

Spoken and Written Communication

Spoken or oral and written communication are both forms of verbal communication. Oral communication is more natural and immediate. It is natural to speak when the other person is present; we speak to communicate in natural and informal situations. We also speak in formal and official situations such as making a presentation or taking an interview when the target audience is present.

Oral communication requires that both the parties should be present and attentive at the same time. This requires certain skills of both; each must be able to respond to the body language of the other, and must be able to make immediate response to what the other says. Oral communication has the advantage of immediate feedback and opportunities to seek and give clarification. The telephone makes it

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possible to speak even when the other person is not present in the same place. The radio makes it possible to speak to a large number of people at the same time.

Written communication has to be used when the other person is not present and is not available on the telephone. Long and complex messages are best conveyed in writing. A written message can go beyond time limitations since it can be preserved and can wait for the attention of the intended receiver. Written communication is separated from the sender and has no support from the sender's personality and voice. This requires different kinds of skills in both the sender and the receiver. Oral and written communication have different qualities which must be taken into account in choosing which one to use in a particular situation. These are discussed in detail in a later chapter.

Attributes of Spoken and Written Communication

Oral and written communication have different attributes which have to be taken into account in choosing which one to use in a particular situation. Some of the attributes are discussed below.

- (i) **Speed:** Written communication is slower in preparation, in conveyance and in reception; it takes more time to draft, type, dispatch, and to receive and read a letter than it takes to speak, and to hear, listen to, and understand an oral message. Feedback is also slower in written communication.
- (ii) **Record:** Written communication serves as a record and can be used for future reference. It is a documentary proof, and can be used as legal evidence. Oral communication may be taped for later reference, but the authenticity of the voice can be questioned; moreover, tapes can be edited and the message distorted. Written records and documents are more reliable and acceptable.
- (iii) **Precision and accuracy:** Written communication is more precise and accurate than oral. Choice of precise words is possible in written communication because the writer has the time to look for suitable words and phrases, and to revise the draft, if necessary. Accuracy is necessary in written communication because the receiver is not present to ask for clarification. In oral communication, it is not always possible to be so precise in the choice of words. There is also no time to seek and consider words while speaking; however, the receiver can seek clarification on the spot. Besides, oral communication has the support of vocal tone and gestures and expressions which enrich the meaning of the words.
- (iv) **Length:** A written message is usually shorter than an oral communication. The situation of oral communication requires some preliminary and closing remarks, while for written messages there are standard formats for opening and closing which can keep the message short.

- (v) **Expense:** Written communication requires stationery, preparation, and transmission, all of which cost money. Oral communication can also cost a great deal since it requires simultaneous presence and attention of the two parties, and getting together costs money. Costs will depend on the availability of the required person(s) at the particular place. Each type requires different channels for transmission. Availability and cost of each of the channels is a factor to be considered. Modern technology like tele-conferencing and video-conferencing has made it possible to use oral communication even when the two parties are separated by a great distance. The cost of this technology is coming down and it saves a good deal of time and energy that would be spent on travelling when there is a need for interviewing or personal discussions.
- (vi) **Body Language:** Oral communication is supported by the speaker's body language and paralanguage. The speaker can control the style of delivery, giving meaning to words and sentences by voice inflexion and facial expressions and gestures. Written communication is separated from the writer's bodily presence and is more in the control of the reader. The reader can give to the words the sound, inflexion and stress as he chooses; and this may be affected by the reader's mood and state of mind at the time of reading.
- (vii) **Feedback:** Oral communication allows immediate feedback; the listener's face gives some feedback and the speaker can modify the message on the spot. Clarifications can be sought and given at once. A conversation can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion by continuous exchange of ideas and views. In written communication the feedback is delayed; the reader's facial expressions cannot be seen by the writer; the reader's response is known to the writer only when the reader replies. The reader may give a cautious and guarded reply without letting the other see the really felt reaction.
- (viii) **Formality:** Spoken language tends to be less formal than written language. When a language is spoken, there are abbreviations and dropping of some sounds, as in *can't, won't, don't, I'll, we'll*. The vocabulary used in written English is also more formal than in spoken English.

Spoken English requires learning correct pronunciation English spelling does not always indicate how the word is pronounced. We have to learn correct pronunciation so that we can communicate with people in other parts of the world. We learn neutral pronunciation, that is, speaking with the least possible interference from the sounds of our mother tongue. Skill in spoken language can be improved by learning the voice dynamics required for the language; intonation, stress, volume, rate of speech and accent are important for spoken language. Skill in written language requires correct spelling and command of a variety of sentence structures in order to put emphasis on the desired points.

Formal and Informal

The difference between “formal” and “informal” is not the same as the difference between “grammatical” and “ungrammatical.” The difference is in the “register” which includes tone of voice, vocabulary and syntax. In writing as well as speaking, we use a variety of registers. We use different registers for writing an assignment, for writing to a friend, for writing to a prospective employer, for conversation with a friend, and for making a presentation. Writing is usually more formal than speaking.

The register we use in a given situation is determined by the social code and not the grammatical code. The relation between writer/speaker and audience is a social relation and we maintain it in the style of writing and speaking.

Formal register follows certain conventions:

Conservative language: In formal style, we are careful about noun-pronoun agreement as in “Everyone has his or her weakness” but in an informal situation we may say, “Everyone has their weakness.”

No contractions: In instruction manuals, “You don’t want to offend your reader,” sounds more comfortable than the formal “You do not want to offend your reader.” But in formal prose, contractions can give the impression that the writer is being casual.

Restrained style: Slang and colloquial terms suggest a casual rather than a serious approach. They are not used in formal communication. Gestures and movements are also restrained in a formal speech.

Formal communication is usually scheduled in advance and has pre-arranged participants and pre-set agenda like a meeting, an interview, a conference, a presentation. Highly formal communication is likely to be one-way and may not be an enriching experience. The language used is formal.

Informal communication may be unscheduled, with random participants, no pre-set agenda. It is likely to be interactive and richer than formal communication. The style is informal and may be conversational.

