**Verbal Communication Skills**

Verbal communication is the use of words to share information with other people. It can therefore include both spoken and written communication. However, many people use the term to describe only spoken communication. The verbal element of communication is all about the words that you choose, and how they are heard and interpreted.

**What is Verbal Communication?**

Verbal communication is any communication that uses words to share information with others. These words may be both spoken and written.

Communication is a two-way process

Communication is about passing information from one person to another.

This means that both the sending and the receiving of the message are equally important.

Verbal communication therefore requires both a speaker (or writer) to transmit the message, and a listener (or reader) to make sense of the message. This page discusses both parts of the process.

There are a large number of different verbal communication skills. They range from the obvious (being able to speak clearly, or listening, for example), to the more subtle (such as reflecting and clarifying). This page provides a summary of these skills, and shows where you can find out more.

It is important to remember that effective verbal communication cannot be fully isolated from non-verbal communication: your body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions, for example.

Clarity of speech, remaining calm and focused, being polite and following some basic rules of etiquette will all aid the process of verbal communication.

**Opening Communication**

In many interpersonal encounters, the first few minutes are extremely important. First impressions have a significant impact on the success of further and future communication.

When you first meet someone, you form an instant impression of them, based on how they look, sound and behave, as well as anything you may have heard about them from other people.

This first impression guides your future communications, at least to some extent.

For example, when you meet someone and hear them speak, you form a judgement about their background, and likely level of ability and understanding. This might well change what you say. If you hear a foreign accent, for example, you might decide that you need to use simpler language. You might also realise that you will need to listen more carefully to ensure that you understand what they are saying to you.

Of course your first impression may be revised later. You should ensure that you consciously ‘update’ your thinking when you receive new information about your contact and as you get to know them better.

**Basic Verbal Communication Skills:**

Effective Speaking and Listening

**Effective speaking involves three main areas**: the words you choose, how you say them, and how you reinforce them with other non-verbal communication.

All these affect the transmission of your message, and how it is received and understood by your audience.

It is worth considering your choice of words carefully.

You will probably need to use different words in different situations, even when discussing the same subject. For example, what you say to a close colleague will be very different from how you present a subject at a major conference.

How you speak includes your tone of voice and pace. Like non-verbal communication more generally, these send important messages to your audience, for example, about your level of interest and commitment, or whether you are nervous about their reaction.

**Active listening is an important skill**. However, when we communicate, we tend to spend far more energy considering what we are going to say than listening to the other person.

Effective listening is vital for good verbal communication. There are a number of ways that you can ensure that you listen more effectively. These include:

**Be prepared to listen**. Concentrate on the speaker, and not on how you are going to reply.

Keep an open mind and avoid making judgements about the speaker.

Concentrate on the main direction of the speaker’s message. Try to understand broadly what they are trying to say overall, as well as the detail of the words that they are using.

Avoid distractions if at all possible. For example, if there is a lot of background noise, you might suggest that you go somewhere else to talk.

**Be objective.**

Do not dwell on one or two points at the expense of others. Try to use the overall picture and all the information that you have.

**Do not stereotype the speaker**. Try not to let prejudices associated with, for example, gender, ethnicity, accent, social class, appearance or dress interfere with what is being said (see Personal Appearance).

**Improving Verbal Communication**:

There are a number of tools and techniques that you can use to improve the effectiveness of your verbal communication. These include reinforcement, reflection, clarification, and questioning.

**Reinforcement**

Reinforcement is the use of encouraging words alongside non-verbal gestures such as head nods, a warm facial expression and maintaining eye contact.

All these help to build rapport and are more likely to reinforce openness in others. The use of encouragement and positive reinforcement can:

Encourage others to participate in discussion (particularly in group work);

Show interest in what other people have to say;

Pave the way for development and/or maintenance of a relationship;

Allay fears and give reassurance;

Show warmth and openness; and

Reduce shyness or nervousness in ourselves and others.

**Questioning**

Questioning is broadly how we obtain information from others on specific topics.

Questioning is an essential way of clarifying areas that are unclear or test your understanding. It can also enable you to explicitly seek support from others

On a more social level, questioning is also a useful technique to start conversations, draw someone into a conversation, or simply show interest. Effective questioning is therefore an essential element of verbal communication.

