segment? If you can move on without the missing element, that is often the best choice, but pausing for a few seconds to decide will be less distracting to the audience than sputtering through a few "ums" and "uhs." Situations like these demonstrate why it's a good idea to have a glass of water with you when you speak. Pausing for a moment to take a sip of water is a perfectly natural movement, so the audience may not even notice that anything is amiss.

Technical Difficulties

Technology has become a very useful aid in public speaking, allowing us to use audio or video clips, presentation software, or direct links to websites. It does break down occasionally, though! Web servers go offline, files will not download, or media content may be incompatible with the computer in the presentation room. Always have a backup plan in case of technical difficulties. As you develop your speech and visual aids, think through what you will do if you cannot show a particular graph or if your presentation slides are garbled. Your beautifully prepared chart may be superior to the verbal description you can provide, but your ability to provide a succinct verbal description when technology fails will give your audience the information they need and keep your speech moving forward.

External Distractions

Unfortunately, one thing that you can't control during your speech is audience etiquette, but you can decide how to react to it. Inevitably, an audience member will walk in late, a cell phone will ring, or a car alarm will go off outside. If you are interrupted by external events like these, it is often useful and sometimes necessary to pause and wait so that you can regain the audience's attention.

Whatever the event, maintain your composure. Do not get upset or angry about these glitches. If you keep your cool and quickly implement a "plan B" for moving forward, your audience will be impressed.

Reading Your Audience

Recognizing your audience's mood by observing their body language can help you adjust your message and see who agrees with you, who doesn't, and who is still deciding. With this information, you can direct your attention—including eye contact and questions—to the areas of the room where they can have the most impact.

As the speaker, you are conscious that you are being observed. But your audience members probably don't think of themselves as being observed, so their body language will be easy to read.

Handling Q&A

Question-and-answer sessions can be trickier to manage than the presentation itself. You can prepare for and rehearse the presentation, but audience members could ask a question you hadn't considered or don't know how to answer. There are three important elements to think about when incorporating Q&A's as part of your presentation:

1. Audience Expectations
2. Timing of Q&As
3. Knowing How to Respond

Audience Expectations

At the beginning of your speech, give the audience a little bit of information about who you are and what your expertise on the subject is. Once they know what you do (and what you know), it will be easier for the audience to align their questions with your area of expertise—and for you to bow out of answering questions that are outside of your area.

Timing of Q&A's

Questions are easier to manage when you are expecting them. Unless you are part of a panel, meeting, or teleconference, it is probably easier to let the audience know that you will take questions at the end of your presentation. This way you can avoid interruptions to your speech that can distract you and cause you to lose time. If audience members interrupt during your talk, you can then ask them politely to hold on to their question until the Q&A session at the end.

Knowing How to Respond

Never pretend that you know the answer to a question if you don't. The audience will pick up on it! Instead, calmly apologize and say that the question is outside of the scope of your knowledge but that you'd be happy to find out after the presentation (or, suggest some resources where the person could find out for themselves).

If you are uncertain about how to answer a question, say something like "That's really interesting. Could you elaborate on that?" Such a response will make the audience member feel good because they have asked an interesting question, and it will give you a moment to comprehend what they are asking.

Sometimes presenters rush to answer a question because they are nervous or want to impress. Pause for a moment, before you begin your answer, to think about what you want to say. This approach will help you to avoid misinterpreting the question, or taking offense to a question that is not intended that way.

A final tip is to be cautious about how you answer, so that you don't offend your audience. You are presenting on a topic because you are knowledgeable about it, but your audience is not. It is important not to make the audience feel inferior because there are things that they don't know. Avoid comments such as "Oh, yes, it's really easy to do that…" Instead, say something like "Yes, that can be tricky. I would recommend…" Also, avoid a bossy tone. For example, phrase your response with "What I find helpful is…" rather than "What you should do is…"

Evaluating a Speech

Feedback is an essential part of the presentation experience. It is often said that we are our own worst critic. Many people are hard on themselves and may exaggerate how poorly a speech or presentation went. Other times, there's not much exaggeration. In both cases, it helps to do a post-examination of your performance as a presenter.

For your RCM 200 presentation, you will be asked to provide feedback on how you think your presentation went as well as provide feedback to your classmates.

Self-Reflection

In the 30-60 second reflective debrief following your **extemporaneous speech**, give yourself a moment to **reflect** with your professor and fellow students about how your speech went. Taking time to reflect after a stressful experience is one way to build your lifelong learning skills, and can help you grow your public speaking skills that much quicker.

One reflective method to consider the **What? So what? Now what?** framework. The video below will explain this framework:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1679#oembed-1

What?	What did you do in your speech? Did you say everything you wanted to say? Did you forget anything?
So what?	What did you wish you could have done differently in your speech? Is there anything that you are especially proud of doing in your speech? Did anything surprise you about the experience?
Now what?	How has this experience changed your mind about public speaking? How will knowing what you know now change your future public speaking experiences?

To provide a slightly more objective approach to analyzing the delivery of your speech or presentation, consider the following questions:

- Did you make the most of your unique voice? Did the audience seem to understand you?
- Did you make the most of using body language? Did your body confidently support what you were saying?
- Did you use a coherent structure? Did the audience seem to make sense of your presentation? Was it logical?
- Did you show enthusiasm? Did you show the audience you cared about your presentation?
- Did you demonstrate expertise? Did you show your credibility by citing reliable sources and making a distinction between facts and your opinion?
- Did you show you practised and prepared? Did your confidence show because you implemented a plan that included sufficient rehearsal, contingency plans, and other success strategies?

Honestly asking yourself these questions with the intention of uncovering your strengths and weaknesses should help you to become a better presenter. While it is important to review other kinds of feedback, whether from the audience, your peers, or an instructor, it is also useful to have a realistic understanding of your own performance. This understanding is part of gaining experience and improving as a presenter.

Feedback as an Audience Member

Audience members are vital in helping speakers understand how they are doing both during and after the presentation. In the public speaking rounds you will have the chance to practice your **active listening** skills and the concept of conscious listening. Knowing what it feels like to be on stage is often motivation enough for many people to give **non-verbal feedback** or **verbal feedback**.

Your instructor will guide the evaluation sessions and will provide some prompting questions to help you give some constructive feedback to your classmates. Part of your professionalism mark will be determined by your participation in being a good audience member for your classmates' speeches.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1679#oembed-2

With the above video in mind, let's look at how you can provide **non-verbal** and **verbal feedback** to a speaker.

Non-Verbal Feedback

Effective listening is more than just using your ears. In fact, Boothman (2008) recommends listening with your whole body, not just your ears. Consider how confident you would feel speaking to a room full of people with their eyes closed, arms and legs crossed, and bodies bent in slouches. These listeners are presenting non-verbal cues communicating that they are uninterested and unimpressed. Meanwhile, listeners sitting up straight, facing you with an intent look on their face, are more likely to offer reassurance that the speaker's words are being understood.

Eye contact is another non-verbal cue to the speaker that you are paying attention. You don't want to be bug-eyed and unblinking; the speaker might assume there is a tiger behind them and begin to panic as you seem to be doing. However, attentive eye contact can indicate you are listening and help you to stay focused too. There are some cultures where maintaining eye contact would cause discomfort, so keep that in mind. Also, you may be someone who listens better with eyes closed to visualize what is being said. This can be difficult for a speaker to recognize, so if this is you, consider incorporating one of the following non-verbals while you listen with eyes closed.

Nodding your head affirmatively and making responses such as "Yes," "Umhum," or "OK" can help the speaker gauge your interest. Even the speed of your head nod can signal your level of patience or understanding (Pease & Pease, 2006). Leaning in as a listener is far more encouraging than slumping in your seat. Nevertheless, sending too many non-verbal responses to the speaker can go wrong, too. After all, a conference room full of people shifting in their seats and nodding their heads may translate as a restless audience that the speaker needs to recapture.

Verbal Feedback

While speakers sometimes want all questions held until the end of a presentation, asking questions when the opportunity presents itself can help you as a listener. For one, you have to listen in order to be able to ask a question. Your goal should be to ask open-ended questions ("What do you think about….?" rather than "We should do …, right?"). You can use questions to confirm your understanding of the speaker's message. If you're not entirely sure of a significant point, you might ask a clarifying question. These are questions such as "What did you mean?" "Can you be more specific?" or "What is a concrete example of your point?" Such questions can help your comprehension while also offering the speaker feedback. When asking questions, approach the speaker in a positive, non-threatening way. A good listener doesn't seek to put the speaker on the defensive. You want to demonstrate your objectivity and willingness to listen to the speaker's response.

Finally, paraphrasing what has been said in your interactions with the speaker can be another useful tool for a good listener. Imagine the difference if, before you respond to an upset colleague, you take a moment to say, "I understand you are disappointed we didn't consult you before moving forward with the product release…" before you say, "we didn't have time to get everyone's input." Reflecting back the speaker's point of view before responding allows the speaker to know you were listening and helps foster trust that everyone's voice is being heard.

Non-Verbal Feedback (constructive)	Verbal Feedback (constructive)
Listen with whole body	Ask open-ended questions
Use appropriate eye contact	Questions confirm understanding of message
Nod affirmatively (mmm hmm, yes, OK)	Ask clarifying questions (can you give an example of/did you mean…)
Use **listener's lean**	Use paraphrasing to demonstrate accurate understanding

Non-Verbal Feedback (not constructive)	Verbal Feedback (not constructive)
Closed body position	Asking closed questions
No eye contact	Asking questions that don't relate to speaker's message
Inattentive, distracted (playing with phones, engaging in side conversations etc.)	Asking rhetorical questions
Slumping, yawning	Making your own speech instead of asking a question

Receiving Feedback

Being open to receiving feedback is the only way to have a better picture of your performance as a presenter or speaker. Combining self-analysis with the feedback of your audience or peers is your opportunity to better understand your strengths as a presenter and what resonated well with your audience.

It may be a bit more uncomfortable to look at things that did not go well, or receive feedback that's judgemental, biased, or otherwise laden with emotion. When receiving and making sense of feedback, it is very important to be self-aware and honest with yourself. This honesty will help you distinguish between an environmental situation, a situation that lies with the audience member, or a situation with the presenter.

Key Takeaways

- It is okay to be anxious about public speaking. Fortunately, there are many strategies you can use to help you before and during the presentation. Coming to your speech prepared will make a huge difference. During the speech, however, you try things like observing your bodies reaction and interacting non-verbally with the audience.
- After your speech is done, you should reflect on what went well and areas where you can improve. You can do this by using the "W**hat? So What? Now What?**" framework, or considering the questions outlined in this chapter.
- Once your speech is done, you still have responsibilities as an audience member. As you listen to a person's speech, be mindful of the **non-verbal** and **verbal feedback** you are showing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: What is Rhetoric?

What is Rhetoric?

Rhetoric is a discipline built on the notion that *language matters*. It's a discipline that's been around for over 2,500 years, and at different times, people who have studied it have been interested in different things. While their interests have led them to focus on different aspects of rhetoric, there are several common characteristics of rhetoric that modern readers and writers value.

Rhetoric is Communicative

It's about conveying ideas effectively in order to promote understanding among people.

I.A. Richards, an early 20th-century philosopher, defined rhetoric as "the study of misunderstandings and their remedies." Language is messy. It is difficult, contextual, and based on individual experience. We use language and privilege particular languages based on who we are, where we come from, and who we interact with. In essence, communicating with others is complicated and fraught with potential misunderstandings based on our experiences as individuals. Rhetoric gives you a way to work within the messiness of language. It helps writers think through the varied contexts in which language occurs, giving them a way to—ideally—effectively reach audiences with very different experiences.

Rhetoric is About Discovery

It's about inquiring into and investigating the communication situations we participate in.

Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in any given case the available means of persuasion." Often, the word "persuasion" is emphasized in this definition; however, the concept of "discovery" is also key here. In order to have ideas to communicate, we have to learn about the case—or situation—we're commenting on. Kenneth Burke likened this process to a gathering in a parlor, where you arrive with a conversation already in progress. You have to actively listen to the conversation—carefully observe the situation you will participate in and the subject(s) that you will comment on—finding out the different participants' positions and justifications for those positions before you can craft an informed opinion of your own. Rhetoric is a tool that helps you think through and research the situation as you prepare to communicate with others.

Rhetoric is about Doing Things

Jeff Grabill, a contemporary writing teacher, asks, "What are people doing when they are said to be doing rhetoric?" In response, he argues that rhetoric is a kind of work that creates things of value in the world. In other words, rhetoric creates attention to the world around us and particular people, places, and ideas in it. Paying attention to others around us helps us identify and make connections with others and their ideas, needs, and interests, and ultimately this can deepen our relationships with others. Importantly, connecting with others leads to action that alters the physical world around us, leading to the production of art and music, protests and performances, and even new buildings and spaces for people to conduct their lives. Understanding that rhetoric makes things can provide a reason to care about it and motivation to practice it.

Rhetoric is Systematic

One characteristic that influences each of the previous three is that rhetoric is systematic. It provides both readers and writers with a purposeful and methodical approach to communicating, discovering, and generating with language. It provides a set of skills and concepts that you can consistently use in order to critically think, read, research, and write in ways that allow you to achieve your communication goals. It's important to realize, though, that rhetoric is not a one-size-fits-all formula. It's not a series of steps that you follow the same way every time. Every communication situation is different, with different goals, contexts, and audiences, and thinking rhetorically is a flexible process that allows you to adapt to, as Aristotle put it, "any given situation." You can think of rhetoric like a toolbelt. When using your tools, you don't always use a tape measure first, then a hammer, then a screwdriver. In fact, you don't always carry the same tools to different jobs. Depending on the job, you use different tools in different ways and in different orders to accomplish your task. Rhetoric is the same way.

Rhetoric is Transferable

Perhaps the most important part of rhetoric is that it's transferable. Rhetoric isn't just a tool that you use in English classes; thinking rhetorically is a way to methodically approach any writing situation that you may run across in your academic, professional, or personal lives. You use rhetorical analysis in the chemistry classroom to dissect complex equations and then to communicate that knowledge to others, just like you use it to decipher what a TV commercial is attempting to make you believe about a given service or product. You use persuasion to pitch business ideas just as you use it when constructing a resume. Considerations of audience are vital for Facebook posts as well as job interviews. Understanding genre helps you to create effective lab reports as well as office e-mails. Learning to think and write rhetorically can impact every area of your life. Rhetoric is everywhere that language is. And language is everywhere.