As the newer, faster, more efficient technology replaces traditional methods of communication, the distinction between formal and informal communication is diminished. The newly named “online speak” consists of a combination of written and spoken language along with imaginative abbreviations. “Online speak” can incorporate anything from e-motions like :) (for a smile) or :((for disappointment) to n2m (not too much) or lol (laugh out loud). Politeness is reduced in electronic messages; there is informality and experimentation.

In an organisation, formal communication is a means of controlling activities through circulation of authoritative policies and procedures stating what is to be done when, where, how, and by whom. Formal communication moves along the

established "channels" of communication within the organisation. It is impersonal (desk to desk), official, and, in most cases, written. Formal meetings are documented by writing summaries and minutes. The purposes of formal communication are to command, to instruct, and to finalise matters through the application of regulations. Formal communication is needed in organisations.

- Since it is official, it is binding and more likely to be obeyed. It establishes responsibility of the sender and receiver.
- Since it is written, it is more precise and less likely to be misunderstood. It can be preserved and traced at any time. Copies can be made for distribution.
- It saves time and effort that would be spent in informal talks and discussions.
- It avoids the embarrassment of face-to-face contact when the subject of communication is sensitive or painful.

There are also disadvantages in formal communication.

- It is too rigid; it limits information within the department to what is sanctioned by the head.
- If it is worded in bureaucratic jargon, with excessively cautious phraseology, it obscures the meaning.
- It often does not give reasons for the message; this can be very frustrating to the recipient.
- It takes time, effort and money to produce.
- It tends to be authoritarian since orders and instructions come down more often than reports and feedback go up and since social matters are seldom mentioned.
- It is usually impersonal and final and fails to motivate employees.

Informal communication is personal, unofficial, and mostly oral. It is based on the realisation that personal interaction among employees is healthy for an organisation. The purposes of informal communication are to educate through information sharing, to motivate through personal contacts, and to resolve conflicts through participation and friendship. It maintains enthusiasm, loyalty, and commitment by involving employees in organisational matters.

Informal communication has many advantages:

- It is less official and less intimidating. It encourages the flow of new ideas.
- It is personal, and carries the enthusiasm of the participants rather than dry, bureaucratic logic.
- Since it is usually oral, it allows two-way communication and both parties can discuss and explore organisational matters.

- It promotes a more open climate and reduces rumours that sprout in a formal environment filled with unanswered questions.
- It can foster harmonious relationships and co-operation based on shared concerns and interests.

On the other hand, informal communication

- is too flexible and difficult to apply systematically.
- can lead to spreading of inaccurate information and also to indiscriminate disclosure of confidential information.
- is often coloured by emotion and can distort the meaning.
- is difficult to trace when an inquiry has to be made.

An appropriate mixture of formal and informal communication is the most useful. There is no magic formula for finding this mixture; intelligent leaders who understand the environment of the department and the needs of its staff can find a suitable blend

One-way and Two-way

In one-way communication information is always transferred in only one direction from the source to the target audience. With one-way communication there is no direct interaction between the persons involved. The receiver has no chance to get clarification or to question the information received. One-way communication follows the linear Source-Message-Channel-Receiver (S-M-C-R) model of communication. Since there is no feedback, the source cannot find out whether the receiver has understood the message. Examples of one-way communications systems are radio and television broadcasts, newspapers, advertisements and other mass media. Within an organisation, the notice board and public address system are one-way systems.

Two-way communication is interactive. It involves both persons fully. In a normal two-way conversation, the persons constantly alternate between being source and receiver. The receiver can ask for clarification or challenge the source or add one's own ideas and views to the conversation. At the end of such a conversation, both gain information on the issue talked about as well as about each other.

Communication is much more complex than the simple model of source sending a message over a channel to a receiver. The sender and the receiver both actively play a role. They function within their respective frames of reference, their social situations, and their relationship to one another. What the receiver brings to the communication situation is as important as (perhaps even more important than) what the sender brings. It is a reciprocal process of exchanging signals to inform, instruct, or persuade. Two-way communication requires interpersonal skills. It takes more time than one-way communication, but it is more satisfying

and brings about a better understanding and agreement between the parties involved.

Between the two extremes of non-interactive one-way and fully interactive two-way communication, there are intermediate modes of information flow.

In a large symposium or lecture meeting, much of the flow is one-way, from the speaker(s) to the audience, but the audience has the opportunity to ask questions. Audience response is not easy when the audience is large and the distance between the speaker(s) and listeners is much. In a smaller meeting, the chairperson can conduct the meeting so as to allow members to respond and participate. It is easier when the number is small and the distance between the participants is less. This simple exercise will help understand the difference between one-way and two-way communication.

Give a volunteer from the class a sheet of paper with a simple drawing consisting of five rectangles. Facing the wall, the volunteer must describe the drawing to the class. The class tries to draw what the volunteer describes. No questions or any other type of interaction may be used, and the volunteer must face the wall during the exercise.

When this is completed, members of the class are shown what is on the sheet of paper used by the volunteer. How successful was each one in reproducing the drawing?

Give a second volunteer a sheet of paper with another simple drawing. All conditions should remain the same except that now the volunteer faces the class and may answer questions asked by the participants. What are the results now?

British and American English

British and American English are variations of the same language. Anyone who learns one of the variants can easily understand the other. The important thing is to be consistent in using one in any particular written document, and to keep to only one for pronunciation and stress while speaking.

There are differences of spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation and stress between British and American English

Spelling Variations

The spelling differences can be easily listed but have to be remembered. It is not difficult in to recognise the words. Americans usually simplify spelling.

Words ending in *-our* in Britain are spelt with *-or* in USA

But not words like *sponsor, councillor, counsellor*

Words ending in *-ise* (British) end in *-ize* (American)

organise / organize, criticise/ criticize etc.

Words ending in *-re* (British) end in *-er* (American)
theatre/theater, centre/center,

Words ending in *-ogue* (British) end in *-og* (American)
catalogue/catalog; analogue/analog

Words ending in *-ence* (British) end in *-ense* (American)
defence/defense; offence/offense

In the middle of words, *-ge-* (British) is *-g-* (American)
ageing /aging; judgement /judgment

In some words, *single l* (British) is *double ll* (American)
fulfil /fulfill; skilful /skillful; enrolment/ enrollment

For verbs ending in a vowel and *l*, the British double the *l* to add *-ing*, or *-e* while American practice is to retain single *l*.
travelling/ traveling; signalled/ signaled.