**We use two main types of question:**

**Closed Questions**

Closed questions tend to seek only a one or two word answer (often simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’). They therefore limit the scope of the response. Two examples of closed questions are:

“Did you travel by car today?” and

“Did you see the football game yesterday?”

These types of question allow the questioner to remain in control of the communication. This is often not the desired outcome when trying to encourage verbal communication, so many people try to focus on using open questions more often. Nevertheless, closed questions can be useful for focusing discussion and obtaining clear, concise answers when needed.

**Open Questions**

Open questions demand further discussion and elaboration. They therefore broaden the scope for response. They include, for example,

“What was the traffic like this morning?”

“What do you feel you would like to gain from this discussion?”

Open questions will take longer to answer, but they give the other person far more scope for self-expression and encourage involvement in the conversation.

**Reflecting and Clarifying**

Reflecting is the process of feeding back to another person your understanding of what has been said.

Reflecting is a specialised skill often used within counselling, but it can also be applied to a wide range of communication contexts and is a useful skill to learn.

Reflecting often involves paraphrasing the message communicated to you by the speaker in your own words. You need to try to capture the essence of the facts and feelings expressed, and communicate your understanding back to the speaker. It is a useful skill because:

The speaker gets feedback about how the message has been received and can then clarify or expand if they wish.

It shows interest in, and respect for, what the other person has to say.

You are demonstrating that you are considering the other person’s viewpoint.

**Summarising**

A summary is an overview of the main points or issues raised.

Summarising can also serve the same purpose as ‘reflecting’. However, summarising allows both parties to review and agree the message, and ensure that communication has been effective. When used effectively, summaries may also serve as a guide to the next steps forward.

**Closing Communication**

The way a communication is closed or ended will, at least in part, determine the way a conversation is remembered.

Verbal signals may include phrases such as:

“Well, I must be going,” and

“Thank you so much, that’s really helpful.”

Non-verbal conclusions may include starting to avoid eye contact, standing up, turning away, or behaviours such as looking at a watch or closing notepads or books. These non-verbal actions indicate to the other person that the initiator wishes to end the communication.

People often use a mixture of these, but tend to start with the non-verbal signals, especially face-to-face. On the telephone, of course, verbal cues are essential.

Closing an interaction too abruptly may not allow the other person to 'round off' what he or she is saying so you should ensure there is time for winding-up. The closure of an interaction is a good time to make any future arrangements. Last, but not least, this time will no doubt be accompanied by a number of socially acceptable parting gestures.

**What Are Verbal Communication Skills?**

Effective verbal communication skills include more than just talking. Verbal communication encompasses both how you deliver messages and how you receive them. Communication is a [soft skill](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-are-soft-skills-2060852), and it’s one that is important to every employer.

Workers who can convey information clearly and effectively are highly valued by employers. Employees who can interpret messages and act appropriately on the information that they receive have a better chance of excelling on the job.

**Verbal Communication Skills in the Workplace**

What constitutes effective verbal communication on the job depends on the relationships between communication partners and the work context. Verbal communication in a work setting takes place between many different individuals and groups such as co-workers, bosses and subordinates, employees, customers, clients, teachers and students, and speakers and their audiences.

Verbal communication occurs in many different contexts including training sessions, presentations, group meetings, performance appraisals, one-on-one discussions, interviews, disciplinary sessions, sales pitches, and consulting engagements.

**Examples of Verbal Communication Skills**

Here are some examples of effective workplace verbal communication skills employed in different workplace contexts.

**Verbal Communications for Supervisors:** The best supervisors don’t merely tell their subordinates what to do and expect them to listen. Instead, they employ [active listening skills](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/active-listening-skills-with-examples-2059684) to understand employee needs and perspectives, engage in verbal negotiation to address and defuse issues, and capitalize upon opportunities to praise individual and team achievement.