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Appendix B: Reader-Centered Writing

Writing can be conceptualized as **writer-centred** or **reader-centred**. Things like diaries and journals are primarily writer-centred, in that they are written for the benefit of the writer. Your schoolwork may also have been somewhat writer-centred, in that often your goal was to "show what you know" and thereby "get a good grade." Technical communications require that you shift this mindset and write for the benefit of your reader—or design the content and structure of your communication for your "user." This mindset should be informed by an understanding of your audience. Use these guidelines and ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who is my target audience?** Are they internal or external readers? Upstream, downstream or lateral from you? Do I have multiple readers?
- **What is their perspectives on the topic, on me, and on the document I will write?** What are they expecting to do with the document? What is the document meant to accomplish? Why has it been requested? What is my role and relationship to my readers? What does the reader need to know? Already know? What does my reader NOT need to have explained?
- **What is my goal or purpose in writing to these readers?** What am I trying to communicate? What do I want them to do as a result of reading this document? How can I plan the content to meet my readers' needs?
- **What is my reader's goal?** Why does this audience want

or need to read this document?

Getting a clear understanding of your audience is important in communicating effectively. It also enables you to imagine your audience as you write and revise. Keep asking yourself whether what you have said would be clear to your audience. How could you say it better?

EXERCISE 2.2 Audience analysis

Choose one of the topics below. Then perform an audience analysis, using the questions above to gain an understanding of the needs of different audiences. Write a profile of your intended reader(s) and consider what sort of information they will need and why?

1. You have been asked to write a report on **Maintaining Internet Privacy** for
   a) A new internet user who just signed up for internet service
   b) A start up e-commerce website developer
2. Prepare a document on **Food-born Diseases** for
   a) Restaurant workers (servers and kitchen staff)
   b) For a health inspector training course
3. Provide information on a proposed **New Bus Shelter Design** to
   a) Mayor's office
   b) Contractor
   c) Newspaper reporter writing an article on the issue

Professional Tone

"Tone" refers to the attitude that a document conveys towards the topic and/or the reader. You have likely read something that sounded angry, or optimistic, or humorous, or cynical, or enthusiastic. These words characterize the tone. Technical communication tends to avoid displaying an obvious emotion, and instead strives for a neutral tone.

Tone is created through word choice (diction), word order (syntax), sentence construction, and viewpoint. Consider a piece of academic writing that you may have read. It creates a formal tone through its use of specialized terminology, sophisticated vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and third person voice. This style suits the genre because it is directed at experts and scholars in the field, and seeks to convey complex information densely and objectively, with an emphasis on reason, logic, and evidence.

Now consider a piece of business writing that you may have read. The tone may be sightly less formal but not colloquial. The language is direct and plain, and the sentences are shorter and more straightforward. It may make use of the second person ("you"). This style suits business writing because it is directed at colleagues, management, or clients who are seeking information clearly and quickly and who may need to take action on it.

Writing Constructively

Striking the appropriate tone involves understanding your purpose, context, and audience. It also involves an understanding that workplaces are often hierarchical, and that cooperation and teamwork are required. Therefore, it is important to consider how you want your reader to feel, and what may make your reader feel that way. Your goal is to write constructively, which means to use positive phrasing to convey your message to your reader. **Table 2.1.1** illustrates the differences between destructive/negative and constructive/positive feelings the reader may experience as a result of the tone used in a document.

TABLE 2.1.1 Differences between destructive/negative and constructive/positive

Negative	Constructive
misunderstood	understood
outraged	conciliatory
disgusted	pleased
guilty	capable
belittled	empowered
patronized	respected
defensive	proud
chastised	valued
humiliated	honoured
excluded	a sense of belonging
resentment	contentment

Considering how your reader may feel after reading your document is an important part of revision. Did your tone come across like you hoped it would? Could it be misconstrued? Often this is where peer reviewing can be helpful. Asking a colleague to review your document before sending it off to its intended audience is a common professional practice.

Sometimes, you will need to communicate information that is unpleasant, such as delivering bad news or rejecting a request. Communicating constructively is possible—and arguably even more important—in these situations. Regardless of message, how can you ensure you are communicating constructively?

- **Adopt an adult-to-adult approach:** that is to say, avoid talking down to your reader in a patronizing tone, and likewise avoid sounding petulant or unwilling to take responsibility. Aim to communicate respectfully, responsibly, confidently, and cooperatively — as one responsible adult to another.
- **Be courteous:** focus on the reader as much as possible. Use "you" unless it results in blaming (one effective use of passive verbs is to avoid assigning blame: "mistakes were made"). Use traditionally accepted forms of courtesy and politeness. Use gender-neutral phrasing and plural forms, unless you are referring to a specific person and you know their gender.
- **Focus on the positive:** emphasize what you *can* do rather than what you can't. Try to avoid negative wording and phrasing (no, not, never, none, isn't, can't, don't, *etc*.). Focus on what *can* be improved.
- **Be genuine:** apologize if you have made a mistake. Take responsibility and promise to do better. Be authentic in your expression. Avoid sounding like marketing material (ad-speak). Make reasonable claims that can be backed with evidence.

Consider the following perspectives:

Writer-Centred (I, we)	**Reader-Centred (you)**
If I can answer any questions, I'll be happy to do so.	If you have any questions, please ask.
We shipped the order this morning.	Your order was shipped this morning.
I'm happy to report that …	You'll be glad to know that …

Negative Phrasing	Constructive Phrasing
We cannot process your claim because the necessary forms have not been completed	Your claim can be processed as soon as we receive the necessary forms
We do not take phone calls after 3:00pm on Fridays	*You try …*
We closed your case because we never received the information requested in our letter of April …	

EXERCISE 2.3 Revise an email for appropriate tone

A colleague has asked you to review his email before sending. What revisions to content, tone, and style would you suggest?

From: Jake Burns
To: J. Parsons, Project Co-ordinator
Date: 12 December 2015
Subject: Two Problems

Hi Ms. P

Say, we may need to increase the budget on this project by $12,000. Sam screwed up when he calculated material costs. Now we don't have enough budgeted to add the additional G3 servers with the 36GB 15k hot pluggable hard drives. I know you don't know what all that means, but trust me. WE NEED THOSE SERVER UPGRADES!!!

Also, I would like to talk about getting my office moved closer to the rest of the IT department. All the running back and forth is disturbing other employees. I am so far away from everyone that I figure I must need to change deodorant or something. ;)

JB

EXERCISE 2.4 Revise for constructive tone

How do you think the following memo will make the recipients feel? How would you revise the following memo to more constructively address the problem?

From: Ann Onymous
To: All Employees
Date: Feb. 3, 2011
Subject: Littering

For some time now, smoking has been strictly prohibited within five metres of the Main Building entrance. Do NOT smoke anywhere near the doors!

Some of you still insist on smoking and have been doing so inside this area. As a result, the areas near the rear exit and around the picnic tables are constantly littered with smoking-related debris (filter tips, half-smoked cigarettes, empty lighters, etc.), creating an eyesore and making more work for my staff, who have to keep cleaning up this mess.

Starting Monday, sand buckets will be provided outside the read doors and in the picnic area. Use them!

For further reading, see "Communication in the Workplace: What Can NC State Students Expect?" a study based on the responses of over 1000 professionals from various fields, including engineering, on how important business, technical and scientific communication is to their work.

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Appendix C: The Seven Cs

Polishing the Report

So far we have discussed the importance of writing with the reader in mind; of striking the right tone for your audience, message, and purpose; of writing constructively; and of writing persuasively. Now we move onto the actual writing itself. Two key characteristics of professional technical communication are that it is precise and concise. This precision and concision must be evident at all levels, from the overall document, to paragraphing, to sentence structure to word choice, and even to punctuation. Every word or phrase should have a distinct and useful purpose. If it doesn't, cut it or revise.

The 7 Cs of Professional Writing

The 7 C's are simply seven words that begin with C that characterize strong professional style. Applying the 7 C's of professional communication will result in writing that is

- Clear
- Coherent
- Concise
- Concrete
- Correct
- Complete
- Courteous.

CLEAR writing involves knowing what you want to say before you say it because often a lack of clarity comes from unclear thinking or poor planning; this, unfortunately, leads to confused or annoyed readers. Clear writing conveys the purpose of the document immediately to the reader; it matches vocabulary to the audience, avoiding jargon and unnecessary technical or obscure language while at the same time being precise. In clarifying your ideas, ensure that each sentence conveys one idea, and that each paragraph thoroughly develops one unified concept.

COHERENT writing ensures that the reader can easily follow your ideas and your train of thought. One idea should lead logically into the next through the use of transitional words and phrases, structural markers, planned repetition, sentences with clear subjects, headings that are clear, and effective and parallel lists. Writing that lacks coherence often sounds "choppy" and ideas seem disconnected or incomplete. Coherently connecting ideas is like building bridges between islands of thought so the reader can easily move from one idea to the next.

CONCISE writing uses the least words possible to convey the most meaning while still maintaining clarity. Avoid unnecessary padding, awkward phrasing, overuse of "to be" forms (*is, are, was, were, am, be, being*), long preposition strings, vagueness, unnecessary repetition and redundancy. Use active verbs whenever possible, and take the time to choose a single word rather than a long phrase or cliched expression. Think of your word count like a budget; be cost effective by making sure every word you choose does effective work for you. Cut a word, save a buck! As William

Zinsser asserts, "the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components."[1]

CONCRETE writing involves using specific, precise language to paint a picture for your readers so that they can more easily understand your ideas. If you have to explain an abstract concept or idea, try to use examples, analogies, and precise language to illustrate it. Use measurable descriptors whenever possible; avoid vague terms like "big" or "good." Try to get your readers to "see" your ideas by using specific terms and descriptions.

CORRECT writing uses standard English punctuation, sentence structure, usage, and grammar. Being correct also means providing accurate information, as well as using the right document type and form for the task.

COMPLETE writing includes all requested information and answers all relevant questions. The more concrete and specific you are, the more likely your document will be complete as well. Review your checklist of specifications before submitting your document to its intended reader.

COURTEOUS writing entails designing a reader-friendly, easy-to-read document; using tactful language and appropriate modes of addressing the audience; and avoiding potentially offensive terminology, usage, and tone. As we have discussed in an early section, without courtesy you cannot be constructive.

In some cases, some of these might come into conflict: what if being too concise results in a tone that sounds terse, or an idea that seems incomplete? **Figure 2.2.1** illustrates one method of putting all the 7Cs together.

1. W. Zinsser, "Simplicity," [Online]. Available: http://www.geo.umass.edu/faculty/wclement/Writing/zinsser.html

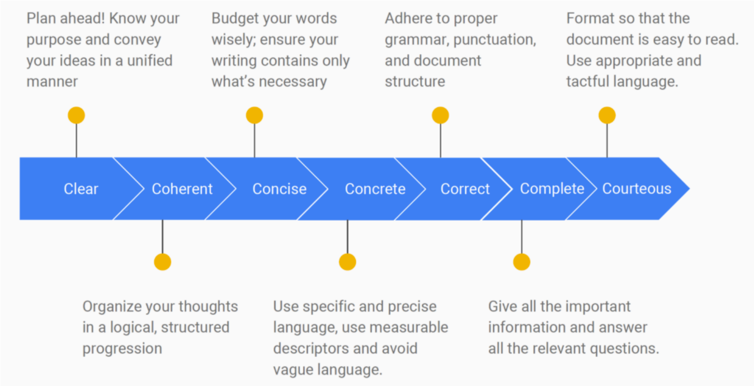

Figure 2.2.1 *Putting all the 7Cs together* [2] *[Image description]*

Be mindful of the tradeoffs, and always give priority to being **clear**: writing that lacks clarity cannot be understood and therefore cannot achieve its purpose. Writing that adheres to the 7 C's helps to establish your **credibility** as a technical professional.

EXERCISE 2.5 Revise for clarity

Revise the following memo so that it adheres to the 7 Cs; make it clear, coherent, concrete and concise, while also being complete, courteous and correct.

2. Figure 2.2.1 created by Alyssa Zicari and Jenna Hildemann; used with permission

MEMO

When workloads increase to a level requiring hours in excess of an employee's regular duty assignment, and when such work is estimated to require a full shift of eight (8) hours or more on two (2) or more consecutive days, even though unscheduled days intervene, an employee's tour of duty shall be altered so as to include the hours when such work must be done, unless an adverse impact would result from such employee's absence from his previously scheduled assignment.

Sentence Variety and Length

While variety makes for interesting writing, too much of it can also reduce clarity and precision. Technical writing tends to use simple sentence structures more often than the other types. That said, simple does not necessarily mean "simplistic," short, or lacking in density. Remember that in grammatical terms, simple just means that it has one main clause (one subject and one predicate). You can still convey quite a bit of concrete information in a simple sentence.

The other consideration for precise writing is length. Your sentences should vary in length just as they can vary in type. However, you want to avoid having too many long sentences because they take longer to read and are often more complex. That is appropriate in academic writing but less so in technical writing. The goal is to aim for an average of around 20 to 30 words per sentence. Reserve the short sentences for main points and use longer sentences for supporting points that clarify or explain cause and effect relationships. If you feel the sentence is too long, break it into two sentences. You do not want your reader to have to read a sentence twice to understand it. If you make compound or complex sentences, ensure that you use appropriate coordinating or subordinating strategies to make the relationship between clauses perfectly clear. See Appendix E to review specific information on simple, compound, and complex sentence structures.

Precise Wording

Technical writing is precise writing. Vague, overly general, hyperbolic or subjective/ambiguous terms are simply not appropriate in this genre. You do not want to choose words and phrasing that could be interpreted in more than one way. For example, if you asked someone to define what makes a "good dog," you might get responses like "obedient, effective hunter/retriever, well-behaved, affectionate, loyal, therapeutic, goofy" and "all dogs are good!" Choose words that most precisely, concisely, and accurately convey the idea you want to convey. Below are some guidelines and examples to follow for using precise wording.

1. Replace abstract nouns with verbs.

Verbs, more than nouns, help convey ideas concisely, so where possible, avoid using nouns derived from verbs. Often these abstract nouns end in –***tion*** and –***ment***. See examples in the following chart.

Abstract Noun	Verb
acquisition	acquire
analysis	analyze
recommendation	recommend
observation	observe
application	apply
confirmation	confirm
development	develop
ability	able, can
assessment	assess

2. Prefer short words to long words and phrases.

The goal is to communicate directly and plainly so use short, direct words whenever possible. In other words, don't use long words or phrases when short ones will do. Write to *express*, not impress.

Long	Short
cognizant; be cognizant of	aware, know
commence; commencement	begin, beginning
utilize; utilization	use (v), use (n)
inquire; make an inquiry	ask
finalize; finalization	complete, end
afford an opportunity to	permit, allow
at this point in time	now, currently
due to the fact that	because, due to
has the ability to	can

3. Avoid clichés.

Clichés are expressions that you have probably heard and used hundreds of times. They are over-used expressions that have largely lost their meaning and impact.