When a verb has past tense forms in *-ed* and in *-t*, the British use the *-ed* form and Americans use the *-t* form;
Learned/learnt; spelled / spelt

Formation of past tense of verbs: Some verbs are used in the base form for past tense in American practice; some have a different form.

British	American
fitted	fit
lighted	lit
strived	strove
wedded	wed

There are some words that are spelt slightly differently

British	American
cheque	check
draught	draft
jewellery	jewelry
plough	plow
programme	program
pyjama	pajama
tyre	tire

The spell check on the computer is useful as you can set the language to UK or US.

Vocabulary variations

One major difference between British and American English is in the choice of vocabulary. Some words mean different things in the two varieties.

British	American
autumn	fall
biscuit	cookie
holiday	vacation
jumper	sweater
queue	line
spring onion	scallion
trolley	cart
goods train	freight train
luggage	baggage
petrol (petrol pump)	gasoline (gas station)
post a letter	mail a letter
shop	store
tap	faucet
torch	flashlight

The importance given to equality in the USA has given rise to a number of new words like the following.

Fireman — fire-fighter,

Policeman — police officer

Mailman — mail carrier,

Salesman — sales person

Maid — house cleaner

Stewardess — flight attendant

Chairman — chairperson, Chair, presiding officer

Elderly or “old” people: ‘senior citizens’; seniors; ‘older’ adults

Handicapped: are called differently-abled or physically-challenged

Coloured people” or “blacks” : “People of color”

Manmade — artificial, synthetic, manufactured

Variations in Pronunciation

Pronunciation differences can present problems in understanding English spoken by native speakers of the other kind, depending on your familiarity with one.

Many words in English have the sound ah as in *dance*, *can't*, *ask*. American pronunciation for these words is like a in *hat*

Stress

Stress is the force with which a syllable in a word (or a word in a sentence) is uttered. The British and the Americans place the stress differently. Take the example of the sentence:

What are you making?

In British English the stress is on *What*. In American English, there is strong stress on the first syllable of *making* 'mak ing

This gives the sentence a different intonation.

Students should try to get good command of only one, that is either British or American accent. Learning both at once is confusing. Whichever you choose, learn to recognise and understand the other one by listening to news on BBC or CNN.

Indian English

Although only 3% of Indians speak English, the number is so large that India is among the top 4 countries in the world with an English-speaking population. Indians have rapidly developed their own version of the language and Indian English is being recognised as a distinct variety of English.

Indian English is in the process of evolving and cannot be pinned down clearly. Some of the variations arise from errors endlessly repeated and finally accepted. Some coined words finally pass into Standard English and get into the Dictionary. Since the Indian English-speaking population is bilingual, a large number of Indian linguistic items constantly get imported into the English language.

Not every linguistic item is used by every Indian English speaker; there is a great deal of regional and educational variation. Even so, there are items that can be identified as aspects of Indian English speech and that are widely used by educated persons in formal situations.

The items are found more in spoken than in written English.

Sounds and Stress

The sound of a second language is strongly influenced by the learner's mother tongue. Some of the following sounds of Indian English are the result of this influence.

The intonation of a sentence tends to be different from what is used by either the British or the Americans. This happens because we tend to speak in the intonation of our mother tongue. It also happens because Indians stress suffixes such as *-ness*, *-able*, *-dom*. Also, vowels sounds which are dropped by American and British English speakers are articulated by Indians. For example, *typically* (*ti-pick-lee*), is pronounced *ti-pick-ah-lee* by Indian English speakers. Besides, function words which are reduced to weak sounds in other varieties of English (of, to, in, the, etc.) are not reduced in Indian English.

Coined Words

Indian English uses compound formation, as in *English-speaking classes*, *convent-educated*, *family members*, *chalk-piece*, *key-bunch*, *meeting notice*, *age barred*, and *pindrop silence*. Common Indian English terms which come from compound formation are *time-pass*, (plain or un-exciting occupation), *cousin-brother* / *cousin-sister*. These words are still regarded as Indianisms.

Many English mass nouns are used in the plural we have words such as, *furnitures*, *machineries* and *sceneries*— words which do not exist in British or American English. Sometimes words which should be pluralised are not; for example, "One of my relative," instead of 'one of my relatives.' This is still considered a grammatical error.

Many commonly used terms are shortened in speech; for example, *enthusiasm* is shortened to *enthu* and *fundamentals* is shortened to *fundas*. Some words are made by adding English suffixes to Indian terms, such as *-ic* in Upanishadic and *-ism* in goondatism. Another example in speech, is the practice in Mumbai of adding *-fy* to a Hindi word to indicate an action, as in *muskafy* to flatter somebody or to butter them up. Such terms are still Indianisms.

Prefixes may also be used in new ways. In Indian English, *pre-* is substituted for *post-* in *postpone* to create the new word *prepone*, which indicates that a fixed appointment has been moved to an earlier time. The word *prepone* has recently been included in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary.

Abbreviation are popular in Indian English. Thus we have *Jan*, *Feb*, *Sec*, *admin*, *princie*. Indian English abbreviations are pronounced as they are spelled after they have been shortened. New words and new usages of standard words are introduced as well. A food grinder is simply called a *mixie*.

Less is used to mean insufficient as in, 'There is less salt in the curry.' An unnecessary *of* appears in the expressions *too much of salt*, and *so much of heat*. "

Some items are directly related to characteristics of Indian languages. Examples are: "What is your good name?" (Aapka shubh naam kya hai?), *today morning* (aaj subah), or *yesterday night* (kal raat) for *this morning* and *last night*. Some of these literal translations can be offensive to US Americans since they also have offensive connotations. The commonly used Indian English expression *you people* (aap log) to address more than one person has unpleasant, racial suggestions for Americans.

Indian English is often a mixture of English, Hindi, and other languages. Many Indian terms frequently slip into English conversation, for example, *achhaa* (good / OK), *arrai* (hey), *buss* (that's it), *muthlab* (meaning), *theek hai* (okay or all right). However, the numbers *lakhs* and *crores* are used even in official documents and in the budget. These mixtures come quite naturally for those acquainted with two or more languages. People from other English speaking countries often cannot follow these terms.