* Advising others regarding an appropriate course of action
* Assertiveness
* Conveying feedback in a constructive manner emphasizing specific, changeable behaviors
* Disciplining employees in a direct and respectful manner
* Giving credit to others
* Recognizing and countering objections
* Showing an interest in others, asking about and recognizing their feelings
* Speaking calmly even when you’re stressed
* Terminating staff
* Training others to carry out a task or role
* Using affirmative sounds and words like “uh-huh,” “got you,” “I understand,” “for sure,” “I see,” and “yes” to demonstrate understanding
* Using self-disclosure to encourage sharing

**Verbal Communications for Team Members:** Open and constant lines of communication are vital to team success, particularly when completing quality- and deadline-critical projects. One of the most important [team-building skills](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/list-of-team-building-skills-2063772), strong verbal communications help to ensure that issues will be spotted and resolved in formative stages, averting costly escalation.

* Conveying messages concisely
* Encouraging reluctant group members to share input
* Explaining a difficult situation without getting angry
* Explaining that you need assistance
* Paraphrasing to show understanding
* Posing probing questions to elicit more detail about specific issues
* Receiving criticism without defensiveness
* Refraining from speaking too often or interrupting others
* Requesting feedback
* Stating your needs, wants, or feelings without criticizing or blaming

**Verbal Communications with Clients:** If a large part of your work involves one-on-one communications with customers, it’s helpful to have a “gift of gab” – particularly if you are a sales professional. Keep in mind, though, that your conversations need to be focused upon identifying and addressing your clients’ needs; using your verbal talents to encourage consultative dialogues will ensure positive client relations.

* Anticipating the concerns of others
* Asking for clarification
* Asking open-ended questions to stimulate dialogue
* Calming an agitated customer by recognizing and responding to their complaints
* Emphasizing benefits of a product, service, or proposal to persuade an individual or group
* Noticing [non-verbal cues](https://www.thebalancecareers.com/nonverbal-communication-skills-2059693) and responding verbally to verify confusion, defuse anger, etc.

**Verbal Communications for Presenters:** Public speaking is a talent that is honed both through practice and through formal training. Speaking articulately and persuasively to a live audience involves:

* Enunciating each word you speak clearly
* Introducing the focus of a topic at the beginning of a presentation or interaction
* Planning communications prior to delivery
* Projecting your voice to fill the room
* Providing concrete examples to illustrate points
* Restating important points towards the end of a talk
* Selecting language appropriate to the audience
* Speaking at a moderate pace, not too fast or too slowly
* Speaking confidently but with modesty
* Summarizing key points made by other speakers
* Supporting statements with facts and evidence
* Tailoring messages to different audiences
* Telling stories to capture an audience
* Using humor to engage an audience

**Tips to Improve Your Verbal Communications**

Even if you are a shy introvert who prefers to work independently, there are ways to improve your verbal communication skills so that you can more easily cultivate rapport with others.

Practice makes perfect, and so take the time to actively practice these communications skills for workplace success: active listening, clarity and conciseness, confidence, empathy, friendliness, open-mindedness, giving and soliciting feedback, confidence, respectfulness, and non-verbal (body language, tone of voice, eye contact) communication.

# How to Develop Effective Verbal Communication Skills

Communication skills are important for most jobs because they help you interact effectively with people you encounter at work, including customers, potential clients and colleagues. In this article, we cover a range of techniques for developing your verbal communication skills.

### Characteristics of an effective communicator

An effective communicator's attributes include:

* Active listening
* Adaptability - adapting your communication styles to support the situation
* Clarity
* Confidence and assertiveness
* Constructive feedback - giving and receiving it
* Emotional intelligence - identifying and managing your emotions, as well as other people's emotions
* Empathy
* Interpersonal skills - social skills which are especially useful in building strong rapports
* Interpretation of body language - this will help you understand how someone is feeling
* Open-mindedness
* Patience
* Simplifying the complex
* Storytelling

## Techniques for improving your communication skills

Communication is a skill which means that you can develop and improve it. Here are some techniques which can refine your skills.

### The power of the mind

Often we talk while we think but this can reduce our credibility because what we're saying is usually meaningless and we come across as nervous. Much of presence is about stillness, listening and providing thoughtful response. When answering questions and whilst engaging in conversation keep the following formula in mind and reply in a short, clear and concise way:

* Think
* Breathe
* Speak

So don't just say the first thing that comes to mind, instead be thoughtful and concentrate on the meaning of what you wish to communicate. When speaking, understand exactly what message you're trying to get across. If you are unclear about your message then your audience won't understand either.