Clichés	Alternatives
as plain as day	plainly, obvious, clear
ballpark figure	about, approximately
few and far between	rare, infrequent
needless to say	of course, obviously
last but not least	finally, lastly
as far as ___ is concerned	?

4. Avoid cluttered constructions.

This category includes redundancies, repetitions, and “there is/are” and “it is” constructions.

Redundancies		
combine/join ~~together~~	fill ~~completely~~	unite ~~as one~~
finish ~~entirely~~	refer/return/revert ~~back~~ to	emphasize/stress ~~strongly~~
examine (closely)	~~suddenly~~ interrupt	~~better/further~~ enhance
~~eventually~~ evolve ~~over time~~	~~strictly~~ forbid	rely/depend ~~heavily~~
plan ~~ahead~~	~~harshly~~ condemn	protest ~~against~~
~~completely~~ surround ~~on all sides~~	estimate/ approximate ~~roughly~~	gather/assemble ~~together~~
~~clearly~~ articulate	~~carefully~~ consider	~~successfully~~ prove
~~future~~ plan	~~mutual~~ agreement	years ~~of age~~
in ~~actual~~ fact	~~positive~~ benefits	~~end~~ result/product

5. Use accurate wording.

Sometimes this requires *more* words instead of fewer, so do not sacrifice clarity for concision. Make sure your words convey the meaning you intend. Avoid using words that have several possible meanings; do not leave room for ambiguity or alternate interpretations of your ideas. Keep in mind that readers of technical writing tend to choose literal meanings, so avoid figurative language that might be confusing (for example, using the word "decent" to describe something you like or think is good). Separate facts from opinions by using phrases like "we recommend," "we believe," or "in our opinion." Use consistent terminology rather than looking for synonyms that may be less precise.

Qualify statements that need qualifying, especially if there is possibility for misinterpretation. Do not overstate through the use of absolutes and intensifiers. Avoid overusing intensifiers like "extremely," and avoid absolutes like "never, always, all, none” as these are *almost* never accurate. Remember Obiwan Kenobi’s warning:

“Only a Sith deals in absolutes.”[3]

We tend to overuse qualifiers and intensifiers, so below are some that you should be aware of and consider whether you are using them effectively.

Overused Intensifiers					
absolutely	actually	assuredly	certainly	clearly	completely
considerably	definitely	effectively	extremely	fundamentally	drastically
highly	in fact	incredibly	inevitably	indeed	interestingly
markedly	naturally	of course	particularly	significantly	surely
totally	utterly	very	really	remarkably	tremendously

Overused Qualifiers					
apparently	arguably	basically	essentially	generally	hopefully
in effect	in general	kind of	overall	perhaps	quite
rather	relatively	seemingly	somewhat	sort of	virtually

For a comprehensive list of words and phrases that should be used with caution, see Kim Blank’s “[Wordiness, Wordiness, Wordiness List](http://web.uvic.ca/~gkblank/wordiness.html).” [4]

3. *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith* (2005). [Film]. Directed by G. Lucas
4. K. G. Blank, “Wordiness list,” Department of English, University of Victoria [Online]. Available: http://web.uvic.ca/~gkblank/wordiness.html

6. Prefer the active voice.

The active voice emphasizes the person/thing doing the action in a sentence. For example, *The outfielder throws the ball*. The subject, "outfielder" actively performs the action of the verb "throw." The passive voice emphasizes the recipient of the action. In other words, something is being done to something by somebody: *The ball was thrown (by the outfielder).* Passive constructions are generally wordier and often leave out the person/thing doing the action.

Active	Passive
S →V →O	**S ←V ←O**
Subject → actively does the action of the verb → to the object of the sentence	Subject ← passively receives the action of the verb ← from the object
Subject → acts → on object	Subject ← is acted upon ← by the object

While the passive voice has a place—particularly if you want to emphasize the receiver of an action as the subject of the sentence, or the action itself, or you want to avoid using first person—its overuse results in writing that is wordy, vague, and stuffy. When possible, use the active voice to convey who or what performs the action of the verb.

Precise writing encapsulates many of the 7 C's; it is clear, concise, concrete, and correct. But it is also accurate and active. To write precisely and apply the 7 C's, it is important to look critically at your sentences, perhaps in a way you may not have done before. You need to consider the design of those sentences, from the words to the phrases to the clauses, to ensure that you are communicating your message effectively.

Image descriptions

Figure 2.2.1 image description:
A priority list of the 7 Cs.

1. Clear: Plan ahead! Know your purpose and convey your ideas in a unified manner.
2. Coherent: Organize your thoughts in a logical, structured progression.
3. Concise: Budget your words wisely; ensure your writing contains only what's necessary.
4. Concrete: Use specific and precise language, use measurable descriptors and avoid vague language.
5. Correct: Adhere to proper grammar, punctuation, and document structure.
6. Complete: Give all the important information and answer all relevant questions.
7. Courteous: Format so that the document is easy to read. Use appropriate and tactful language.

[Return to Figure 2.2.1]

References

1. W. Zinsser, "Simplicity," [Online]. Available: http://www.geo.umass.edu/faculty/wclement/Writing/zinsser.html ↲
2. Figure 2.2.1 created by Alyssa Zicari and Jenna Hildemann; used with permission ↲
3. *Star Wars: Episode III – Revenge of the Sith* (2005). [Film]. Directed by G. Lucas ↲
4. K. G. Blank, "Wordiness list," Department of English, University of Victoria [Online].

Available: http://web.uvic.ca/~gkblank/wordiness.html ↲

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Appendix D: Understanding and Documenting Information

Understanding and Documenting Information

Remember, our own ethos relies, in part, on the quality of the secondary research sources we use. That is, the sources we use can either add or detract from our overall credibility. Therefore, reviewing, processing, and documenting information is an integral part of the research process. Below, we discuss a variety of strategies for effectively understanding and documenting sources.

Skimming

Skimming is the process of reading key parts of a text in order to get an overview of an author's argument and main ideas. There are many different methods for skimming, so you will have to determine which works best for you and your particular source.

Well-written texts such as essays, articles, and book chapters are generally formatted in similar ways:

Introduction: provides the main idea/thesis as well as overview of the text's structure

Body: provides claims, arguments, evidence, support and so on to support thesis

Conclusion: provides connections to larger contexts, suggests implications, ask questions, and revisit the main ideas

Ideally, the main ideas will be presented in the introduction, elaborated on in detail in the body, and reviewed in the conclusion. Further, many sources will contain headings or subheadings to organize points and examples, and well-written paragraphs generally have clear topic sentences, or sentences that provide the main idea(s) discussed in the paragraph. All of these aspects will help you skim while developing a sense of the argument and main ideas.

When you skim a source, consider the following process:

1. Read the introduction (this could be a few paragraphs long).
2. Scan the document for headings. In a shorter article, there may not be any headings or there may be only a couple.
3. Whenever you see a new heading, be sure to read at least the first few sentences under the heading and the final few sentences of the section.
4. Read the conclusion.

Example: Skimming a Book

When we encounter a text for a first time, it's a good idea to skim through to see if we need to take a further look at it in our research. One method for doing this is referred to as the First Sentence Technique, which entails reading the introduction, the first sentence of each paragraph, and the conclusion. This approach can be useful for taking notes and creating summaries of sources.

A slightly more in-depth approach can deepen your understanding of the text and help you identify particular sections or even other resources that might be helpful:

- Scan the preface, acknowledgements, and table of contents. (This identifies the methods and framework for the book.)
- Scan the notes at the end of chapters to better

understand the author's research.

- Scan the index to see if the book covers the information you need.
- Read the introductory paragraphs for each chapter. (This can help you better understand the structure and arguments of the book.)

Taking Notes

Taking notes is a central component of the research process. While you skim the articles, record important information, beginning with publication information. Publication information provides a sense of the rhetorical situation for the source, such as intended audience and context. As you encounter texts in your research, consider their role in your project and take note of the publication information as noted. Recording the publication information as you go will help avoid problems or mistakes when citing and building the reference list.

[Add HP5 CONTENT from this PAGE]

You may think, "what should I record from the sources other than the publication information?" The goal of research notes is to help you remember information and quickly access important details. You should write down the following details:

- Thesis statement
- Keywords
- Major points or claims
- Evidence, support and/or examples
- Headings (depending on the source)

You may want to write down the thesis, points, and claims exactly as they appear in the source. However, whenever you copy the language exactly, be sure to use quotation marks to indicate that the information is coming directly from a source/author.

Restating the Information in Your Own Words

After taking the time to skim and take notes, you should also put the author's thesis and ideas into your own words. Doing so ensures that you truly understand the source and the author's points. There are two major ways to approach this process: summary and paraphrase. We will touch on both of these more when we talk about producing the report, but in this instance, please know that you are using both methods for your own knowledge, not necessarily for content in your report.

Summary

Summaries are condensed versions of the original source, in your own words. Summaries focus on the main ideas, but do not copy any of the original language. A 500 page book or a 2 hour movie could be summarized in a sentence. **Summaries do not contain the same level of detail as the original source.**

Example: Summary

The following text demonstrates a summary of an original passage:

Original Text

"Lead can enter drinking water when service pipes that contain lead corrode, especially where the water has high acidity or low mineral content that corrodes pipes and fixtures. The most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and fixtures with lead solder, from which significant amounts of lead can enter into the water, especially hot water."

Summary

Water becomes contaminated by lead when lead pipes, solder, or certain types of fixtures degrade, and hot water can increase the amount lead released.

Environmental Protection Agency. (2016). Basic information about lead in drinking water. Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water

Paraphrase

Similarly, paraphrases are restatements of source material, in your own words, but the difference is that paraphrases tend to be closer in length to the original source. **Paraphrases have the same level of detail as the original.** Remember, though, if you copy from the original even two or three words in a row you must provide quotation marks around those words.

Example: Paraphrase

Original

"Lead can enter drinking water when service pipes that contain lead corrode, especially where the water has high acidity or low mineral content that corrodes pipes and fixtures. The most common problem is with brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and fixtures with lead solder, from which significant amounts of lead can enter into the water, especially hot water."

Paraphrase

Water becomes contaminated by lead when lead pipes or lead solder degrades. Certain types of fixtures, such as those plated with chrome and brass, as well as hot water, acidic water, and water with lower amounts of minerals can make lead contamination significantly worse.

Regardless of whether you choose to directly quote, summarize, or paraphrase a source, you **must** document the source material. **Failure to do so is plagiarism** and can lead to allegations of academic or workplace dishonesty.

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Appendix E: Academic Integrity and the Professional Space

If you haven't already, make sure you complete all three assigned Library tutorials on Academic Integrity accessed through the following links:

- Understanding Academic Integrity
- Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities
- Developing Skills that Prevent Misconduct

Depending on where you are in your college career, the idea of "academic integrity" is probably not new. If anything, the library tutorials are probably a review, since academic integrity is typically discussed by most professors. However, let's look forward and briefly consider what the larger idea of integrity means outside of academia and in the professional workspace.

Integrity is all about how you conduct yourself. Are your actions ethical? Do they potentially cause harm to others, either intentionally or unintentionally? You will need to consider your integrity throughout your career. Let's apply this idea to the three modes of appeal (ethos, logos, and pathos). How do they connect to integrity issues in the workplace? Below you'll find a example of someone making a decision that could negatively impact one of the modes of appeal. Can you identify which mode of appeal they are breaking, how they are doing it, and a possible consequence?

Scenario #1

Mateo has a problem. He is trying to put together a pitch for a potential client so his company can get a lucrative construction contract from the province. However, the data he needs to highlight just isn't available right now. He knows the evidence exists because his friends who do research says it does, but it just hasn't been verified in a peer-reviewed journal. He decides to include data from a friend's article in a non-peer reviewed journal, but not directly state that fact in his pitch.

Which mode of appeal is Mateo breaking?

Logos: Mateo is using evidence that has not been verified in his pitch. Yes, it may be from a journal and people in the industry that he trusts, but that doesn't mean its okay to include in a report. Additionally, choosing to not mention this to the organization he's pitching is potentially illegal. This choice could result in fines for the company and Mateo might lose his job.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1655#h5p-7

Scenario #2

Personal connections are important. Susie knows their value after several years in social work, since she requires them to It's help her audience connect with her presentation. The problem is she doesn't really have a personal connection to her field: drug addiction. She is passionate about helping people overcome addiction, but when she talks about it to crowds, she notices that the audience seems to not pay close enough attention because she usually just states facts. So, instead, she decides to create a fictional story of a family member who eventually went to jail for using illegal drugs. She has worked with many drug addicts during her career, so she combines a bunch of their stories in order to make her own. Since the story doesn't belong to anyone, it's probably going to be fine, especially if it helps other people seek treatment.

Which mode of appeal is Susie breaking?

Pathos: While Susie's intention to evoke an emotional response from the audience is good in principle, the way she goes about it is completely wrong. She is, in fact, lying about her personal experience to get the audience to feel empathy. She is by no means the only person to do this, but the consequences can be bad for her career if anyone finds out.

Scenario #3

Martin works a large agricultural corporation that is looking for land to test some of its new seeds. The company is looking for land that they think will be relatively inexpensive to use, and decides to try to reach out to a First Nation on the prairies. He sets up a meeting with the Elders, and in this meeting, he promises that the company will provide the community with the tools and supplies necessary to farm the seeds. Martin also insists that the company has the community's best interests at heart and this partnership would be a great advantage for their community.

Which mode of appeal is Martin breaking?

Ethos: There is an issue of credibility. Yes, Martin may genuinely believe that partnering with this Indigenous community will be mutually beneficial, and it may very well be, but that does not take into consideration the long history of

Indigenous peoples being taking advantage of by government and business, especially within the agricultural sphere. Indigenous Peoples have often been told that something was being done for their benefit, which often resulted in very little positive gains for them. In an agricultural context, when Plains nations were moved to reserves, they were told they would be provided with proper tools and supplies, which is not what happened. Martin's company may not be directly responsible for this historical legacy, but that does not mean they will be outright trusted by the members of the community.

The modes of appeal are important because they help people listen to our ideas. Also, they identify us a person of integrity who can be trusted to do good work. However, challenges may arise that push us to forget or ignore one, if not all, of those modes of appeal. Ultimately, how we respond to these challenges is what defines us as professionals.

Appendix F: Presentation Aids

Learning Objectives

- Explain reasons why presentation aids are important in public speeches;
- Detail how presentation aids function;
- Discuss strategies for implementing and integrating presentation aids.

