

THE BASICS OF SPEECH

learning
to be a
competent
communicator

GALVIN · COOPER · GORDON

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Learning to be a Competent Communicator

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To our children:

Matthew, Katie, and Kara
Jenifer and Jamie
Natalie

To the Student

This book talks about a very important life skill—communication. Ever since birth you have been making contact with other people—your parents, friends, teachers, relatives, people in your community. Some of these contacts have been easy; others have been difficult. Your ability to communicate effectively touches every part of your life. Although you already have many communication skills, you can always become a more competent communicator.

In this book you will encounter many different ways of thinking about your communication skills. We hope you will understand the communication process and will learn to appreciate your communication strengths. We also hope you will develop further strengths during the course. We believe a competent communicator makes choices. He or she (1) analyzes a situation, (2) chooses a way to deal with it, (3) acts on that choice, and (4) evaluates the results. In short, a competent communicator is able to cope well in many situations.

The Basics of Speech has special features to guide you through understanding the communication process and improving your communication skills. Each chapter opens with a list of Learning Objectives and Key Words. Within the text, you will discover Journal Entries, the “Helping Hand,” Interact and Observer boxes. The Chapter Reviews contain “Think About It,” “Try It Out,” and “Put It in Writing.”

Checklists, charts, evaluation forms, sample scripts, speeches, student comments and many literature selections are found throughout the text. The wide variety of materials will stimulate your interest and involve you in an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience.

Chapter Objectives

Good speakers and listeners need “road maps” or some way of knowing where they are going. The objectives give you a road map for the chapter and tell you what you should be able to do when you have completed the chapter.

Key Words

A competent communicator has a large vocabulary and uses words correctly. In order to communicate about communication you need to develop a proper vocabulary. The Key Words that appear at the beginning of each chapter are the most important vocabulary words in the text.

Journal Entries

Often, when a friend describes an experience or feeling, you may think “I’ve felt that way” or “something like that happened to me.” Throughout the book you will find Journal Entries written about the topic by other teenagers. You may find that the Journal Entries help you understand someone else better. We are grateful to the teenagers who shared their entries with us.

Observe

Seeing and hearing are important parts of understanding communication. The assignments in the Observe sections are designed to help you really see and hear what is going on around you so you can respond in the best way. By doing these assignments, you should become a more careful observer of others’ communication.

Interact

Reading and observing will tell you a great deal about communication. But talking about communication situations or trying out communication strategies can teach you a great deal. The Interact Boxes contain directions to get you involved with other people in the class. You may be asked to share your ideas or to try out a specific communication skill.

The Helping Hand

Within the text you will find sections set off by a hand with a pointing finger. These are sections which require you to actively respond to the text. Sometimes you are asked to complete a checklist, analyze an example, or find

solutions to a problem. These sections are designed to help you apply the ideas you are learning.

Think About It

Before you can apply what you have learned, you need to make sure you understand the content. Questions and statements at the end of the chapter ask you to review what you have learned. If you can answer these questions correctly, you are well on your way to understanding communication principles.

Try It Out

When people work together to solve a problem or to create something, they learn a lot in the process. The activity suggestions at the end of each chapter contain ideas for applying what you have learned.

Put It in Writing

Sometimes a good way to make sense of what you see, hear, or think is to write it down. Writing may help you get clearer about your experience. It may help you see how ideas go together. The Put It in Writing sections may ask you to record ideas in a journal, or to analyze an event you observe, or to describe what might happen in the future.

Glossary

All the Key Words of this text plus many other important vocabulary words are defined in the Glossary. You will find it is a handy reference tool when you need to review the word meanings.

Many people helped with this book. A special thanks to Todd Fry, Sandra Schwartz, Rhonda Luniak, Kathleen McGrath, the students at Baker Junior High School in Corpus Christi, Texas, Ola Underhill, Ginger Allen, Doris Antonetz, and editor Judith Clayton and the staff at National Textbook Company.

K. G. P. C. J. G.

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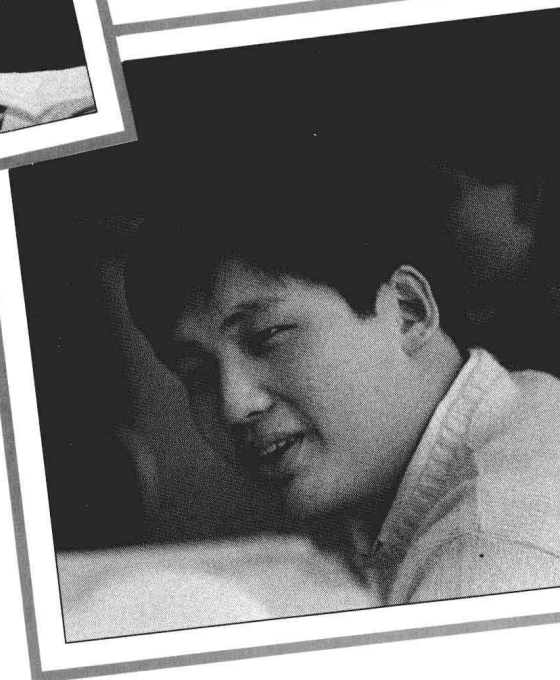
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Chapter 1

The Communication Process

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- **Define *communication* as a process.**
- **Describe how communication skills influence family life, school, work, and citizenship.**
- **Describe the 4 types of oral communication.**

Key Words

communication
group communication
interpersonal communication

interpretive communication
public communication

Communication
 Verbal/nonverbal
 Trying to connect
 Watching, laughing, questioning, talking
 Work

Communication
 Speaking and listening
 Making thoughts clear
 Sharing feelings and questions
 Contact

Communication
 Scared, shaking
 Standing up alone
 Feeling my heart explode
 Speaking

If someone asked, “What does the word *communication* mean to you?” how would you answer? You might respond by telling how you relate to friends or family members, how to speak in front of an audience, or how you function in a group. Even before studying the subject you can explain what *communication* means to you now. The above poems represent three students’ reactions to the word *communication*.

Your Experience With Communication

You have been communicating with other people almost all of your life. You have discussed plans, shared secrets, asked questions, given directions, and listened to problems. You have told stories, delivered oral book reports, acted in skits, and listened to the nightly news.

Most people find that they are better in some communication situations than in others. They might argue well but get uncomfortable listening to others talk about their feelings. They may be great at conversation but poor at speaking before a group. Everyone has strengths in communication and areas of needed growth. And with work everyone can overcome fears or difficulties in communication.