Syntax

Indian English syntax is affected by Indian syntax in several ways. As articles do not have a parallel in Indian languages *a/an* and *the* are somewhat arbitrarily used. Often, *one* is substituted for *a*; as in, 'Three children and one tall lady...' *The* and *a* are often dropped when they should be used and used when they should be dropped, as in, 'We are going to temple.'

Something typical to Indian English is the use of *only* and *itself* to emphasize time and place. Sentences like 'I was in Islamabad only' and 'Can we meet today itself?' come from the Hindi word *hi*. Another common feature is repetition of a word for emphasis as in 'Come come! Sit sit!' or 'hot, hot coffee' and 'long, long hair.'

CHAPTER

9

ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS

Etiquette means conventionally accepted rules for formal relations and personal behaviour in polite society. It includes the code of ethical behaviour in relation to professional practice or action among members of a profession in dealing with each other. Other words associated with etiquette are **decorum**, which suggests dignity and a sense of what is appropriate for a person of good breeding, and **propriety**, which implies established conventions of morals and good taste.

Skills of behaviour that make one's relationship pleasant, attractive and comfortable to others are essential for effective communication. Since communication is, essentially, relationship, and includes the activity of establishing and maintaining contact with others, knowledge and practice of rules of etiquette add to a person's effectiveness. Just as attention must be paid to one's grooming and clothing to make oneself presentable, some effort and time must be spent on learning the ways and manners that make one's company and relationship pleasant to others.

Basic etiquette is an important part of presenting a positive image to one's boss, colleagues, clients, customers and acquaintances. It projects a relaxed and competent image which is necessary in modern organisations that expect their employees to present themselves and the company's interests to the best advantage.

In business, etiquette is the art of being comfortable around others and making others comfortable around you. Basic knowledge and practice of etiquette is an advantage; it helps a person to make a socially acceptable approach to others and also helps to make the right impression even when one meets someone

for the first time. Many people who are good at their jobs and upwardly mobile, are handicapped by lack of the social skills that are needed to move to higher positions.

The main difference between business etiquette and social etiquette is that business etiquette is genderless while social etiquette is the traditional chivalrous etiquette of holding the door open for a woman. In the workplace, **men and women are peers**. The guiding principle is always to **treat people with consideration and respect**. Unfortunately, this basic decency is often ignored or neglected in today's work environment. A cultivated person is marked by behaviour that shows respect and courtesy to everyone, regardless of position. Having a **consistent demeanour** adds to a person's credibility; a person who treats VIPs with impeccable courtesy and snaps at counter clerks, is not likely to be trusted even by the higher-ups.

Personal Behaviour

It is generally felt that if you cannot be trusted not to embarrass yourself in business and social situations, you may lack the self-control that is necessary to be good at what you do.

It is customary to greet others on entering, and acknowledge others' greetings either with a smile and a nod or with formal greeting like "good morning" according to the occasion.

Good posture is pleasant, and can be developed by keeping both feet firmly on the floor, holding the back straight without slouching, and not crossing the arms either while standing or sitting. Self-composure and a dignified posture make a good impression and project an image of competence. Not being overweight or being in good shape contributes to a presentable appearance.

Sneezing or coughing may be unavoidable, but can be dealt with discreetly. If you sense a sneeze or cough or yawn coming on, cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief in your left hand, so as to leave your right hand clean for shaking hands, opening doors, etc. Burping must be firmly controlled; hiccups can be avoided by being in good health and taking care of what one eats.

Grooming such as combing the hair or applying lipstick, should always be done in the privacy of rest-rooms.

Fragrances or perfumes of any kind should be applied sparingly, evoking a subtle scent. Strong and/or cheap fragrance is often offensive and not appropriate in a professional setting.

Greetings

The style of greeting varies from country to country. In the company of only Indians, the greeting "Namaste" is acceptable in most places, but it is best to keep

to the customs of the city in which you are. If in mixed religious company, it may be useful to keep to Western style greetings.

At interviews which are held in English, keep to English greetings.

On first meeting

- before 12.00 noon, the greeting is "Good morning."
- after 12.00 noon till 4.00 p.m., the greeting is "Good afternoon."
- after 4.00 p.m. till quite late, even after nightfall, the greeting is "Good evening."

At parting,

- till sunset, the greeting is "Good day."
- after sunset, the greeting is "Good night."

When receiving visitors from another country or visiting another country, it is better to find out

their style of greeting, both the verbal and the non-verbal gesture that accompanies it.

Between persons who know each other very well, it is customary to greet with "Hello! How are you?" The response is "Hello! Quite well, thanks. And you?"

Making an Apology

A simple apology is to say, "Sorry" or "I'm sorry." A somewhat more formal style is to say, "Pardon me" or "I beg your pardon." This formal apology is also used if you do not catch or understand what someone says to you, and you wish them to repeat what they said. A formal written apology uses the words "I/We regret..."

Requirements and styles of apology vary between cultures. In India, a gestural apology is required if your foot accidentally touches another person. In most Western cultures, an apology is definitely required if you are late and keep someone waiting.

Tone of voice and facial expression are important while expressing an apology.

Expressing Thanks and Appreciation

There are many styles from the most informal to the most formal for expressing thanks. A simple "Thanks" is quite informal; "thank you" is slightly more formal. "Thank you, Shailesh" sounds very sincere; "thank you, Mr. Murthy" or "thank you, sir" is formal.

In the USA many people say, "Thanks. I appreciate your help," Or "Thank you. I appreciate it." The tone of voice and facial expression should be appropriate.

A written expression is formal; for example, "I/ We appreciate your cooperation in" Or "I/We thank you for your interest in our project."

It is important not to sound patronising while expressing appreciation.

Conversation

In conversation, speak in a low voice, with controlled gestures. Make eye contact with the speaker. Show him you understand his talk by nodding your head, maintaining an upright posture, and, if appropriate, putting in an occasional comment such as "I see" or "that's interesting" or "really?" The speaker will appreciate your interest and feel that you are really listening.

It is not polite to interrupt others; wait and listen politely till they complete what they are saying and speak only when they stop; if by mistake you interrupt, stop at once and apologise.