When you give a speech, you are presenting much more than just a collection of words and ideas. Because you are speaking live, your audience members will aesthetically experience your speech through all five of their senses: hearing, vision, smell, taste, and touch. In addition to your verbal and nonverbal embodiment, presentation aids assist in amplifying your content for the audience's overall experience.

Presentation aids are the resources beyond the speech itself that a speaker uses to enhance the message conveyed to the audience. The type of presentation aids that speakers most typically make use of are **visual aids:** pictures, diagrams, charts and graphs, maps, and the like. **Audible aids** include musical excerpts, audio speech excerpts, and sound effects. A speaker may also use fragrance samples or food samples as olfactory (sense of smell) or gustatory (sense of taste) aids. Finally, presentation aids can be three-dimensional objects or they can change over a period of time, as in the case of a how-to demonstration. As you can see, you have a range of presentation aids at your disposal.

Effective presentation aids are guided by two questions:

1. How can I best represent an idea in my speech through a presentation aid?
2. When is best to introduce it to the audience?

If you're able to answer these two main questions, the audience is more likely to understand your idea more fully. Each presentation aid a speaker uses must be a direct, uncluttered example of a specific element of the speech. It is understandable that someone presenting a speech about Abraham Lincoln might want to include a photograph of him, but if there's a high probability that the audience knows what Lincoln looked like, the picture would not contribute much to the message unless, perhaps, the message was specifically about the changes in Lincoln's appearance during his time in office.

In this example, other visual artifacts may be more likely to deliver relevant information—a diagram of the interior of Ford's Theater where Lincoln was assassinated, a facsimile of the messy and much-edited Gettysburg Address, or a photograph of the Lincoln family, for example. The key is that each presentation aid must directly express an idea in your speech.

Moreover, presentation aids must be used at the time when you are presenting the specific ideas related to the aid. For example, if you are speaking about coral reefs and one of your supporting points is about the location of the world's major reefs, it would make sense to display a map of these reefs while you're talking about location. If you display it while you are explaining what coral actually is, or describing the kinds of fish that feed on a reef, the map will not serve as a useful aid—in fact, it's likely to be a distraction.

In this chapter, we will discuss some principles and strategies to help you incorporate effective presentation aids into your speech. We will begin by discussing the functions that good presentation aids fulfill. Next, we will explore some of the many types of presentation aids and how best to design and utilize them. We will also describe various media that can be used for presentation aids.

Functions of Presentation Aids

Why should you use presentation aids? If you have prepared and rehearsed your speech adequately, shouldn't a good speech with a good delivery be enough to stand on its own? While it is true that impressive presentation aids will not rescue a poor speech, it is also important to recognize that a good speech can often be made even better by the strategic use of presentation aids. Remember that your speech is an experience rather than the isolated transmission of information, so presentation aids can enhance or detract from the aesthetics.

Presentation aids can fulfill several functions:

- improve your audience's understanding of the information you are conveying;
- enhance audience memory and retention of the message;
- add variety and interest to your speech;
- enhance your credibility as a speaker.

Let's examine each of these functions.

Improving Audience Understanding

Human communication is a complex process that often leads to misunderstandings. If you are like most people, you can easily remember incidents when you misunderstood a message or when someone else misunderstood what you said to them. Misunderstandings happen in public speaking just as they do in everyday conversations.

One reason for misunderstandings is that perception and interpretation are highly complex, individual processes (remember that communication is always cultural and contextual rather than a universal set of symbols). Most of us have seen the image in which, depending on your perception, you see either the outline of a vase or the facial profiles of two people facing each other, known as the Rubin's vase (Hasson et al, 2001). Or you may have listened to a song for years only to have a friend say, "uh, those aren't the lyrics!" These examples demonstrate how interpretation can differ, and it means that your presentations must be based on careful thought and preparation to maximize the likelihood that your listeners will understand your presentation as you intend them to.

As a speaker, one of your basic goals is to help your audience understand your message. To reduce misunderstanding, presentation aids can be used to clarify or to emphasize. Use table 10.1 to identify questions that underly clarifying or emphasizing ideas.

Improving Audience Understanding		
To clarify : Simplifying complex information	Am I describing a complex process that could represented differently? Am I referencing ideas that are visual or sensory in nature?	If your speech is about the impact of the Coriolis Effect on tropical storms, for instance, you will have great difficulty clarifying it without a diagram because the process is a complex one.
To emphasize : Impress your listeners with the importance of an idea	Is there an idea or aspect of the speech that needs to be underscored?	Let's say that you're describing the increased prevalence of super tornadoes across the state of Kansas over the last 30 years. You may decide that a map will visually underscore the sudden increase in storms.

Table 10.1

Aiding Retention and Recall

The second function that presentation aids can serve is to increase the audience's chances of remembering your speech. An article by the U.S. Department of Labor (1996) summarized research on how people learn and remember. The authors found that "83% of human learning occurs visually, and the remaining 17% through the other senses—11% through hearing, 3.5% through smell, 1% through taste, and 1.5% through touch."

For this reason, exposure to an image can serve as a memory aid to your listeners. When your graphic images deliver information effectively and when your listeners understand them clearly, audience members are likely to remember your message long after your speech is over.

An added plus of using presentation aids is that they can boost *your* retention and memory while you are speaking. Using your presentation aids while you rehearse your speech will familiarize you with the association between a given place in your speech and the presentation aid that accompanies that material.

Adding Variety and Interest

A third function of presentation aids is simply to make your speech more interesting. For example, wouldn't a speech on community gardens have a greater impact if you accompanied your remarks with pictures of such gardens? You can imagine that your audience would be even more enthralled if you had the ability to display produce for your audience live. Similarly, if you were speaking to a group of gourmet cooks about spices, you might want to provide tiny samples of spices that they could smell and taste during your speech.

Enhancing a Speaker's Credibility

The final function of a presentation aid is to increase your ethos, or credibility. A high-quality presentation will contribute to your professional image. Thus, in addition to containing important information, your presentation aids must be clear, clean, uncluttered, organized, and large enough for the audience to see and interpret correctly. Misspellings and poorly designed presentation aids can damage your credibility as a speaker. Even if you give a good speech, you run the risk of appearing unprofessional if your presentation aids are poorly executed.

In addition, make sure that you give proper credit to the source of any presentation aids that you take from other sources. Using a statistical chart or a map without proper credit will detract from your credibility, just as using a quotation in your speech without credit would. This situation will usually take place with digital aids such as PowerPoint slides. The source of a chart or the data shown in a chart form should be cited at the bottom of the slide and orally in your speech.

If you focus your efforts on producing presentation aids that contribute effectively to your meaning, that look professional, and that are handled well, your audience will most likely appreciate your efforts and pay close attention to your message. That attention will help them learn or understand your topic in a new way and will thus help the audience see you as a knowledgeable, competent, and credible speaker. With the prevalence of digital communication, the audience expectation of quality visual aids has increased.

Avoiding COMMON PRESENTATION AID PITFALLS

Using presentation aids can come with some risks. However, with a little forethought and adequate practice, you can choose presentation aids that enhance your message and boost your professional appearance in front of an audience.

One principle to keep in mind is to use only as many presentation aids as necessary to present your message or clarify a component of your idea. Too often, speakers fall into a "must have long and detailed presentational aids for the entire speech"—in these cases, the aid can overshadow or distract from the content, rather than clarify or add emphasis. Instead, simplify as much as possible, emphasizing the information you want your audience to understand rather than overwhelming them with too much text and too many images.

Another important consideration is context. Remember to survey the literal context of your speech to decide what aid is possible—is there technology? Is there a poster stand or a white board? Are there speakers? Is there WiFi? Keep your presentation aids within the limits of the working technology available to you. Whether or not your technology works on the day of your speech, you will still have to present. As the speaker, you are responsible for arranging the things you need to make your presentation aids work as intended. Carry a roll of duct tape so you can display your poster even if the easel is gone. Find an extra chair if your table has disappeared. Test the computer setup. Have your slides on a flash drive AND send it to yourself as an attachment or post to a cloud service. Have an alternative plan prepared in case there is some glitch that prevents your computer-based presentation aids from being usable. Most importantly, be sure you know how to use the technology.

Finally, presentation aids do not "speak for themselves." When you display a visual aid, you should explain what it shows, pointing out and naming the most important features. If you use an audio aid such as a musical excerpt, you need to tell your audience what to listen for. Similarly, if you use a video clip, it is up to you as the speaker to point out the characteristics in the video that support the point you are making—but probably beforehand, so you are not speaking over the video. At the same time, a visual aid should be quickly accessible to the audience. This is where simplicity comes in. Just as in organization of a speech you would use 3-5 main points, not 20 main points, you should limit categories of information on a visual aid.

Types of Presentation Aids

Now that we've explored some basic hints for preparing presentation aids, the next step is determining what type of presentation aid is best. We'll discuss types of aids that fall into two categories: representations of data and/or representations that display a real process, idea, person, place, or thing. In other words, ask yourself: "what type of information do I think needs to be accentuated? A statistic? An image of an idea?" Once you answer, the categories below can help you determine which aid would be the best to display that type of information.

Representations of Data

If you are looking to clarify a complex piece of data or piece of evidence from your speech, you may decide that a chart, graph, or diagram is best. Charts, graphs, and diagrams help represent statistics, processes, figures, or other numeric evidence that may be otherwise difficult to comprehend if just spoken.

Chart: A **chart** is commonly defined as a graphical representation of data or a sketch representing an ordered process. Whether you create your charts or do research to find charts that already exist, it is important for them to exactly match the specific purpose in your speech. Figure 10.1 ("Acupuncture Chart") shows a chart related to acupuncture and may be useful in a speech about the history and development of acupuncture. However, if your goal is to show the locations of meridians (the lines along which energy is thought to flow) and the acupuncture points, you may need to select an alternative image.

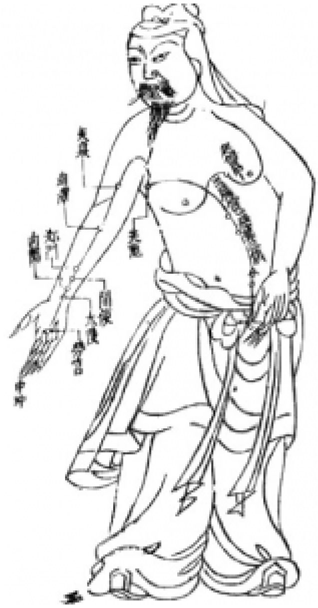


Figure 10.1

There are two common types of charts: statistical charts and sequence-of-steps chart.

- *Statistical Charts*: For most audiences, statistical presentations must be kept as simple as possible, and they must be explained. When visually displaying information from a quantitative study, you need to make sure that you understand the material and can successfully and simply explain how one should interpret the data. This is surely an example of a visual aid that, although it delivers a limited kind of information, does not speak for itself. As with all other principles of public speaking, KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE.
- *Sequence-of-Steps Charts*: Charts are also useful when you are trying to explain a process that involves several

steps. If you are working with a scientific or medical argument, you may need to visually map the sequence because the process is otherwise difficult to follow.

Graph: A **graph** is a pictorial representation of the relationships of quantitative data using dots, lines, bars, pie slices, and the like. Graphs show how one factor (such as size, weight, number of items) varies in comparison to other items. Whereas a statistical chart may report the mean (or average) ages of individuals entering college, a graph would show how the mean age changes over time. A statistical chart may report the number of computers sold in the United States, while a graph will use bars or lines to show the breakdown of those computers by operating systems such as Windows, Macintosh, and Linux.

Public speakers can show graphs using a range of different formats. Some of those formats are specialized for various professional fields. Very complex graphs often contain too much information that is not related to the purpose of a speech. If the graph is cluttered, it becomes difficult to comprehend. If you find a graph that has useful information, ask: "do I need to represent this graph as-is or can I represent a key portion of the graph that's most relevant to my data?"

There are 3 types of graphs that we'll introduce: line graphs, bar graphs, and pie graphs.

- *Line Graph*: A line graph is designed to show trends over time. You could, for example, use a line graph to chart Enron's stock prices over time.
- *Bar Graph:* Bar graphs are useful for showing the differences between quantities. They can be used for population demographics, fuel costs, math ability in different grades, and many other kinds of data. The graph in Figure 10.2 ("Suicide vs. Homicide") is well designed. It is relatively simple and is carefully labeled, making it easy for

you to guide your audience through the recorded numbers of each type of death. The bar graph is designed to show the difference between rates of suicides and homicides across various age groups. When you look at the data, the first grouping clearly shows that eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds are more likely to die because of a homicide than any of the other age groups.

- *Pie Graph:* Pie graphs are usually depicted as circles and are designed to show proportional relationships within sets of data; in other words, they show parts of or percentages of a whole. They should be simplified as much as possible without eliminating important information.

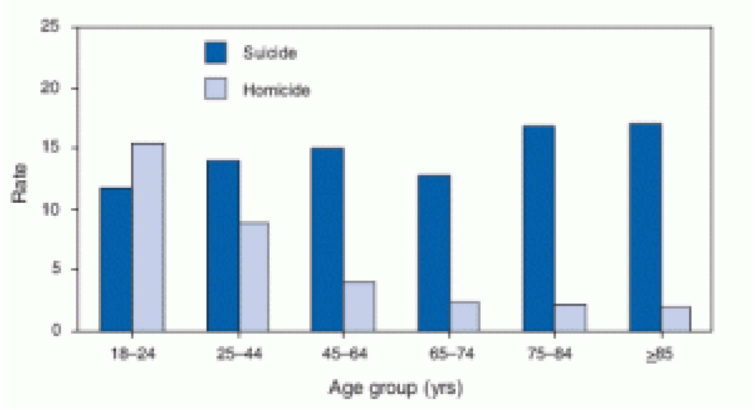


Figure 10.2

***Diagrams**:* **Diagrams** are visual representations that simplify a complex process. They may be drawings or sketches that outline and explain the parts of an object, process, or phenomenon that cannot be readily seen. When you introduce a diagram, you are working to label parts of a process for your audience. For example, you may decide to diagram how human communication occurs because simply describing that process would be too complex.

Charts, graphs, and diagrams can present challenges in being effective but also in being ethical. To be both ethical and effective, you need a good understanding of what statistics mean, and you need to create or use graphs that show amounts clearly. Remember that clarifying is a key goal of presentational aids, so ask: is my graph or chart making my information more or less difficult to comprehend?

Representations of Real Processes or Things

In contrast, a second set of presentational aids represents real processes, things, persons, places, or ideas. While charts and graphs simplify more complex or abstract ideas, data, or evidence, this set of presentational aids attempts to add emphasis to actual people, places, or objects. Such aids may include maps, photos, videos, audio recordings, and objects (diagrams can also fall into this category, depending on what you're mapping).