#### Positive visualisation

This tactic is employed by [athletes before a race](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/active/10568898/Sports-visualisation-how-to-imagine-your-way-to-success.html), they visualise themselves winning and focus on this idea intensely. This gives them a mental boost which translates into a physical one.

You can use this technique before a big presentation – imagine standing on a podium in front of hundreds of people, imagine delivering your speech and the audience looking engaged, imagine finishing up your speech and the audience applause.

Repeating this several times and immersing yourself in the event and the emotions will build effective communication skills.

#### Exercise - Positive Visualisation

1. Find a quiet place to sit down and relax
2. Close your eyes
3. Think back to an experience you have had that made you feel really good. It can be anything - a personal accomplishment, a youthful memory, a successful project at work
4. Take yourself back there and replay the sequence of events
5. Be as detailed as you can in reliving the moment for yourself
6. Hear the sounds, see the sights and feel the emotions
7. Replay this a few times until you are immersed in this event
8. Now open your eyes

This is a great technique to do before a presentation as it will help you control your nerves and it will increase your confidence for the event.

### Keep your audience in mind

You must understand your audience to communicate effectively. By having this understanding you can tailor your communication to suit them so your message has the most impact.

To develop this skill you must imagine yourself in the audience's position - think of their demographic and shared characteristics. Ask: why are they attending? What do they want to find out? What level are they in terms of knowledge and experience?



### Actively listen

Active listening is when you listen beyond the words being spoken - you understand the message being communicated. During conversations, a lot of the time the "listener" is thinking about how they're going to respond rather than concentrating on what the speaker is saying.

By really listening you can provide a more thoughtful answer that takes the speaker's thoughts and opinions into account. Like Richard Branson said "Listen more than you talk."



To develop active listening you should practice the following:

#### 1. Pay attention

Give the speaker your complete attention:

* Look at them directly and maintain eye contact.
* Don't think about your reply whilst they're speaking.
* Interpret their body language.
* Try to avoid being distracted by what's happening around you.

#### 2. Show the speaker that you're interested

* Use your body language to highlight you're engagement, such as, nodding, smiling, maintaining an open posture etc.
* Use prompts, such as, "uh huh", "yep" etc.
* Clarify your understanding...

#### 3. Clarify your understanding

You need to ensure that you understand what the speaker is saying without your judgments and beliefs getting in the way:

* Reflect on what you have heard by summarising and paraphrasing, for example, "Sounds like you're saying…". Ensure you do this periodically in a conversation as it helps with your understanding and it's also another way to show the speaker than you're listening.
* Ask questions to ensure that you understand everything, such as, "What do you mean when you say…" Ensure that these questions are non-judgemental.
* Ask whether you've got it right and accept if you need to be corrected.
* Ask for specific examples.
* Admit if you're unsure about what the speaker means.
* Ask the speaker to repeat something if you think it will help.

#### 4. Don't interrupt or redirect the conversation

Interrupting is not helpful as it's irritating for the speaker and it reduces the time for you to understand the message:

* Before saying anything ensure that the speaker has finished a point.

#### 5. Provide a suitable response

* Be honest when you respond but avoid attacking or making the speaker feel bad because this is unhelpful.
* Provide your opinions politely.

These are the most common obstacles to active listening:

* Losing concentration.
* Jumping to conclusions which subsequently leads to false assumptions.
* Hastily forming a response before the speaker is finished.
* Arguing.

### Be empathetic

To be empathetic means that you are able to identify and understand others' emotions i.e. imagining yourself in someone else's position. Understanding how people feel will help you communicate your thoughts and ideas in a way that makes sense to others and it helps you understand others when they communicate.

To develop empathy:

* Imagine yourself in someone else's position. Even if you have not experienced a similar situation, remember a situation where you have felt the same emotion your colleague/employee is experiencing.
* Practice listening to your colleagues without interrupting them.
* Observe your colleagues and try to gauge how they're feeling.
* Never ignore your colleagues' emotions, for example, if someone looks upset don't disregard this - address it.
* Try to understand first rather than form a judgement. For example, you may initially feel annoyed at a colleague who seems cold and disinterested. However, after discovering they suffer from social anxiety you may feel more sympathetic.
* To communicate your empathy keep your body language open and regulate your voice to show your sincerity.