Remember that you represent the company and not just yourself. Divulging company secrets or speaking off the record is not acceptable.

The purpose of small talk is to find something in common and create a bond. A good way to do this is to ask people about their interests. Being witty is less important than being observant and asking good questions.

Politics is a delicate topic but is of common interest to most people; it need not be avoided so long as no arguments are raised. Business environment, cultural events, sports, are good conversation topics on which one should be well-informed.

Using slang terms or swearing is not polite even in an informal social situation. People who have to swear to make a point are often perceived as less intelligent.

Introducing

Introductions may appear simple but these are the few moments in which critical first impressions are made on all sides. And you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

An introduction is our very first interaction with another person who may be a potential client/ customer, or a valuable contact. Generally, personal impressions are made within 20 – 30 seconds upon meeting someone.

The person making the introduction, and the two persons being introduced must all be able to do their parts well. Create a warm, happy and cordial atmosphere while introducing.

Business Introductions:

Business introductions are based on hierarchy; a person of lesser authority is introduced to a person of greater authority. In business etiquette, gender has no

place; it does not affect the order of introductions. For example, you may say, “*Mr. Greater Authority, I would like to introduce /Ms. Lesser Authority.*” But a client always takes precedence over anyone in your organisation; so also does an elected official.

If Mrs Murthy is your CEO and you are introducing administrative assistant Smita Jog to her, you would say, “*Mrs. Murthy, I’d like you to meet Smita Jog.*”

Some other rules are:

1. Introduce a non-official person to an elected official. An important point to note is that, whenever you introduce someone from the Press, include this information in your introduction in order to warn the person, especially a public official, that the conversation may be on record. Example: “*Mr Walia, allow me to introduce Michael D’Mello of The Tribune.*”
2. Introduce someone from your firm to a client or customer. Example: “*Mr. Dhawan, this is Miss Soonavala, our Chief Accounts Officer. Mr. Dhawan our client from Delhi.*”
3. Introduce a junior executive to a senior executive. Example: “*Miss Senior Executive, I’d like to introduce Mr. Junior Executive.*”

When introducing people, help the newly acquainted persons to start and carry on a smooth, friendly flow of conversation. Comment briefly on the background of each. A remark on a hobby or interest common to both helps to get a conversation started.

Introducing Yourself:

If no one introduces you, or if the host or hostess of the function is too busy, just introduce yourself to the other guests. Extend your hand, smile and say, “I’m Hilla Vakil, David’s partner.” Avoid saying things like “Mr. Mehta works for me;” it sounds arrogant. Instead, say, “Mr Mehta and I work in the same office.”

Always use both, your name and surname when introducing yourself. Be clear and concise in your introduction; it is poor manners to narrate your life history (or, worse, your problems or illnesses. Leave your problems outside and be sure to speak in an engaging tone). Construct an introduction that is interesting and easy to remember, and yet professional. It should not take more than fifteen seconds to deliver.

Consider what information about yourself will be of interest to the others. At a business function, it is appropriate to say where you work. Take care not to focus too much attention on yourself with grand sounding statements. For the particular audience, decide whether it is more appropriate to say, “I’m in public relations at Infosys” or to expand it slightly and say, “I try to attract investment in Infosys by working on the company’s annual reports.”

At functions that are not strictly business, it is not necessary to give much job information, since many people feel that they are not defined by employment. At a special interest event like environmental protection work, you can mention your connection to the organisation that has organised the event. If there is a common interest, mention it but use phrases that **keep the focus on the other person**. For example, "Kunal just mentioned that you are a member of the Indo-Canadian Business Association. I'd be interested in learning how the association has benefited you since I'm also engaged in international trade."

At any business meal, always introduce yourself to the people sitting next to you to open the way for conversation. Not introducing yourself can cost you a valuable business lead because few people want to deal with someone who appears to be aloof or not able to follow the etiquette.

Shaking Hands

Shaking hands is a formal greeting gesture. Shake hands only when introduced to someone, or on meeting an acquaintance. Hands are not shaken at parting; you do not shake hands with someone you know very well.

The physical connection you make when shaking hands with someone can leave a powerful impression. When someone's handshake is unpleasant in any way, we often associate negative character traits with that person. A firm handshake made with direct eye contact sets the stage for a positive encounter.

Offer your hand turned (at a 90 degree angle) towards the floor; don't hold just the fingers or try to crush the other person's hand with an iron grip. To shake hands properly, keep your thumb up and touch webs (the space between your thumb and first finger) before wrapping the fingers around the other person's hand. Ensure your grip is medium to firm, neither limp and weak nor bone-crushing.

Men and women are equals in the workplace. Men and women should shake hands with each other the same way as woman to woman or man to man. Some men may wait for a woman to offer her hand to be shaken, rather than automatically extending their hand to her. It is advisable for women to offer their hand right away to avoid confusion.

During cocktails, hold your drink in the left hand so that your right hand is free, and it is not wet and cold from holding a glass.

At a conference or other function where participants use name-tags, wear the name-tag high on the right shoulder so that it is easy to read when shaking hands.

Paying Compliments

Paying compliments is an art; some persons do it naturally well, but most persons can learn the art with a little effort and practice.

A compliment is an expression of appreciation. If you can, make a complimentary remark on an attractive neck-tie / scarf, or brief-case/ handbag, a well-argued case, competent collection of data, a well-planned meal, a well-conducted meeting, a neatly turned out phrase, or simply say, "You're looking very well." It goes a long way in creating goodwill.

A compliment should be given at the right time and place, for example, soon after meeting, before the business begins. It should be given immediately on noticing something or immediately after a praiseworthy accomplishment. Compliments may also be paid during a meeting or after it if someone made a very good point or spoke very well or performed anything very well. At the end of a meeting, guests may compliment the excellent arrangements, provision of fine food / drinks, hosting, etc.

If the following points are borne in mind, it should be possible to learn the art of paying compliments.