Maps: Maps are extremely useful if the information is clear and limited. There are all kinds of maps, including population, weather, ocean current, political, and economic maps, so you should find the right kind for the purpose of your speech. Choose a map that emphasizes the information you need to deliver and are trying to represent. For example, you might decide that a map outlining the Hawaiian Islands would be helpful to clarify the spatial dimensions of the state. Although the map may not list the names of the islands, it is helpful in orienting the audience to the direction and distance of the islands to other geographic features, such as the Pacific Ocean.

Photographs and Drawings: Sometimes a photograph or a drawing is the best way to show an unfamiliar but important detail. For example, if you gave a speech about the impact of plastics on ocean life, you may decide to include a photo of a beached whale who had suffered from plastic inhalation. The photo may emphasize the impact of plastic that speaking otherwise doesn't capture.

Video or Audio Recordings: Another very useful type of presentation aid is a video or audio recording. Whether it is a short video from a website such as YouTube or Vimeo, a segment from a song, or a piece of a podcast, a well-chosen video or audio recording may be a good choice to enhance your speech.

There is one major warning to using audio and video clips during a speech: do not forget that they are supposed to be aids to your speech, not the speech itself! In addition, be sure to avoid these four mistakes that speakers often make when using audio and video clips:

- Avoid choosing clips that are too long for the overall length of the speech.
- Practice with the audio or video equipment prior to speaking. If you are unfamiliar with the equipment, you'll look foolish trying to figure out how it works. Be sure that the speakers on the computer are on and at the right volume level.
- Cue the clip to the appropriate place prior to beginning your speech, and try to avoid any advertisement interruptions (which can make the aid look unprofessional).
- The audience must be given context before the video or audio clip is played, specifically what the clip is and why it relates to the speech. At the same time, the video should not repeat what you have already said, but add to it.

Objects: Objects refer to anything you could hold up and talk about during your speech. If you're talking about the importance of not using plastic water bottles, you might hold up a plastic water bottle and a stainless-steel water bottle as examples.

Ways to Display Your Presentation Aid

Above, we've discussed why you might use a presentation aid and what aid might work best. "How do I display these?" you might be wondering. For example, if you decide that a graph would be helpful in clarifying a complex idea, you have options on how to present that graph to the audience, including presentation software or more low-tech means. We'll talk through each below.

Using Presentation Software

Presentation software and slides are a common mechanism to display information for your audience. You are likely familiar with PowerPoint, but there are several others:

- Prezi, available at www.prezi.com
- Slide Rocket, available at www.sliderocket.com
- Google Slides, available in Google Drive and useful for collaborative assignments
- Keynote, the Apple presentation slide software on Macs
- Impress, an Open Office product (http://www.openoffice.org/prod-uct/impress.html)
- PrezentIt
- AdobeAcrobat Presenter
- ThinkFree
- E-Maze

Each software allows you to present professional-looking slides.

For example, you can use the full range of fonts, although many of them are not appropriate for presentations because they are hard to read. Use Table 10.3 to track advantages and disadvantages of using slides.

Advantages to Using Slides	**Disadvantages to Using Slides**
• They allow visualization of concepts; • They are easily portable and uniform; • They can be embedded with videos and audio; • They are projectable and more easily visible throughout a room	• They're too linear and audiences aren't encouraged to see the relationship between ideas (Frommer, 2012); • PowerPoint is too rigid in the slide-by-slide format (Tufte, 2005). • They become overcrowded; • The presentational slides become the speech.

Table 10.3

Remember that presentation software aids are a way to display what you want your audience to know—a graph, an idea, an image. Presentation software is not the only way to display these, so slides should be a purposeful choice. *What* you display is the top priority.

Before we continue, we have one note: You'll notice that "text from the speech" is not included in our list of types of presentation aids in the section above. You may decide that adding emphasis to a key word or concept from your speech is needed – and that's OK! You may even decide that providing that concept, visually, for the audience is worthwhile by writing or displaying the words, and that's OK, too. However, remember that presentation aids are included for a reason, and it's often unnecessary to provide an entire outline of your speech's text through a presentation software like PowerPoint slides. Speakers, too often, copy and paste parts of their speech onto a PowerPoint slide and think, "There! A presentation aid!" Ask: *what purpose does this text serve for my audience*? If your answer doesn't result in clarifying, emphasizing, or retaining, it's likely not needed.

Creating Quality Slide Shows

Slides should show the principles of good design, which include unity, emphasis or focal point, scale and proportion, balance, and rhythm (Lauer & Pentak, 2000). Presenters should also pay attention to tone and usability. With those principles in mind, here are some tips for creating and then using presentation software.

- *Unity and Consistency:* use a single (readable) sans serif font, single background, and unified animations for your visuals so that they look like a unified set. Each slide should have one message, photo, or graphic.
- *Emphasis, Focal Point, and Visibility:* all information should be large enough—at least 24-point font— for audiences. To guarantee visibility, follow the 7X7 rule: no more than seven horizontal lines of text (including the heading) and the longest line should not exceed seven words. Finally, provide higher contrast between text and slides.
- *Tone*: Fonts, color, clip art, photographs, and templates all contribute to tone, which is the attitude being conveyed in the slides. Make sure the tone of the presentation software matches the overall aesthetic tone of the speech.
- *Scale and Proportion*: Use numbers to communicate a sequence. If bullet points are used, the text should be short. Adjust graphs or visuals on the slide, avoiding small or multiple visuals on the same image.

- *Balance and rhythm*: Work to create symmetry and balance between each slide. When presenting, think about what's being displayed on the slide to the audience and when. If you aren't using it, insert a black screen between images.
- *Usability*: With any image or graphic, make sure to include "alt text" – or a description of what the image is. Proving alt text is helpful for users with screen readers.

We recommend that you survey your university's resources for assistance with creating quality and accessible presentation slides.

Low-Tech Presentation Aids

In addition to presentation slides, there are other "low-tech" ways to display. Instead of providing a diagram on PowerPoint, you may decide that drawing it live is more beneficial. Below, we talk through a few additional means to display your information to the audience.

Dry-Erase Board

If you use a chalkboard or dry-erase board, what you display should still be thought-out, rehearsed, and clearly professional. You run the risk of appearing less prepared, but numerous speakers do utilize chalk and dry-erase boards effectively. Typically, these speakers use the chalk or dry-erase board for interactive components of a speech. For example, maybe you're giving a speech in front of a group of executives. Chalk or dry-erase boards are very useful when you want to visually show information that you are receiving from your audience. If you ever use a chalk or dry-erase board, follow these five simple rules:

- Write large enough so that everyone in the room can see (which is harder than it sounds; it is also hard to write and talk at the same time!).
- Print legibly; don't write in cursive script.
- Write short phrases; don't take time to write complete sentences.
- Never turn your back to the audience while you're talking.
- Be sure you have markers that will not go dry, and clean the board afterward.

Flipchart

A flipchart is useful for situations when you want to save what you have written for future reference or to distribute to the audience after the presentation. As with whiteboards, you will need good markers and readable handwriting, as well as a strong easel to keep the flipchart upright.

Posters

Posters often represent a key graph, idea, or visualization. For a poster, you likely want to display one key piece of information at one key part of your presentation. Otherwise, posters are probably not the best way to approach presentation aids in a speech. There are problems with visibility as well as portability. Avoid producing a presentation aid that looks like you simply cut pictures out of magazines and pasted them on.

Handouts

Handouts are appropriate for delivering information that audience members can take away with them. As we will see, handouts require a great deal of management if they are to contribute to your credibility as a speaker.

First, make sure the handout is worth the trouble of making, copying, and distributing it. Does the audience really need the handout? Second, make sure to bring enough copies of the handout for each audience member to get one. Having to share or look on with one's neighbor does not contribute to a professional image. Third, consider timing. We recommend providing the handout at the conclusion of your speech.

Reminders for Integrating Presentation Aids

Regardless of what presentation aid you choose—a photo, chart, map—and the medium that you'll display it—a handout, slide deck, audio device—all presentation aids require rehearsal. While we've included tips on integrating presentation aids in your speech throughout this chapter, use the following list of strategies to integrate your aid into the speech.

- Gather all citation information and provide it both visually and orally to your audience.
- In your speaking notes, mark where you will integrate the presentation aid so that you don't forget about it due to nervousness.
- Determine where the presentation aid will be when it's not being displayed.
- For a PowerPoint presentation, include blank/black slides

that are used when your visual aid isn't in use.

- Store other objects in non-distracting locations.
- Rehearse your transitions into and out of the presentation aid.

The Mythical Norm and Presentation Aids

When you're an audience member, it's important to reflect on the assumptions that we hold about the speaker. Are we judging a speaker based on our own assumptions of what's normal?

Similarly, when you're making decisions about presentation aids as a speaker, it's important to be reflexive about who is in the audience. Are you making decisions about presentation aids based on our own assumptions about what's normal and who's normal? Are you assuming, for example, that all audience members are able-bodied and able to visually and audibly experience your presentation aid?

Creating an accessible experience for audience members must be a priority. For example, you may want to avoid red and green colors on your visual aids as they're not perceivable to all audience members. While constructing presentation software of slides, make sure you include alt-text for images, especially if you provide the slides to the presentation. These are for audience members who may be sight-impaired. Check out guidelines for the presentation software you're using on how to embed alt-text. Additionally, be weary of smells that may be intense or irritate audience members. Overall, be careful not to assume that audience members also fit the mythical norm as you construct your presentation aid.

Conclusion

To finish this chapter, we will recap a few key pieces of information. Whether your aid is a slide show, object, or dry erase board, these standards are essential:

- Presentation aids must be easily experienced by your audience.
- Presentation aids must be portable, easily handled, and efficient. They should disappear when not in use.
- Presentation aids should be aesthetically pleasing and in good taste. Additionally, electronic media today allows you to create very "busy" slides with varieties of fonts, colors, collages of photos, etc. Keep in mind the principles of unity and focal point.
- Color is another aesthetic aspect. Some colors are just more soothing, readable, and appropriate than others. Also, the color on your slides may be different when projected from what is on your computer.
- Provide credit when using images that aren't your own.
- Finally, presentation aids must support your speech and have high relevance to your content.

This chapter has covered a wide range of information about all kinds of audio and visual aids, but audiences today expect and appreciate professionally designed and handled presentation aids. The stakes are higher now, but the tools are many.

Attribution

This chapter is adapted from "Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking as Advocacy" by Meggie Mapes (on Pressbooks). It

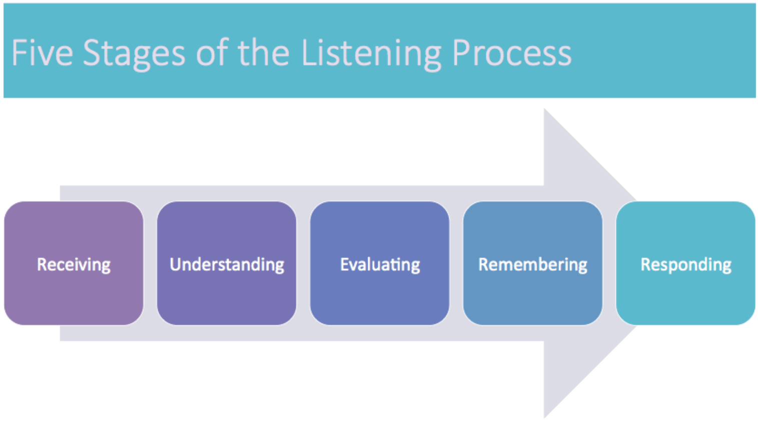
Appendix G: Stages of Listening

Stages of the Listening Process

Listening is a skill of critical significance in all aspects of our lives, from maintaining our personal relationships, to getting our jobs done, to taking notes in class, to figuring out which bus to take to the airport. Regardless of how we're engaged with listening, it's important to understand that listening involves more than just hearing the words that are directed at us. Listening is an active process by which we make sense of, assess, and respond to what we hear.

The listening process involves five stages: receiving, understanding, evaluating, remembering, and responding. These stages will be discussed in more detail in later sections. An effective listener must hear and identify the speech sounds directed toward them, understand the message of those sounds, critically evaluate or assess that message, remember what's been said, and respond (either verbally or nonverbally) to information they've received.

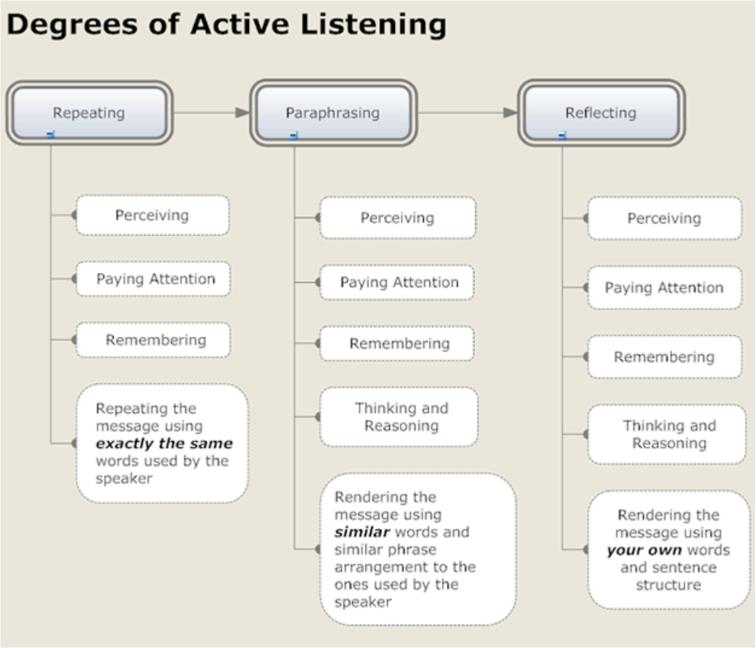
Effectively engaging in all five stages of the listening process lets us best gather the information we need from the world around us.



Active Listening

Active listening is a particular communication technique that requires the listener to provide feedback on what he or she hears to the speaker, by way of restating or paraphrasing what they have heard in their own words. The goal of this repetition is to confirm what the listener has heard and to confirm the understanding of both parties. The ability to actively listen demonstrates sincerity, and that nothing is being assumed or taken for granted. Active listening is most often used to improve personal relationships, reduce misunderstanding and conflicts, strengthen cooperation, and foster understanding.

When engaging with a particular speaker, a listener can use several degrees of active listening, each resulting in a different quality of communication with the speaker. This active listening chart shows three main degrees of listening: repeating, paraphrasing, and reflecting.