### Body language and posture

Your [posture has the greatest impact](https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/body-language.html) on your communication. The impression you have on others is split approximately:

* Body (visuals) 55%
* Voice (sound) 38%
* Words (content) 7%

Folded arms, crossed legs, hunched shoulders, hands in pockets, looking down – these are just some of the protective measures that make us feel safer, and should be avoided when giving a presentation or speech. Appearing relaxed makes us exert dominance and authority.

If you watch politicians speak, notice how relaxed and confident they appear, talking slowly and making positive body movements. Use your arms to emphasis a point and illustrate the message.

Read our [8 Elements of Confident Body Language](https://virtualspeech.com/blog/8-elements-of-confident-body-language).

#### Exercise – Posture

1. Place your feet the same width apart as your hips.
2. Feel your weight at the heel of your foot on the floor
3. Think of your shoulders expanding out from one another.
4. Do not hunch forward or pull your shoulders back - allow them to rest centrally.
5. Hold your head level.
6. Let your arms hang relaxed by your side.
7. Spend a moment getting used to this position.
8. Do a mental check around your body and make any adjustments you need to get comfortable.
9. Try moving to another spot, regaining this relaxed position.

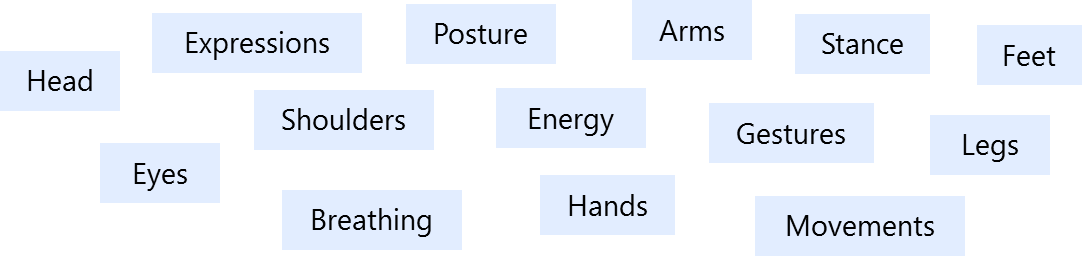
#### Centring

When a person is centred, they are balanced and relaxed. Getting used to placing your attention in your centre of gravity will help you achieve an open, relaxed posture, and make room for deeper, freer breath.

Think about the place half way between the front and back of your body, and just above your waist. Stand with your feet a shoulder length apart and let your arms hang loosely by your side. Try and put all your attention at this centre before an important meeting or presentation, it will increase your presence and bring you into the moment.

#### Visual rapport – things to consider

From top down: head, eyes, expressions, shoulders, posture, breathing, energy, arms, hands, gestures, movements, stance, legs and feet.



### Using the full range of your voice

The human voice is capable of 24 notes on a musical scale. We use about three of these in everyday speech. Think about this next time you speak, as using a wider range will allow you to quickly develop effective communication skills. This will help enthuse, persuade and excite the person or people you are talking to.

[Sound resonates](http://www.entnet.org/content/how-voice-works) in the mouth once your breath has delivered air to the vocal chords. Your tongue manipulates and shapes the sound, giving us speech, pitch and tone.

The more air in your lungs, the better the sounds resonate, giving us a wider range of audible voice. Most of us use less than a third of our vocal capacity and the reason is usually because we do not use our breath as well as we could.

To further understand how to use your voice, read the [Toastmasters Speaking Voice Guide](http://www.toastmasters.org/~/media/B7D5C3F93FC3439589BCBF5DBF521132.ashx).

#### Breathe deeply to communicate effectively

Every time you think, you breathe. Every time you speak, you breathe. The fact that we breathe subconsciously, means we often don’t think about it when speaking. When we get nervous our [breathing becomes shallow](http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/vocal-variety-speech-breathing/). Combine this with overlong sentences, which usually accompany speaking in public, and words begin to trail away at the end.