- A compliment should be moderate. There is a difference between flattery and genuine appreciation. Flattery is exaggerated expression of praise; a compliment reflects a sincere opinion.
- A genuine compliment sounds true. It should be expressed in a positive, sincere and friendly manner. Maintain good eye contact with the person to whom you are paying the compliment, and smile appreciatively while speaking.
- Compliments should have no other motive than to recognise someone for something special. If compliments are given in order to get a compliment or a favour in return, people soon find out the ulterior motive.
- A compliment should never be sarcastic. Tone of voice and body language must express the appreciation as much as the words. A remark can mean something totally different depending on the tone of voice or body language. Sarcasm hurts the receiver, and it is not polite.
- Remarks that could be construed as sexually provocative, racist, or sexist should not be made even if the atmosphere is relaxed.

Here are some useful phrases:

What a beautiful house / flat / office!

You have a fine office here!

What a beautiful painting!

You've done a great job.

That's a beautiful / pretty dress.

You look wonderful today.

You look good in green.

That was gracefully done.

You made an excellent point

I enjoyed your presentation

That's a beautiful tie/ scarf you're wearing.

It is not polite to ask where they bought it (whatever you appreciate) or how much they paid for it. Also, boasting about your own clothes or possessions is impolite.

Take the time to honour another with a genuine compliment. You will feel better about yourself in the process.

Responding to Compliments

When someone pays you a compliment, acknowledge it and thank the person graciously. A simple 'thank you' with an expression reflecting pleasure on the face is sufficient. Don't feel embarrassed or rebuff the compliment saying "Oh! It's nothing" or "Sorry, I could not do much."

Many persons find it difficult to receive a compliment gracefully. They tend to discount or downplay the compliment. How often have you heard a conversation like this? Someone says, "*I really like your shirt!*"...The other person looks down at the floor and mumbles..."*Oh, it's an old thing. I found it at a garage sale!*" or some such words that diminish the praise. Some persons deflect the compliment in their response by shifting the credit to someone else; some seek reassurance (*do you really think so?*) or return the compliment (*you're looking well, too.*)

Pay attention to your response to the compliments you receive. Try to receive the positive energy that is offered to you by saying, "*It's very nice of you to say that*" or "*I'm glad you like it.*" Even a simple, "*thank you*" and a smile can create a circuit of positive energy.

Agreeing and Disagreeing

Agreeing with someone is easier to express than disagreement. But overdoing it to win goodwill is not sincere. It is sufficient to say cheerfully, "I agree" or "Yes, that seems OK to me," or "Yes, OK" when it is informal. In a formal situation or when speaking to seniors, formal style is better; a remark such as, "Yes, I accept that," or "Yes, I think that is all right," would be sufficient.

Some persons find it difficult to agree with others, and express agreement grudgingly and gracelessly; agreement must be graceful and cheerful, even if the agreement is conditional. State the condition clearly and say, "I'll agree to that on one condition ...," or "I'll accept that on the condition that"

If you disagree with someone's statement, in a discussion, you may feel tempted to express yourself aggressively. An aggressive response such as, "I don't agree with you," can hurt or irritate those who hear it. Also, an artificially polite statement like, "I beg to differ," is not friendly (it is a put-down).

Etiquette is the art of making others comfortable as well as being comfortable yourself. Whatever may be the content of the conversation, a person with good manners must know the art of expressing it politely and courteously, with consideration for other people's feelings and dignity.

Telephone Etiquette

Your voice is all you have got to make the telephone conversation lively and effective. When you talk to someone face-to-face, how much of your message is conveyed just by what you say? (Guess! 50 percent? 80 percent? 30 percent?) Studies have shown that only 7 percent is conveyed by the words you use. Another 38 percent is conveyed by the tone of voice. The remaining 55 percent is conveyed by body language. And that is missing in a telephone call. You have to make up the missing 55 percent by using your voice.

How is that to be done? Clarity of speech is of great importance. Clear articulation and correct pronunciation are necessary. But it is not advisable to try to put on an artificial or borrowed accent. English is spoken all over the world, in varying accents; it is sufficient to pronounce correctly and clearly. Speed of speaking can affect clarity to some extent. Average speaking speed is about 150 words a minute; talking very fast not only affects clarity, but may also give the impression of being in a hurry; very slow talkers give the impression of being dull. A high-pitched voice is un-pleasant and may appear uncultured; an extremely low pitch can sound mechanical. People who have a loud voice appear to be brash and overbearing; very soft speakers cannot be heard clearly, and may seem shy. You need to find the right speed, pitch and volume that makes you sound clear and easy to follow. Tone is the expressiveness of the voice. It carries 38% of the load of communication; you have to make it count. A great deal of tone depends on the speaker's attitude and state of mind. Cheerful/sad, respectful/impertinent, interested/bored, energetic/tired, sincere/false; these are some of the words we use to describe tone of voice. The person who hears the voice is affect-ed by its tone, and so is his/her attitude to the speaker. Hence it is necessary to learn to use the voice effectively. Can gestures be made to count for anything in a telephone conversation? Can a smile be heard? Yes, it can; if you smile while you are speaking, there is a different, more friendly sound to the voice; and it influences your own frame of mind. If your normal gestures make you feel more effective when you speak on the phone, use them.

Here are some guidelines for making a positive impact by telephone.

Making a call

Prepare in advance; before making a call, plan all questions and comments. Collect all required information, files, papers that may be needed. Have paper and pen at hand. Greet; as soon as the call is answered, return the greeting and identify yourself, and ask for the person to whom you want to speak.

Concentrate; eliminate all distractions and pay attention only to the person you have called.

Use simple language; unfamiliar words and long sentences are very difficult over the phone. Never use slang. Say "yes" not "yah".

Take notes; jot down names, addresses, telephone numbers and other important points which need to be remembered and/or passed on to others and may be needed later. If a name is unusual, write down the correct spelling as well as phonetic spelling to indicate the correct way to pronounce it. Ask questions; if something is not clear, ask for clarification or explanation and listen carefully.

Visualise the speaker; it is easier to be interested in words that relate to a face.

Use conversation cues; saying "I see" or "Yes" at the proper time shows the speaker that you are listening, and encourages him/her to continue speaking.

Listen between the lines; tone of voice conveys a good deal. Summarise; the main points should be repeated at the end to check the understanding of both parties.