Active listening can also involve paying attention to the speaker's behavior and body language. Having the ability to interpret a person's body language lets the listener develop a more accurate understanding of the speaker's message.

The Receiving Stage

The first stage of the listening process is the receiving stage, which involves hearing and attending.

Hearing is the physiological process of registering sound waves as they hit the eardrum. As obvious as it may seem, in order to effectively gather information through listening, we must first be able to physically hear what we're listening to. The clearer the sound, the easier the listening process becomes.

Paired with hearing, attending is the other half of the receiving stage in the listening process. Attending is the process of accurately identifying and interpreting particular sounds we hear as words. The sounds we hear have no meaning until we give them their meaning in context. Listening is an active process that constructs meaning from both verbal and nonverbal messages.

The Challenges of Reception

Listeners are often bombarded with a variety of auditory stimuli all at once, so they must differentiate which of those stimuli are speech sounds and which are not. Effective listening involves being able to focus on speech sounds while disregarding other noise. For instance, a train passenger that hears the captain's voice over the loudspeaker understands that the captain is speaking, then deciphers what the captain is saying despite other voices in the cabin. Another example is trying to listen to a friend tell a story while walking down a busy street. In order to best listen to what she's saying, the listener needs to ignore the ambient street sounds.

Attending also involves being able to discern human speech, also known as "speech segmentation. "[1] Identifying auditory stimuli as speech but not being able to break those speech sounds down into sentences and words would be a failure of the listening process. Discerning speech segmentation can be a more difficult activity when the listener is faced with an unfamiliar language.

The Understanding Stage

The second stage in the listening process is the understanding stage. Understanding or comprehension occurs when both the speaker and audience share an experience of meaning, and constitutes the first step in the listening process. This is the stage during which the audience determines the context and meanings of the words they hear. Determining the context and meaning of individual words, as well as assigning meaning in language, is essential to understanding sentences, and, thus, both are essential to understanding a speaker's message.

Once the listener understands the speaker's main point, they can begin to sort out the rest of the information they are hearing and decide where it belongs in their mental outline. For example, a political candidate listens to her opponent's arguments to understand what policy decisions that opponent supports.

Before getting the big picture of a message, it can be difficult to focus on what the speaker is saying. Think about walking into a lecture class halfway through. You may immediately understand the words and sentences that you are hearing, but not immediately understand what the lecturer is proving or whether what you're hearing at the moment is the main point, side note, or digression.

Understanding what we hear is a huge part of our everyday lives, particularly in terms of gathering basic information. In the office, people listen to their superiors for instructions about what they are to do. At school, students listen to teachers to learn new ideas. We listen to political candidates give policy speeches in order to determine who will get our vote. But without understanding what we hear, none of this everyday listening would relay any practical information to us.

One tactic for better understanding a speaker's meaning is to ask questions. Asking questions allows the listener to fill in any holes he or she may have in the mental reconstruction of the speaker's message.

The Evaluating Stage

This stage of the listening process is the one during which the listener assesses the information they received, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Evaluating allows the listener to form an opinion of what they heard and, if necessary, to begin developing a response.

During the evaluating stage, the listener determines whether or not the information they heard and understood from the speaker is well constructed or disorganized, biased or unbiased, true or false, significant or insignificant. They also ascertain how and why the speaker has come up with and conveyed the message that they delivered. This process may involve considerations of a speaker's personal or professional motivations and goals. For example, a listener may determine that a co-worker's vehement condemnation of another for jamming the copier is factually correct, but may also understand that the co-worker's child is sick and that may be putting them on edge. A voter who listens to and understands the points made in a political candidate's stump speech can decide whether those points were convincing enough to earn their vote.

The evaluating stage occurs most effectively once the listener fully understands what the speaker is trying to say. While we can, and sometimes do, form opinions of information and ideas that we don't fully understand—or even that we misunderstand—doing so is not often ideal in the long run. Having a clear understanding of a speaker's message allows a listener to evaluate that message without getting bogged down in ambiguities or spending unnecessary time and energy addressing points that may be tangential or otherwise non-essential.

This stage of critical analysis is important for a listener in terms of how what they heard will affect their own ideas, decisions, actions, and/or beliefs.

The Remembering Stage

In the listening process, the remembering stage occurs as the audience categorizes and retains the information they've gathered from the speaker for future access. The result—memory—allows the person to record information about people, objects, and events for later recall. This process happens both during and after the speaker's delivery.

Memory is essential throughout the listening process. We depend on our memory to fill in the blanks when we're listening and to let us place what we're hearing at the moment in the context of what we've heard before. If, for example, you forgot everything that you heard immediately after you heard it, you would not be able to follow along with what a speaker says, and conversations would be impossible. Moreover, a friend who expresses fear about a dog she sees on the sidewalk ahead can help you recall that the friend began the conversation with her childhood memory of being attacked by a dog.

Remembering previous information is critical to moving forward. Similarly, making associations to past remembered information can help a listener understand what she is currently hearing in a wider context. In listening to a lecture about the symptoms of depression, for example, a listener might make a connection to the description of a character in a novel that she read years before.

Using information immediately after receiving it enhances information retention and lessens the forgetting curve or the rate at which we no longer retain information in our memory. Conversely, retention is lessened when we engage in mindless listening, and little effort is made to understand a speaker's message.

Because everyone has different memories, the speaker and the listener may attach different meanings to the same statement. In this sense, establishing common ground in terms of context is extremely important, both for listeners and speakers.

The Responding Stage

The responding stage is the stage of the listening process wherein the listener provides verbal and/or nonverbal reactions based on short- or long-term memory. Following the remembering stage, a listener can respond to what they hear either verbally or non-verbally. Nonverbal signals can include gestures such as nodding, making eye contact, tapping a pen, fidgeting, scratching or cocking their head, smiling, rolling their eyes, grimacing, or any other body language. These kinds of responses can be displayed purposefully or involuntarily. Responding verbally might involve asking a question, requesting additional information, redirecting or changing the focus of a conversation, cutting off a speaker, or repeating what a speaker has said back to her in order to verify that the received message matches the intended message.

Nonverbal responses like nodding or eye contact allow the listener to communicate their level of interest without interrupting the speaker, thereby preserving the speaker/listener roles. When a listener responds verbally to what they hear and remember—for example, with a question or a comment—the speaker/listener roles are reversed, at least momentarily.

Responding adds action to the listening process, which would otherwise be an outwardly passive process. Oftentimes, the speaker looks for verbal and nonverbal responses from the listener to determine if and how their message is being understood and/or considered. Based on the listener's responses, the speaker can choose to either adjust or continue with the delivery of her message. For example, if a listener's brow is furrowed and their arms are crossed, the speaker may determine that she needs to lighten their tone to better communicate their point. If a listener is smiling and nodding or asking questions, the speaker may feel that the listener is engaged and her message is being communicated effectively.

Conclusion

In short, active listening is crucial for establishing our ethos. If we hope to be persuasive, we need to demonstrate our good will, good character, and good judgement to others by carefully listening and responding to their messages.

Appendix H: Intercultural Communication

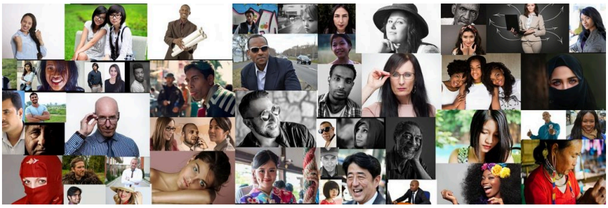


Figure 1 Source: pixabay.com

Culture involves beliefs, attitudes, values, and traditions that are shared by a group of people. From the choice of words (message), to how you communicate (in person, or by email), to how you acknowledge understanding with a nod or a glance (nonverbal feedback), to the internal and external interference, all aspects of communication are influenced by culture.

Watch the following 1 minute video *What is Culture*?

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://openpress.usask.ca/rcm200/?p=1989#oembed-1

It is through intercultural communication that you come to create, understand, and transform culture and identity. Intercultural communication is communication between people with differing cultural identities. One reason you should study intercultural communication is to foster greater self-awareness (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Your thought process regarding culture is often "other focused," meaning that the culture of the other person or group is what stands out in your perception. However, the old adage "know thyself" is appropriate, as you become more aware of your own culture by better understanding other cultures and perspectives. Intercultural communication can allow you to step outside of your comfortable, usual frame of reference and see your culture through a different lens. Additionally, as you become more self-aware, you may also become more ethical communicators as you challenge your ethnocentrism, or your tendency to view your own culture as superior to other cultures.

Ethnocentrism makes you far less likely to be able to bridge the gap with others and often increases intolerance of difference. Business and industry are no longer regional, and in your career, you will necessarily cross borders, languages, and cultures. You will need tolerance, understanding, patience, and openness to difference. A skilled business communicator knows that the process of learning is never complete, and being open to new ideas is a key strategy for success.

Communication with yourself is called **intrapersonal** communication, which may also be intracultural, as you may only represent one culture. But most people belong to multiple groups, each with their own culture. Does a conversation with yourself ever involve competing goals, objectives, needs, wants, or values? How did you learn of those goals, or values? Through communication within and between individuals many cultures are represented. You may struggle with the demands of each group and their expectations and could consider this internal struggle intercultural conflict or simply intercultural communication.

Culture is part of the very fabric of our thought, and you cannot separate yourself from it, even as you leave home, defining yourself anew in work and achievements. Every business or organization has a culture, and within what may be considered a global culture, there are many subcultures or co-cultures. For example, consider the difference between the sales and accounting departments in a corporation. You can quickly see two distinct groups with their own symbols, vocabulary, and values. Within each group, there may also be smaller groups, and each member of each department comes from a distinct background that in itself influences behaviour and interaction.

Intercultural communication is a fascinating area of study within business communication, and it is essential to your success. One idea to keep in mind as you examine this topic is the importance of considering multiple points of view. If you tend to dismiss ideas or views that are "unalike culturally," you will find it challenging to learn about diverse cultures. If you cannot learn, how can you grow and be successful?

To summarize, intercultural communication is an aspect of all communicative interactions, and attention to your perspective is key to your effectiveness. Ethnocentrism is a major obstacle to intercultural communication.

How to Understand Intercultural Communication

The American anthropologist Edward T. Hall is often cited as a pioneer in the field of intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Born in 1914, Hall spent much of his early adulthood in the multicultural setting of the American

Southwest, where Native Americans, Spanish-speakers, and descendents of pioneers came together from diverse cultural perspectives. He then traveled the globe during World War II and later served as a U.S. State Department official. Where culture had once been viewed by anthropologists as a single, distinct way of living, Hall saw how the perspective of the individual influences interaction. By focusing on interactions rather than cultures as separate from individuals, he asked people to evaluate the many cultures they belong to or are influenced by, as well as those with whom they interacted. While his view makes the study of intercultural communication far more complex, it also brings a healthy dose of reality to the discussion. Hall is generally credited with eight contributions to the study of intercultural communication as follows:

1. Compare cultures. Focus on the interactions versus general observations of culture.
2. Shift to local perspective. Local level versus global perspective.
3. You don't have to know everything to know something. Time, space, gestures, and gender roles can be studied, even if we lack a larger understanding of the entire culture.
4. There are rules we can learn. People create rules for themselves in each community that we can learn from, compare, and contrast.
5. Experience counts. Personal experience has value in addition to more comprehensive studies of interaction and culture.
6. Perspectives can differ. Descriptive linguistics serves as a model to understand cultures, and the U.S. Foreign Service adopted it as a base for training.
7. Intercultural communication can be applied to international business. U.S. Foreign Service training yielded applications for trade and commerce and became

a point of study for business majors.
8. It integrates the disciplines. Culture and communication are intertwined and bring together many academic disciplines (Chen & Starosta, 2000; Leeds-Hurwitz, 1990; McLean, 2005).
9.

Hall indicated that emphasis on a culture as a whole, and how it operated, might lead people to neglect individual differences. Individuals may hold beliefs or practice customs that do not follow their own cultural norm. When you resort to the mental shortcut of a stereotype, you lose these unique differences. **Stereotypes** can be defined as a generalization about a group of people that oversimplifies their culture (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999).

The American psychologist Gordon Allport explored how, when, and why people formulate or use stereotypes to characterize distinct groups. When you do not have enough contact with people or their cultures to understand them well, you tend to resort to stereotypes (Allport, 1958).

As Hall notes, experience has value. If you do not know a culture, you should consider learning more about it firsthand if possible. The people you interact with may not be representative of the culture as a whole, but that is not to say that what you learn lacks validity. Quite the contrary; Hall asserts that you can, in fact, learn something without understanding everything, and given the dynamic nature of communication and culture, who is to say that your lessons will not serve you well? Consider a study abroad experience if that is an option for you, or learn from a classmate who comes from a foreign country or an unfamiliar culture. Be open to new ideas and experiences, and start investigating. Many have gone before you, and today, unlike in generations past, much of the information is accessible. Your experiences will allow you to learn about another culture and yourself, and help you to avoid prejudice.

Read the following web article [Stereotypes Impact Workplace Behavior In Complex Ways]

Prejudice involves a negative preconceived judgment or opinion that guides conduct or social behaviour (McLean., 2005). As an example, imagine two people walking into a room for a job interview. You are tasked to interview both, and having read the previous section, you know that Allport (1958) rings true when he says we rely on stereotypes when encountering people or cultures with which we have had little contact. Will the candidates' dress, age, or gender influence your opinion of them? Will their race or ethnicity be a conscious or subconscious factor in your thinking process? Allport's work would indicate that those factors and more will make you likely to use stereotypes to guide your expectations of them and your subsequent interactions with them.

People who treat other with prejudice often make assumptions, or take preconceived ideas for granted without question, about the group or communities. As Allport illustrated, you often assume characteristics about groups with which you have little contact. Sometimes you also assume similarity, thinking that people are all basically similar. This denies cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and many other valuable, insightful differences.

In summary, ethnocentric tendencies, stereotyping, and assumptions of similarity can make it difficult to learn about cultural differences.

Common Cultural Characteristics

Figure 2 Culture Characteristics [Image Description]

Groups come together, form cultures, and grow apart across time. How do you become a member of a community, and how do you know when you are full member? What aspects of culture do people have in common and how do they relate to business communication? Researchers who have studied cultures around the world have identified certain characteristics that define a culture. These characteristics are expressed in different ways, but they tend to be present in nearly all cultures.