Maximising your breath and filling your lungs when speaking is very important for building effective communication skills. It makes you sound influential.

Remember to pause for emphasis, pause to take in a breath and pause to allow your message to sink in.

#### Exercise – Breathing

1. Stand in the Neutral Position and put your hands on your stomach.
2. Breathe deeply.
3. Try to push your hands out as you breathe in by filling your ribs.
4. Increase your awareness of this happening as you breathe - the movement and expansion of the ribs.

### Control your nerves by practicing

The key to controlling your nerves is preparation. Spend plenty of time preparing your material, make sure you know it really well. While practicing, get someone to interrupt you at various points, then try to continue the presentation – this is a great way to make sure you’re not just presenting a rigid script.

Knowing your subject well will also help with [answering questions](https://virtualspeech.com/blog/guide-for-handling-questions-after-a-presentation) afterwards, often the most nerve-wracking part of the presentation. The final presentation the audience sees is only a small percentage of the work required to get to that point with the planning and preparation.

Read our article on [overcoming your presentation nerves](https://virtualspeech.com/blog/overcome-fear-public-speaking-guide-tips).

#### Practice in a realistic setting

To quickly improve your verbal communication skills it's a good idea to practice in realistic settings:

**Method 1**

A particularly helpful setting for practicing communication skills is in meetings. In these situations people often have the tendency to think that their opinions don't matter or that people will negatively judge them if they speak up. But this isn't the case and it's likely that others in the room will also feel too afraid to say anything so they'll respect you when you do speak up.

What is valuable to you will be valuable to another person - at the end of the day your input matters so get comfortable sharing your opinions and ideas.

**Method 2**

Practice by talking to friends and family. You don’t even have to be practicing a speech, sales pitch, or interview questions; just talk to your friends as normal, with one tiny difference. Pay attention to your use of hesitation words such as ‘like’, ‘um’, ‘ah’, ‘ok’, etc. and notice how often you use them - is it when you don’t know what to say? When you can’t express yourself properly? Or is it just a habit?

The easiest way to do this when you first try is to record yourself and listen back to what you’ve said. You’ll realise two things: firstly, how much you hate the sound of your own voice, and secondly, what your hesitation words are and how often you use them.

By becoming aware of them, and consciously trying to reduce their use in daily conversation, you’ll gradually eliminate them out of your everyday vocabulary and improve verbal communication skills.

**Method 3**

Practicing in front of a virtual audience. Virtual reality (VR) tricks your mind into thinking what you see virtually is real so it’s an effective method of overcoming a fear of public speaking. A [meta-study](https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/know-your-mind/201703/why-virtual-reality-could-be-mental-health-gamechanger) by the University of Oxford and the University of Barcelona proved that VR can be used to treat anxiety, so it’s definitely worth a try.

### Watch videos from experts

You can do this one in the comfort of your own home as there are lots of videos online from motivational speakers and communication experts. Watch how these people present themselves - where they look, their tone of voice, the speed at which they speak etc. Make a list of things they do that you want to replicate in your own speaking and then imitate what the speakers do when you’re talking.

Start small and scale up to a larger audience as you become more comfortable and confident in your ability to deliver your message effectively. This isn’t an overnight quick-fix (unfortunately, there isn’t one) and you’ll have to practice to master speaking techniques and eliminate any bad linguistic habits you’ve picked up. If you persevere, you’ll improve your verbal communication skills quickly.



Matt Abrahams giving a talk on how to 'Think Fast, Talk Smart'.

Here are two videos to get you started:

* '[Think Fast, Talk Smart](https://youtu.be/HAnw168huqA)' - Matt Abrahams, Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Stanford Business School. This video is a great example of how to incorporate your personality to connect with the audience and ensure your message is clear and structured.
* '[Why We Do What We Do](https://youtu.be/Cpc-t-Uwv1I)' - Tony Robbins, motivational speaker. You can use this video to show you techniques such as pausing after important points, varying your pitch and using hand gestures to emphasise your message.

### Get feedback on your verbal communication

Feedback is essential if you’re preparing for a specific speech or presentation. You could ask a friend to listen to your speech and give you feedback on what you’re saying and how you present.