End the call politely; say "thank you" for giving you time (or information or help), indicate the next step, if required. Wish the time of the day pleasantly and replace the receiver gently. The person who made the call should put down the receiver first; within the organisation, the senior should end the call; in case of a call to or from a customer, the customer should end the call.

Taking a call

Answer the call promptly, on the first or second ring; not more than three in any case.

Identify yourself by a phrase like, "Suresh Nair here" or "Suresh speaking" or "XYZ Computers, Suresh Nair speaking" or "Mrs Philo-rose, Training Officer" and greet good morning or good evening as suitable. This usually prompts the speaker to identify him-self/herself; if it does not, ask, "May I know who's calling?" (not "who is this?" or "who is speaking?") Smile when you speak; though the smile cannot be seen, it helps to make a positive welcoming impression with the tone of the voice. Never cover the mouthpiece with your hand. Listen carefully; it is bad manners to interrupt. Get any clarifications after the person has paused for a response. Take responsibility to help; connect to the right person (after saying so) or offer to get the required information. Take down a message if necessary; get all points correct (and check by reading out if it is long or complicated). Check all dates, addresses, figures and spellings of names. (Writing down the phonetic spelling for correct pronunciation saves much embarrassment later)

Use the caller's name (correctly!); it shows you are tuned in and attentive.

If you have to leave the telephone to get some information ask if the caller would like to hold on or would like you to call back. And be sure to call back with the information.

Keep your cool and be patient with a difficult caller.

Cellular Phone Etiquette

Most of the guidelines for telephone calls apply to cellular phone calls. However, as many people tend to perceive the cell phone as a status symbol, a few more guidelines are needed. Cell phone should be used only in an emergency. If it is necessary to make or take a call, keep it short and discreet.

If other people are present, excuse yourself. Attention to present company is always important; never give the impression that speaking to someone else is more important than those present. Move to a quiet corner so as not to bother others. Switch off the cell phone when entering a meeting or a lecture hall; also in a theatre, or any other public performance. Use a quiet method of call notification like vibrator or flashing light in a hospital or in any place where the ring is likely to cause severe discomfort.

Placing Someone on Hold

There should be a very good reason for placing someone on hold; like pulling out the person's file or answering another line. Ask permission before placing the person on hold and do so only after getting the response; taking permission for granted is very impolite.

Never keep a person on hold for more than 60 seconds. If you find it will take longer, return and explain, and ask "May I call you back?" And, of course, call back as soon as the other work is done.

When you return, thank the person for holding.

Leaving a Voice Mail

While leaving a voice mail (message on the answering machine) it is important to include your name, telephone number, and company's name if you are calling on your company's behalf. Spell any unusual name. Repeat your name and telephone number at the end of the message.

Specify the purpose of the call instead of just saying "please give me a call."

Indicate what would be the best time to return your call. If you are likely to be away, say when you will be back or whom to contact in your absence.

Anticipate that you may have to leave a message, and prepare what you have to say. This will prevent rambling.

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Using the Dictionary and Thesaurus

The dictionary and the Thesaurus are the two most important sources of information about words, their meanings, usage, synonyms and antonyms. They list words in alphabetical order.

Everyone in a responsible position in an organisation has to do some kind of writing and preparation of documents. Besides, during college life, it is essential for every student to write assignments, papers, reports and drafts of presentations. For all communication work and for writing papers, you need to refer to the Dictionary and to the Thesaurus.

Dictionaries

We often speak of “the dictionary”, as if there was only one kind of dictionary, with all the words in the language and all possible information about the words. But no single dictionary can include all the words in the language or can give all the things that we need from a dictionary. You probably have at least one kind of English dictionary, and you must have seen many other kinds in the college library and in bookshops.

There are good reasons why there are many dictionaries.

- There are technical words used only by small groups of subject specialists and there is no need to clutter a general dictionary with them.
- Children need simple dictionaries; younger and older children have different needs from a dictionary.
- Learners of English sometimes use a dictionary to find and learn new English words to add to their vocabulary. Learners also need different kinds of information about the meaning and use of common words.

Dictionaries for Learners of English

The most important British dictionaries for adult non-native speakers of English are:

- Cambridge International Dictionary of English (CIDE) first edition 1995
- Collins COBUILD English Dictionary (CCED) second edition 1995
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) third edition 1995
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) fifth edition 1995

All these dictionaries are useful for students at English-medium universities. The 1995 editions and later editions are an improvement on earlier ones; it is therefore a good idea to buy a new dictionary. The new ones are more useful for persons in countries that do not speak English as the native language; they provide more help with the use of language.

The new editions of the four important learner's dictionaries have the following features:

- they include information about the English language from very large collections of modern writing and speech
- they represent both spoken and written English. Earlier dictionaries concentrated on written rather than spoken use.
- they represent both British and non-British varieties of English
- they represent the English used by young adults as well as by older people
- they explain how words can be grouped together, as well as how they are used in isolation
- they pay attention to common learner errors
- it is easier to find the right definition of a word, and understand its meaning.
- they give synonyms and antonyms for most words

Thesaurus

A thesaurus is a dictionary of synonyms; that is, words with similar meanings, for example: walk, stroll, stalk, strut. Sometimes it also gives antonyms (words with opposite meanings).

A thesaurus helps you to:

- find the words to say something more effectively and more interestingly
- avoid repeating the same words in a composition
- find a fresh word for stale old expressions (clichés)
- find the word that best suits the type of writing (for example, a letter), purpose, intended audience and situation
- recollect a word that is on the tip of the tongue but slips the mind

An idea needs to be expressed in different words in a different situation. A thesaurus helps you find the words and choose the right ones.

How to use a Thesaurus

A thesaurus is arranged in alphabetical order. Find the word you need a synonym for as if you would find it in a dictionary. Following the word (headword), you will find a list of synonyms to choose from. These synonyms are also arranged alphabetically.

Although there is some variation in the way different thesauruses present information, there will be:

- (1) Distinction between the different meanings of the headword. For example, *book* could mean “publication” or “make a reservation” or “charge.” The different meanings are numbered and the synonyms for each meaning follow. Choose the meaning that is relevant for your purpose, and then choose from its synonyms given.
- (2) An abbreviation indicating what part of speech the word is. *Book* can be a noun (n) or a verb (v). Choose the one that is the appropriate part of speech for your writing, and then find its synonyms.
- (3) The country where the synonym might be commonly used. If it is used mostly in Scotland, it will not be right for you.