Rites of Initiation

Cultures tend to have a ritual for becoming a new member. A newcomer starts out as a nonentity, a stranger, an unaffiliated person with no connection or even possibly awareness of the community. Newcomers who stay around and learn about the culture become members. Most cultures have a rite of initiation that marks the passage of the individual within the community; some of these rituals may be so informal as to be hardly noticed (e.g., the first time a coworker asks you to join the group to eat lunch together), while others may be highly formalized (e.g., the ordination of clergy in a religion). The nonmember becomes a member, the new member becomes a full member, and individuals rise in terms of responsibility and influence.

Across the course of your life, you have no doubt passed several rites of initiation but may not have taken notice of them. Did you earn a driver's license, register to vote, or acquire the permission to purchase alcohol? In North American culture, these three common markers indicate the passing from a previous stage of life to a new one, with new rights and responsibilities.

Rites of initiation mark the transition of the role or status of the individual within the group. Your first day on the job may have been a challenge as you learned your way around the physical space, but the true challenge was to learn how the group members communicate with each other. If you graduate from college with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree, you will already have passed a series of tests, learned terms and theories, and possess a symbol of accomplishment in your diploma, but that only grants you the opportunity to look for a job—to seek access to a new culture.

In every business, there are groups, power struggles, and unspoken ways that members earn their way from the role of a "newbie" to that of a full member. The newbie may get the tough account, the office without a window, or the cubicle next to the bathroom, denoting low status. As the new member learns to navigate through the community—establishing a track record and being promoted—he passes the rite of initiation and acquires new rights and responsibilities.

Over time, the person comes to be an important part of the business, a “keeper of the flame.” The “flame” may not exist in physical space or time, but it does exist in the minds of those members in the community who have invested time and effort in the business. It is not a flame to be trusted to a new person, as it can only be earned with time. Along the way, there may be personality conflicts and power struggles over resources and perceived scarcity (e.g., there is only one promotion and everyone wants it). All these challenges are to be expected in any culture.

Common History and Traditions

Think for a moment about the history of a business like Tim Hortons—what are your associations with Tim Horton, the relationship between hockey, coffee, and donuts? Traditions form as the organization grows and expands, and stories are told and retold to educate new members on how business should be conducted. The history of every culture, of every corporation, influences the present. There are times when the phrase “we’ve tried that before” can become stumbling block for members of the organization as it grows and adapts to new market forces. There may be struggles between members who have weathered many storms and new members, who come armed with new educational perspectives, technological tools, or experiences that may contribute to growth.

Common Values and Principles

Cultures all hold values and principles that are commonly shared and communicated from older members to younger (or newer) ones. Time and length of commitment are associated with an awareness of these values and principles, so that new members, whether they are socialized at home, in school, or at work, may not have a thorough understanding of their importance.

Watch the following 2 minute video: ***Core Values & Company Culture from Jim Collins, Tony Hsieh, and Steve Jobs***

https://youtube.com/watch?v=ecWiloEJ1dk%3Ffeature%3Doembed

Common Purpose and Sense of Mission

Cultures share a common sense of purpose and mission. Why are we here and whom do we serve? These are fundamental questions of the human condition that philosophers and theologians all over the world have pondered for centuries. In business, the answers to these questions often address purpose and mission, and they can be found in mission and vision statements of almost every organization. Individual members will be expected to acknowledge and share the mission and vision, actualize them, or make them real through action. Without action, the mission and vision statements are simply an arrangement of words. As a guide to individual and group behavioural norms, they can serve as a powerful motivator and a call to action. For example, Boeing Canada's Purpose and Mission, and Aspiration statements are as follows:

Purpose and Mission: Connect, Protect, Explore and Inspire the World through Aerospace Innovation

Aspiration: Best in Aerospace and Enduring Global Industrial Champion

Based on these two statements, employees might expect a culture of innovation, quality, and safety as core to their work. What might those concepts mean in your everyday work if you were part of Boeing "culture?"

Common Symbols, Boundaries, Status, Language, and Rituals

Many people learn early in life what a stop sign represents, but not everyone knows what a ten-year service pin on a lapel, or a corner office with two windows means. Cultures have common symbols that mark them as a group; the knowledge of what a symbol stands for helps to reinforce who is a group member and who is not. Cultural symbols include dress, such as the Western business suit and tie. Symbols also include slogans or sayings, such as "Mr. Christie you make good cookies" or "Noooobody". The slogan may serve a marketing purpose but may also embrace a mission or purpose within the culture. Family crests and clan tartan patterns serve as symbols of affiliation. Symbols can also be used to communicate rank and status within a group.

Space is another common cultural characteristic; it may be a nonverbal symbol that represents status and power. In most of the world's cultures, a person occupying superior status is entitled to a physically elevated position—a throne, a dais, a podium from which to address subordinates. Subordinates may be expected to bow, curtsy, or lower their eyes as a sign of respect. In business, the corner office may offer the best view with the most space. Movement from a cubicle to a private office may also be a symbol of transition within an organization, involving increased responsibility as well as power. Parking spaces, the kind of vehicle you drive, and the transportation allowance you have may also serve to communicate symbolic meaning within an organization.

The office serves our discussion on the second point concerning boundaries. Would you sit on your boss's desk or sit in his chair with your feet up on the desk in his presence? Most people indicate they would not, because doing so would communicate a lack of respect, violate normative space expectations, and invite retaliation. Still, subtle challenges to authority may arise in the workplace. A less than flattering photograph of the boss at the office party posted to the recreational room bulletin board communicates more than a lack of respect for authority. By placing the image anonymously in a public place, the prankster clearly communicates a challenge, even if it is a juvenile one. Movement from the cubicle to the broom closet may be the result for someone who is found responsible for the prank. Again, there are no words used to communicate meaning, only symbols, but those symbols represent significant issues.

Communities have their own vocabulary and way in which they communicate. Consider the person who uses a sewing machine to create a dress and the accountant behind the desk; both are professionals and both have specialized jargon used in their field. If they were to change places, the lack of skills would present an obstacle, but the lack of understanding of terms, how they are used, and what they mean would also severely limit their effectiveness. Those terms and how they are used are learned over time and through interaction. While a textbook can help, it cannot demonstrate use in live interactions. Cultures are dynamic systems that reflect the communication process itself.

Cultures celebrate heroes, denigrate villains, and have specific ways of completing jobs and tasks. In business and industry, the emphasis may be on effectiveness and efficiency, but the practice can often be "because that is the way we have always done it." Rituals serve to guide our performance and behaviour and may be limited to small groups or celebrated across the entire company.

Rituals can serve to bind a group together, or to constrain it. Institutions tend to formalize processes and then have a hard time adapting to new circumstances. While the core values or mission statement may hold true, the method of doing things that worked in the past may not be as successful as it once was. Adaptation and change can be difficult for individuals and companies, and yet all communities, cultures, and communication contexts are dynamic, or always changing. As much as we might like things to stay the same, they will always change—and we will change with (and be changed by) them.

Read the following web article: Culture at Work: The Tyranny of 'Unwritten Rules'

To summarize, all cultures have characteristics such as initiations, traditions, history, values and principles, purpose, symbols, and boundaries.

Divergent Cultural Characteristics

We are not created equal. Cultures reflect this inequality, this diversity, and the divergent range of values, symbols, and meanings across communities. People have viewpoints, and they are shaped by their interactions with communities. Let's examine several points of divergence across cultures.

Figure 3 Source: Pixabay.com

Individualistic versus Collectivist Cultures

The Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede explored the concepts of individualism and collectivism across diverse cultures (Hofstede, 2005). He found that in individualistic cultures like the United States and Canada, people value individual freedom and personal independence, and perceive their world primarily from their own viewpoint. They perceive themselves as empowered individuals, capable of making their own decisions, and able to make an impact on their own lives.

Cultural viewpoint is not an either/or dichotomy, but rather a continuum or range. You may belong to some communities that express individualistic cultural values, while others place the focus on a collective viewpoint. Collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 1982), including many in Asia and South America, and many Indigenous cultures, focus on the needs of the nation, community, family, or group of workers. Ownership and private property is one way to examine this difference. In some cultures, property is almost exclusively private, while others tend toward community ownership. The collectively owned resource returns benefits to the community. Water, for example, has long been viewed as a community resource, much like air, but that has been changing as business and organizations have purchased water rights and gained control over resources. How does someone raised in a culture that emphasizes the community interact with someone raised in a primarily individualistic culture? How could tensions be expressed and how might interactions be influenced by this point of divergence? In the following sections these viewpoints will be examined.

Explicit-Rule Cultures versus Implicit-Rule Cultures

Do you know the rules of your business or organization? Did you learn them from an employee manual or by observing the conduct of others? Your response may include both options, but not all cultures communicate rules in the same way. In an explicit-rule culture, where rules are clearly communicated so that everyone is aware of them, the guidelines and agenda for a meeting are announced prior to the gathering. In an implicit-rule culture, where rules are often understood and communicated nonverbally, there may be no agenda. Everyone knows why they are gathered and what role each member plays, even though the expectations may not be clearly stated. Power, status, and behavioural expectations may all be understood, and to the person from outside this culture, it may prove a challenge to understand the rules of the context.

Outsiders often communicate their "otherness" by not knowing where to stand, when to sit, or how to initiate a conversation if the rules are not clearly stated. While it may help to know that implicit-rule cultures are often more tolerant of deviation from the understood rules, the newcomer will be wise to learn by observing quietly—and to do as much research ahead of the event as possible.

Uncertainty-Accepting Cultures versus Uncertainty-Rejecting Cultures

When people meet each other for the first time, they often use what they have previously learned to understand their current context. People also do this to reduce uncertainty. Some cultures, such as the United States and Britain, are highly tolerant of uncertainty, while others go to great lengths to reduce the element of surprise. Whereas a U.S. business negotiator might enthusiastically agree to try a new procedure, the Egyptian counterpart would likely refuse to get involved until all the details are worked out.

Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese (1975) developed **Uncertainty Reduction theory** to examine this dynamic aspect of communication. Here are seven axioms of uncertainty:

1. There is a high level of uncertainty at first. As we get to know one another, our verbal communication increases and our uncertainty begins to decrease.

2. Following verbal communication, nonverbal communication increases, uncertainty continues to decrease, and more nonverbal displays of affiliation, like nodding one's head to indicate agreement, will start to be expressed.

3. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, we tend to increase our information-seeking behaviour, perhaps asking questions to gain more insight. As our understanding increases, uncertainty decreases, as does the information-seeking behaviour.

4. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, the

communication interaction is not as personal or intimate. As uncertainty is reduced, intimacy increases.

5. When experiencing high levels of uncertainty, communication will feature more reciprocity, or displays of respect. As uncertainty decreases, reciprocity may diminish.

6. Differences between people increase uncertainty, while similarities decrease it.

7. Higher levels of uncertainty are associated with a decrease in the indication of liking the other person, while reductions in uncertainty are associated with liking the other person more.

Time Orientation

Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall (1987) state that monochronic time-oriented cultures consider one thing at a time, whereas polychronic time-oriented cultures schedule many things at one time, and time is considered in a more fluid sense. In monochromatic time, interruptions are to be avoided, and everything has its own specific time. Even the multitasker from a monochromatic culture will, for example, recognize the value of work first before play or personal time. Canada, Germany, and Switzerland are often noted as countries that value a monochromatic time orientation.

Polychromatic time looks a little more complicated, with business and family mixing with dinner and dancing. Greece, Italy, Chile, and Saudi Arabia are countries where one can observe this perception of time; business meetings may be scheduled at a fixed time, but when they actually begin may be another story. Also note that the dinner invitation for 8 p.m. may in reality be more like 9 p.m. If you were to show up on time, you might be the first person to arrive and find that the hosts are not quite ready to receive you.

When in doubt, always ask before the event; many people from polychromatic cultures will be used to foreigner's tendency to be punctual, even compulsive, about respecting established times for events. The skilled business communicator is aware of this difference and takes steps to anticipate it. The value of time in different cultures is expressed in many ways, and your understanding can help you communicate more effectively.

Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation

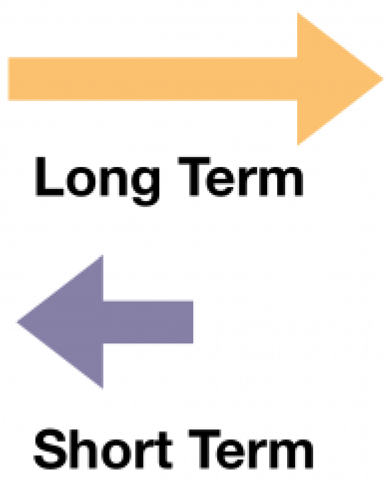


Figure 4 Short-Term/Long-Term [Image Description]
Source: ecampusontario

Do you want your reward right now or can you dedicate yourself to a long-term goal? You may work in a culture whose people value immediate results and grow impatient when those results do not materialize. Geert Hofstede discusses this relationship of time orientation to a culture as a "time horizon," and it underscores the perspective of the individual within a cultural context. Many countries in Asia, influenced by the teachings of Confucius, value a long-term orientation, whereas other countries, including Canada, have a more short-term approach to life and results. Indigenous peoples are known for holding a long-term orientation driven by values of deep, long-term reflection and community consultation.

If you work within a culture that has a short-term orientation, you may need to place greater emphasis on reciprocation of greetings, gifts, and rewards. For example, if you send a thank-you note the morning after being treated to a business dinner, your host will appreciate your promptness. While there may be a respect for tradition, there is also an emphasis on personal representation and honour, a reflection of identity and integrity. Personal stability and consistency are also valued in a short-term oriented culture, contributing to an overall sense of predictability and familiarity.

Long-term orientation is often marked by persistence, thrift and frugality, and an order to relationships based on age and status. A sense of shame for the family and community is also observed across generations. What an individual does reflects on the family and is carried by immediate and extended family members.

Direct versus Indirect

In Canada, business correspondence is expected to be short and to the point. "What can I do for you?" is a common question when a business person receives a call from a stranger; it is an accepted way of asking the caller to state his or her business. In some cultures it is quite appropriate to make direct personal observation, such as "You've changed your hairstyle," while for others it may be observed, but never spoken of in polite company. In indirect cultures, such as those in Latin America, business conversations may start with discussions of the weather, or family, or topics other than business as the partners gain a sense of each other, long before the topic of business is raised. Again, the skilled business communicator researches the new environment before entering it, as a social faux pas, or error, can have a significant impact.

Materialism versus Relationships

Members of a materialistic culture place emphasis on external goods and services as a representation of self, power, and social rank. If you consider the plate of food before you, and consider the labour required to harvest the grain, butcher the animal, and cook the meal, you are focusing more on the relationships involved with its production than the foods themselves. Caviar may be a luxury, and it may communicate your ability to acquire and offer a delicacy, but it also represents an effort. Cultures differ in how they view material objects and their relationship to them, and some value people and relationships more than the objects themselves. The United States and Japan are often noted as materialistic cultures, while many Scandinavian nations feature cultures that place more emphasis on relationships.