There are also [mobile apps](https://virtualspeech.com/learn/public-speaking-apps) that can help you by giving you instant feedback on areas you could improve. The [VirtualSpeech VR app](https://virtualspeech.com/product) can track your hesitation words, pitch, volume, and speed, and give you feedback so that you can practice and improve on a daily basis.

If you want to improve verbal communication skills in a realistic environment, it’s a great way to bridge the gap between practicing in front of a mirror and performing the real thing, because you can practice in front of photo-realistic audiences in the safety of the virtual world.

The mobile app also has training courses such as how to deal with distractions and maintain eye contact (it’ll even give you a heatmap of where in the audience you’ve been looking) so that you can learn techniques, practice them and improve.



### 8 rules for effective communication skills

1. Think about both your content and your audience. Is your speech suitable?
2. Understand the core message you are trying to get across and the three points you want your audience taking away with them
3. Have an overview of your speech in mind before spending time on details
4. Have a clear presentation structure and show it repeatedly to your audience so they know which section they are on and how long left
5. Rehearse aloud. Record your voice and present to friends (if possible) to get feedback
6. Try and keep your speech simple, focus on only a few points and explain them clearly
7. Be enthusiastic, move around the stage and use body language to convey confidence
8. Make a list of possible questions and rehearse answers for them

### Communication barriers

You should be aware of potential communication barriers so you can try to manage them, such as:

* Your lack of interest in what the speaker is saying.
* Differing opinions and judgements as this may distort what you're hearing or lead to incorrect assumptions.
* Physical issues, such hearing problem, speech difficulties, language differences.
* Using technical terminology.
* Worrying that you will offend the other person.
* Physical barriers which may prevent you from seeing non-verbal cues.
* Cultural differences.

### Final thoughts

Communication is one of the most effective skills that you can cultivate for work so it's worth the effort to develop it. It's also helpful to keep in mind the following when working on your communication:

* What we hear last is remembered the easiest.
* We remember things that are presented with an impact, such as, using emotional appeals (pathos).
* We remember things that we have use for.
* We remember what we hear frequently so repetition is important.

# 7 Tips to Improve Verbal Communication Skills

Strong verbal communication skills are important for everyone to master. They are extremely valuable in both your personal and professional life. When speaking clearly, confidently, and with poise, you are much more likely to command the respect of others and build rapport. This is particularly important in business interactions.

The following 7 tips will help you improve your verbal communication skills so that you can better connect with your audience, earn respect, and build the relationships necessary for successful business interactions:

## 1. Think before you speak:

By organizing your thoughts in advance, you can eliminate many of the awkward pauses that occur when speaking. It will also help you relay your information more concisely. While writing down your thoughts is not always possible in impromptu discussions, it is still effective to take a minute to organize your thoughts in your mind before you begin to speak.

## 2. Be clear and concise:

The most effective way to get your point across is to make it in a clear and concise manner. Avoid using complex, convoluted sentences, and try to state your argument in direct language. Before speaking, ask yourself, “What is the clearest way I can make my point?”

## 3. Speak with confidence:

Speaking in a confident manner will help you build trust and command the respect of your audience. There are several factors which can impact your ability to speak confidently, including your command of the subject matter, your word choice, the tone of your voice, your body language, and your ability to make direct eye contact with your audience.

## 4. Vary your vocal tone:

Speaking in a monotone voice is a surefire way to bore your audience. Instead, use voice inflection to add emphasis to important points, and vary the pitch of your voice to express emotion. This will help keep your audience engaged in your message.

## 5. Be a good listener:

Being a good listener is as important as being a good speaker, and it will improve the quality of your verbal interactions. It shows the people you are speaking with that you genuinely care about their ideas, and it helps ensure you understand their needs. This will enable you to build trust and rapport much quicker.

## 6. Be aware of your non-verbal communication cues:

Your body language significantly impacts the way others interpret what you say. Pay attention to the gestures you make, your facial expressions, and your body language to ensure they align with the message you are trying to get across.

## 7. Think about the perspective of your audience:

Just because you have a strong command of a topic doesn’t mean the people you are speaking to have the same knowledge as you. Try to think about how someone else will understand what you are trying to communicate, particularly if they lack the technical knowledge about a subject that you possess.