It is important to choose a synonym that is consistent with the style of the composition in hand.

The Thesaurus in MS Word

Microsoft Word has an incorporated thesaurus which can be used while working. To find a synonym for a word in your work, highlight the word and type shift + F7. A list of synonyms will appear in a box. The left column gives the different meanings with indication of part of speech. Select the meaning appropriate for your work; the synonyms for the selected meaning appear in the right column. Select the synonym you want and press enter; it will replace the highlighted word in your text.

The latest Word programme can connect you directly to on-line thesaurus.

Anyone whose work involves writing should own a thesaurus.

List of Words

Given below is an alphabetical list of words

A

abbreviation

accelerator

acceptable

accessible

accessories

accommodate

accumulate

achievement

Words often confused

There are many similar words in all languages. While learning a new language and while enhancing vocabulary, we must take care not to confuse between similar words. The pairs of words given below are commonly confused by Indian learners.

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accede, exceed
access, excess
affect, effect
ascent; assent
career; carrier
committee; commission
considerable; considerate
continuous, continual
credible; creditable
depreciate; deprecate
eligible; illegible
formally; formerly
incidence, incidents
industrial; industrious
later; latter
momentary; momentous
practical; practicable
principal; principle
prosecute; persecute
runway; runaway
spatial; special
stationary; stationery
systematise; systemise
verbal; verbatim; verbose

accept; except
adapt; adept, adopt
alternately; alternatively
beside; besides
check; cheque
complement; compliment
continual; continuous
councillor; counsellor
defective; deficient
effect; affect
eminent; imminent
honourable; honorary
incidence; incidents
instalment; installation
lose; loose
personal; personnel
precede; proceed
prior; primary
respectable; respectful; respective
sell; sale
stationary, stationery
systematic; systemic
technique; technology
weather; whether

Commonly mis-spelt words

appreciate

coming

conducive (to)

immediately

committee

convenience

privilege

Add to this list from your commonly needed vocabulary

One Word Substitution

It is worth developing a good vocabulary; it is often possible to reduce the number of words by finding a single word for a phrase. The following are only some examples.

1. One who is out to subvert a government:	Anarchist
2. One who is recovering from illness:	Convalescent
3. One who is all powerful:	Omnipotent
4. One who is present everywhere:	Omnipresent
5. One who knows everything:	Omniscient
6. One who is easily deceived:	Gullible
7. One who does not make mistakes:	Infallible
8. One who can do anything for money:	Mercenary
9. One who has no money:	Pauper
10. One who changes sides:	Turncoat
11. One who works for free:	Volunteer
12. One who loves books:	Bibliophile
13. One who can speak two languages:	Bilingual
14. One who loves mankind:	Philanthropist
15. One who hates mankind:	Misanthrope
16. One who looks on the bright side of things:	Optimist
17. One who looks on the dark side of things:	Pessimist
18. One who doubts the existence of god:	Agnostic
19. One who pretends to be what he is not:	Hypocrite
20. One incapable of being tired:	Indefatigable
21. One who helps others:	Good Samaritan
22. One who copies from other writers:	Plagiarist
23. One who hates women:	Misogynist
24. One who knows many languages:	Polyglot
25. One who thinks only of himself:	Egoist
26. One who thinks only of welfare of women:	Feminist
27. One who is indifferent to pleasure or pain:	Stoic
28. A man who is quite like a woman:	Effeminate
29. One who has strange habits:	Eccentric
30. One who speaks less:	Reticent
31. One who goes on foot:	Pedestrian
32. One who believes in fate:	Fatalist
33. One who dies without a Will:	Intestate
34. One who always thinks himself to be ill:	Valetudinarian
35. A Government by the people:	Democracy
36. A Government by a king or queen:	Monarchy

37. A Government by the officials:	Bureaucracy
38. A Government by the rich:	Plutocracy
39. A Government by the few:	Oligarchy
40. A Government by the Nobles:	Aristocracy
41. A Government by one:	Autocracy
42. Rule by the mob:	Mobocracy
43. That through which light can pass:	Transparent
44. That through which light cannot pass:	Opaque
45. That through which light can partly pass:	Translucent
46. A sentence whose meaning is unclear:	Ambiguous
47. A place where orphans live:	Orphanage
48. That which cannot be described:	Indescribable
49. That which cannot be imitated:	Inimitable
50. That which cannot be avoided:	Inevitable
51. A position for which no salary is paid:	Honorary
52. That which cannot be defended:	Indefensible
53. That which is not likely to happen:	Improbable
54. People living at the same time:	Contemporaries
55. A book published after the death of its author:	Posthumous
56. A book written by an unknown author:	Anonymous
57. A life history written by oneself:	Autobiography
58. A life history written by somebody else:	Biography
59. People who work together:	Colleagues
60. One who eats too much:	Glutton
61. That which cannot be satisfied:	Insatiable
62. One who questions everything:	Cynic
63. A flesh eating animal:	Carnivorous
64. A grass eating animal:	Herbivorous
65. One who lives in a foreign country:	Immigrant
66. To transfer one's authority to another:	Delegate
67. That which is lawful:	Legal
68. That which is against law:	Illegal
69. A game in which no one wins:	Draw
70. A study of ancient things:	Archaeology
71. Murder of a human being:	Homicide
72. Murder of a father:	Patricide

73. Murder of a mother:	Matricide
74. Murder of a brother:	Fratricide
75. Murder of an infant:	Infanticide
76. Murder of self:	Suicide
77. Murder of the king:	Regicide
78. To free somebody from all blame:	Exonerate
79. To write under a different name:	Pseudonym
80. A thing no longer in use:	Obsolete
81. A handwriting that cannot be read:	Illegible
82. One who is greedy for money:	Avaricious
83. Something that cannot be imitated:	Inimitable
84. One who doesn't know how to read and write:	Illiterate
85. A person's peculiar habit:	Idiosyncrasy
86. An animal which preys on other animals:	Predator
87. Violating the sanctity of a church:	Sacrilege
88. One who can throw his voice:	Ventriloquist