Low-Power versus High-Power Distance

In low-power distance cultures, according to Hofstede (2009), people relate to one another more as equals and less as a reflection of dominant or subordinate roles, regardless of their actual formal roles as employee and manager, for example. In a high-power distance culture, you would probably be much less likely to challenge the decision, to provide an alternative, or to give input. If you are working with people from a high-power distance culture, you may need to take extra care to elicit feedback and involve them in the discussion because their cultural framework may preclude their participation. They may have learned that less powerful people must accept decisions without comment, even if they have a concern or know there is a significant problem. Unless you are sensitive to cultural orientation and power distance, you may lose valuable information.

Read the following Harvard Business Review article: Research: The Biggest Culture Gaps Are Within Countries, Not Between Them

To summarize, cultures have distinct orientations when it comes to rules, uncertainty, time and time horizon, masculinity, directness, materialism, and power distance.

Image Description

Figure 2 image description: This diagram is showing a large circle with the words Global Village in it and four surrounding circles with the words political, ethical, legal, and economic in them. [Return to Figure 18.6]

Figure 4 image description: This diagram shows a long arrow pointing to the right and the words long term underneath, short arrow pointing to the left with the words short term underneath. [Return to Figure 18.8]

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Glossary

ethos

pathos

accidental communication

> when one person stimulates meaning in the mind of another without having any intention of doing so and without necessarily knowing that he or she has done so

action verbs

> verbs found in job application materials that quickly identify a candidate's skills, achievements, and accomplishments

active listening

> engaging with the speaker and the material you hear in an active way, such as by asking questions, paraphrasing ideas, and listening without judgement

active voice

> a sentence structure where the subject carries out the action

Advertiser's Stance

> a rhetorical corruption where the speaker or writer undervalues the subject and overvalues pure effect

ambiguity

> the quality of being open to more than one interpretation

APA Style

the American Psychological Association (APA) Style is a style guide that provides guidance on how to format papers. For this course, we are using it only for rules on citing sources and creating reference entries.

audience

the receiver or receivers of a message

audience-centred

preparing materials for a speech, report, or job package that a focus on the audience rather the speaker or the message

author-date citation system

a system for creating in-text citations that requires the inclusion of the author(s) last name, and the year the source was published. For RCM 200, we want you to also include the page number.

axiom

a universal principle or foundational truth that operates across cases or situations

back matter

the final part of your report, this is where your reader can find information that will help them learn more information about the topic. The elements are the recommendations, the appendix and the references page

character

the personal history and personality traits of the speaker or writer

chronological résumé

a traditional résumé format whose main section is the "employment experience" section. Jobs are listed in reverse chronological order, with skills/achievements under each position

clause

when a subject and verb are combined in a sentence. There are two types: independent clause and dependent clause.

comma splice

when two independent clauses are incorrectly joined by a comma

communication

the process of one person stimulating meaning in the mind of another by means of a message

conciseness

using the fewest words possible to achieve the goal of communication

connective statements

several types of statements or phrases that are designed to connect part of your speech to make it easier for audience members to follow

constraints

something that makes it difficult for your message to be received, such as beliefs, facts, interests, and motives. These can from both the rhetor and the audience

coordinating conjunctions

a word that joins two clauses. These include words like and, but, for, yet, nor, or, so

cover letter

also known as an "application letter," this document is your opportunity to establish a connection with the company you are applying to. You will pick a few significant qualifications that make you a good fit for the position and go into depth about each one.

credibility

a quality that allows others to trust and believe you

dependent clause

a clause that relies on another part of the sentence for meaning because it cannot stand on it's own

direct quote

a word-for-word copy of someone else's words and/or ideas.

ethos

a rhetorical appeal that addresses the values of an audience as well as establishes authorial credibility/ character

exigence

a problem that needs to be solved. This "problem" isn't always negative though. It can be something that needs to be said or a task that needs to be completed

expressive communication

Communication that arises from the emotional, or motivational, state of the individual

Extemporaneous

a speech delivery method where the presentation is carefully planned and rehearsed, but spoken in a conversational manner using brief notes

extemporaneous speech

a type of speech delivery that is carefully planned and rehearsed, but uses minimal notes and is spoken in a conversational manner

face

our sense of self-worth in a given situation

face loss

the experience of feeling judged, or feeling that people do not recognize us as we perceive ourselves to be

feedback

information that a receiver sends back to the sender

focused topic

a specific topic for a written report or oral presentation that is neither too broad or too general.

footing

the foundation upon which your credibility rests in a given interaction

front matter

the first group of elements that a reader will see of your report. These elements are the cover page, the transmittal document, the title page, the table of contents, the list of tables and figures, and the summary.

full block format

a standard letter format that has seven elements: (1) letterhead/logo, (2) the heading, (3) salutation, (4) the introduction, (5) the body, (6) the conclusion, (7) the signature line

functional (skills) résumé

a résumé format whose main section is the "Skills and Achievements" section. Skills are organized into categories. There is still an "Employment Experience" section, but it only include basic information about each position.

fused sentence

when two independent clauses are combined without any punctuation

gerund

a word ending in -ing that serves as a noun or adjective in a sentence, not a verb

gerund fragment

a type of sentence fragment where the issue is a gerund (an -ing word serving as a noun or adjective) being used incorrectly in a sentence

gifs

an image file that is usually animated in some way

header block

the section of a memo that contains detailed information on its recipient, sender, and purpose

Impromptu

a speech delivery method where a short message is presented without advanced preparation

in-text citation

also called a "citation," in-text citations are a mechanical way that a writer acknowledges the work of others. An in-text citation can take two forms: a parenthetical citation or a narrative citation.

independent clause

a clause that can stand on it's own because it conveys a complete idea.

informative report

a report where you establish your credibility so the audience will accept the facts you present

interview

the phase of the job search process where you go from being an applicant on paper to a real, three dimensional person.

Interviewing

the phase of the job search process where you are evaluated on your verbal communication skills through face-to-face (or phone) interaction

iterative

an iterative process is a process for calculating a desired result by means of a repeated cycle of operations. An iterative process should be convergent, i.e., it should come closer to the desired result as the number of iterations increases.

jargon

certain words that are used by a profession or group that are difficult for others to understand

job package

a collection of documents that are used to apply for a position such as a cover letter and résumé

keywords

words in a job posting that highlight skills, qualities, and values that are important to a company

lead-ins

long strings of words that don't add much to the overall meaning of the message

letter

a brief message to recipients that are often outside the organization

logos

a rhetorical appeal that requires the use of logic, careful structure, and objective evidence to appeal to the audience

Manuscript

a speech delivery method where a message is read word-for-word off a written page or autocue device

Memorized

a speech delivery method where a message is presented after being committed to memory by the speaker

memos

full name "memoranda," these are documents sent within an organization to pass along or request information, outline policies, present short reports, or propose ideas

modes of appeal

Aristotle's means for persuading an audience. The modes are ethos, pathos, and logos

narrative citation

a type of citation where the source information is embedded into the text. The author's name is in the text and is then followed by the year in parenthesis. The year is then followed by a signal verb. Include the page number at the end of the sentence in parenthesis. For example: MacLennan (2009) argues….(p. 10).

netiquette

etiquette for using the internet, or more specifically, communicating in online spaces. This includes (1) knowing your context, (2) remembering the human, (3) recognizing that text is permanent, (4) avoiding flaming, and (5) respecting privacy and original ideas

noise

information that is added unintentionally to a message during a transmission

nominalizations

an issue where the main action (a verb) is turned into a noun which overcomplicates the writing

non-verbal communication

the transfer of information through the use of body language including eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and more

non-verbal feedback

a type of feedback where you use your whole body to provide information to a speaker. Some examples include leaning your body in, using eye contact, and nodding affirmatively

oral report

a type of report where a person is using their voice to relay information

outline

a visual structure where you can compile information into a well-organized document

paraphrase

a way to use your own words to present information. This method is more detailed and specific than a summary and retains the length of the original source.

parenthetical citation

a type of citation that comes at the end of a sentence where an outside source is used. The author, date, and page number go inside the parenthesis. For example: (MacLennan, 2009, p. 10)

passive voice

a sentence structure where the subject of a sentence receives an action instead of doing it

pathos

a rhetorical appeal that tries to tap into the audience's emotions to get them to agree with a claim

persuasive report

a report where you want the audience to accept the facts *and* you want them to change their thinking and actions

phrase

a group of words that are missing a subject, a verb, or both

plagiarism

when a person represents the ideas of another as their own original work

plain words

words that are more common and easier for readers to understand

popular sources

sources that are good for background information and ideas, but not for including in actual research

pre-writing

the first phase of the writing process where you gather information and content from sources to help generate materials in the drafting phase

predicate

the verb that conveys the action or state of being in a clause or sentence

preparation outline

a comprehensive form of outline that includes all of the information in your speech

preposition

words that show relationships between other words. Some examples include *in*, *on*, *at*, *of*, and *under*

preposition fragment

a type of sentence fragment where an issue with a preposition makes the sentence an incomplete idea

primary research

research that is often made up of first-person accounts and can be useful for issues where there is little research available

Projection

a technique for making your voice loud and clear that is more than just speaking loudly or shouting

rate

how quickly or slowly you speak during a presentation

receiver

a person who receives a message from a sender

reference entry

detailed information about your source that a reader can use to find the information on their own. A reference entry should include, at minimum, the author(s) who generated the source, the date the source was published, the title of the source, and information on where the source can be found.

references

references page

a section of your report that will have reference entries for all of the sources you cite in your paper. All reference entries should be organized in alphabetical order by author last name or organization name, and, if the reference runs on to multiple lines, each successive line should be indented.

report

an account of your investigation into a subject, presented in a written document or oral presentation that has conventional formatting

report body

the main portion of the report that has all the content of your findings. The elements are the introduction, the discussion, and the conclusion.

research question

a question that a research project sets out to answer

résumé

a document that summarizes your education, skills, talents, employment history, and experiences in a clear and concise format for potential employers

reverse chronological order

a way of organizing your job experiences so that you are starting with the most recent job and working backwards toward your first job

rhetor

a person who uses rhetoric to accomplish a task through communication

rhetoric

a practical, purposeful communication that attempts to create change in the world by enabling a rhetor to persuade people to change their beliefs or solve problems.

rhetorical audience

an audience that can take action to solve a problem *and* can be persuaded by the rhetor to take action

rhetorical balance

a way to construct a persuasive message that keeps a balance between three rhetorical elements: logos, pathos, and ethos.

rhetorical communication

the process of a source stimulating a source-selected meaning in the mind of a receiver by means of verbal and non-verbal messages

rhetorical corruptions/perversions

any issue that arises when one of the modes of appeal is out of balance. These corruptions/perversions are the pedant's stance, the advertiser's stance, and the entertainer's stance

rhetorical exigence

a "problem" that can be affected by human activity

rhetorical situation

also known as a "communication context," this is a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.

run-on sentence

a writing error where two or more independent clauses are connected without proper punctuation

scholarly sources

sources that are typically peer-reviewed by experts, more technical in nature, and cite references

scope

elements you must consider that can impact the message you create and how it will be received. For example, the audience, the purpose of your message, and constraints you must work within

secondary research

research the requires searching libraries and other locations for other peoples' published studies and research

self-inventory

the process of brainstorming your past accomplishments, skills, and achievements

sender

a person who sends a message

sentence fragment

a writing error where a sentence is missing a subject or verb

Shannon-Weaver Model

also known as the transmission model, this communication model shows communication as a linear process where a sender encodes information and sends it to a receiver who decodes it

SIDCRA

an acronym that stands for the six parts of a report: (1) summary, (2) introduction, (3) discussion, (4) conclusion, (5) recommendations, (6) appendix

signal verb

a special verb that show the reader how an author is expressing their ideas

simple future

a verb tense that is used to talk about things that haven't happened yet

simple past

a verb tense that is used to talk about things that happened or existed before now

simple present

a verb tense that is used show an action is happening right now or that it happens regularly

speaker

a person sending a message through their voice

speaking outline

a keyword outline used to deliver an extemporaneous speech

subject

the topic being discussed in a clause or sentence

subordinate conjunction

a word that connects a dependent clause to an independent clause. It shows a cause-and-effect relationship or a shift in time and place between the two clauses

subordinate conjunction fragment

a type of sentence fragment that is caused by an issue with a subordinate conjunction

summary

a way to use your own words to present your own information. This method is used for describing an entire source. This means that you will focus only on main ideas and not go into details.

targeted (hybrid) résumé

a résumé format that includes, both, a well-developed "Skills and Achievements" section that highlights a candidates most relevant skills and includes bullet points under each job in the "Employment Experience" section

team chat applications

a program, such as Slack or Microsoft Teams, that companies use to promote efficient communication across their workforce

technical communication

any communication on a specialized, technical topic

thank you note

a brief note that thanks the interviewers for meeting with you. It should also express your continued interest in the position, reference something specific from the conversation, and remind them of your qualifications

the advertiser's stance

a rhetorical corruption that occurs when the speaker or writer undervalues the subject of the message and focuses more on the effect of the message

the entertainer's stance

a rhetorical corruption that occurs when the speaker or writer undervalues establishing their credibility to an audience

the pedant's stance

a rhetorical corruption that occurs when the speaker or writer underplays the relationship of the speaker to the audience

the rhetorical triangle

a communication model that states the elements of communication—the speaker, audience, and message—are related to each of the others, showing that communication is a complex, dynamic system

tone

the attitude of a communicator toward the message being delivered and/or the audience receiving the message

transactional

types of communication that are highly designed to create a purposeful exchange between the sender and receiver of a message

transition words

words that are used to connect words, phrases, or sentences. Examples include: *as a matter of fact*, *moreover*, *in other words*, and *as a result*

verb

a word that conveys the action or state of being in a sentence

verb tenses

grammatical ways of altering verbs to show when a person does something, or when something existed or happened

verbal delivery

using your voice to communicate a message through projection, vocal enunciation and punctuation, pace and rate, and vocal pauses

verbal feedback

a type of feedback where you ask specifics types of questions to help guide the speaker. These include open-ended questions, clarifying questions, and questions that confirm understanding

visual delivery

the way you use elements of nonverbal communication—eye contact, facial expressions, attire, and movement—to communicate your message

Vocal enunciation

a speaking technique where words are pronounced correctly and expressed in such a way that it draws in the audience

vocal pauses

a strategic pause during a presentation that gives your audience a chance to fully understand what has been said

written report

a type of report where a person uses writing to relay information

About the Authors

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