

FOURTH EDITION

COLLEGE ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION

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COLLEGE ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION, Fourth Edition

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PREFACE

The business world of the 1980s is highly competitive and performance-oriented. Each year, companies across the country spend millions of dollars to find the best qualified prospective employees and to upgrade their present employees, all in an effort to improve productivity and profitability. To get the job you want, then, you may need one or more special job-related skills, such as the ability to type, develop computer programs, write shorthand, or operate data processing machines or other office machinery. In addition, you will also need another skill: the ability to communicate effectively during an interview and on the job.

Why do employers demand communication skill as a basic need for *all* employees? The reason is simple: experienced executives and managers are aware that most business workers spend the greater part of each workday communicating—writing, listening, speaking, and reading. They know that workers who write poorly, listen inattentively, or read slowly will impede progress. Of course, such employees are not considered valuable—especially in today's competitive, performance-oriented business world.

THE COLLEGE ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The Fourth Edition of *College English and Communication* provides a comprehensive program to help you develop the proficiency in writing, listening, speaking, and reading that you will need for career success. It is especially designed to help you master the fundamental principles of communication, and it achieves this goal through its carefully planned, step-by-step presentation.

Chapter 1: Communicating Effectively. Because understanding the communication process is fundamental to effective writing, listening, speaking, and reading, Chapter 1 offers an overview of the communication process. This introductory chapter also describes many of the communication media used in business.

Chapter 2: Developing Listening and Reading Skills. As a follow-up to the introduction to communication in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 helps you develop your listening and reading skills—skills that are as important on the job as they are in the

classroom. In Chapter 2 you will begin a long-range program for improving your listening and reading skills.

Chapter 3: Understanding Language Structure. Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the principles of grammar that you must apply if you wish to write and speak effectively. Throughout the chapter, principles of grammar are simplified whenever possible, and many examples are offered to illustrate proper usage. Often, “Memory Hooks” are presented to give special attention to difficult points of grammar, and “Twilight Zones” explain aspects of language usage that are in a state of transition. In addition, many “Checkup” exercises provide immediate reinforcement and practice in applying the principles presented in the chapter.

Chapter 4: Applying the Mechanics of Style. In Chapter 4 you will master the style for expressing numbers and for using punctuation, capitalization, and abbreviations in written communications. Because a consistent application of writing style helps the reader to interpret messages correctly, Chapter 4 is an especially important preparation for writing business letters, memos, and reports. As in Chapter 3, many “Checkup” exercises are provided for immediate reinforcement and practice.

Chapter 5: Using Words for Greatest Effect. The effective communicator must, of course, be able to use words skillfully both in writing and in speaking, and *College English and Communication*, Fourth Edition, provides a continuing program to expand and refine your vocabulary. Chapter 5 will introduce you to the reference tools that will make your writing less difficult and, at the same time, more effective. In this chapter you will learn techniques for using words precisely and for achieving variety in word usage. In addition, Chapter 5 offers some basic methods for improving spelling.

Chapter 6: Establishing Writing Skill. Understanding the rules of grammar and having a wide vocabulary do not, of course, guarantee effective writing. Letters, memos, and reports must be planned if they are to achieve their goals, and Chapter 6 presents the techniques for planning and organizing messages. This chapter also discusses human behavior and advanced writing techniques that will help transform average writing into forceful communication.

Chapter 7: Writing Business Memos and Letters. Chapter 7 offers you the opportunity to apply all the writing techniques presented in the first six chapters. This chapter treats each category of business letter and memo individually—requests, claim and adjustment letters, sales letters, and so on. By giving each type of communication special emphasis in a separate section, the text provides ample opportunities to learn about and to write each kind of letter and memo.

Chapter 8: Preparing Reports and Special Communications. Reports are important, commonly used business communications, and they are treated in detail in Chapter 8. Besides memorandum reports and long reports, this chapter discusses progress reports, minutes of meetings, and agendas.

Chapter 9: Communicating Orally. Speaking to co-workers, customers, and others is an important part of the business day for most people, and Chapter 9 presents the basic information that you must know to speak effectively in one-to-one situations

and in group discussions, as well as what you must know to prepare and deliver a formal speech. Also included in this chapter is a discussion on enunciation and pronunciation.

Chapter 10: Communicating for Career Success. During employment interviews and on the job, the communication skills that you have developed will be tested. In Chapter 10 you will discover how you can apply your communication skills to find a job and to make your interviews more effective. In this chapter you will also learn techniques for handling your communication duties on the job.

As mentioned above, the text offers “Checkup” exercises within the sections in Chapters 3 and 4; in addition, it offers a variety of “Communication Projects” at the end of each section:

- **Practical Application** exercises reinforce the principles presented in each section and review principles covered in previous sections.
- **Edition Practice** exercises help you acquire the ability to detect—and to correct—errors in English usage.
- **Case Problems** generally emphasize the human relations aspects of successful business communication. They will help you develop your ability to make sound judgments and decisions in typical on-the-job situations.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Besides the text, the *College English and Communication* program includes two other publications:

For the student. A comprehensive book of skill-building activities entitled *Communication Problems Correlated With College English and Communication*, Fourth Edition, provides additional exercises to improve your communication skills. The exercises provide excellent reinforcement of the text principles section by section, as well as periodic reviews of preceding sections.

For the instructor. *Instructor’s Guide and Key for College English and Communication*, Fourth Edition, is a valuable source of information for planning and presenting a successful communications course. This guide includes (1) general teaching suggestions for each of the ten chapters, (2) 32 pages of test masters that the instructor may duplicate for classroom use, (3) a complete key to all text exercises, (4) a facsimile key of all pages in *Communication Problems*, and (5) a facsimile key of all 32 test pages.



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1 THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

The purpose of this book is to help you communicate more effectively. In order to achieve this goal, you must become familiar with the many aspects of the communication process. You must develop an understanding of (1) the components of the communication process, (2) the goals of effective communication, (3) those factors that influence the effectiveness of communication, and (4) the importance, to you and to everybody else, of being an effective communicator.

COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION

Simply defined, communication is the process of transmitting a message from one source to another.

SENDER → message → RECEIVER

Notice that this definition involves three components: a sender, a message, and a receiver.

The Sender

The sender of a message may be a *person* representing himself or herself, representing someone else, or representing a group of individuals (a business firm or a corporation, for example); or the sender may be a *machine*, such as a computer. The purposes of the sender usually are to inquire, to inform, to persuade, or to develop goodwill.

INQUIRE—"May I have an appointment on January 5?"

INFORM—"Our sale will begin on August 1."

PERSUADE—"This stereo receiver is a *good* buy at \$275."

GOODWILL—"We value your business, so we have extended your credit limit."

The Receiver

The receiver of a message, likewise, may be a *person* receiving the message for himself, for another individual, or for a group; or it may be a *machine*. The receiver of a message may respond to a message in the manner requested by the sender, may alter the response to suit his or her own needs, or may not respond at all.

The Message

The heart of a communication is the message. Often the message is intended to provide the receiver with facts or ideas not already possessed by the receiver or to add

to or alter those facts or ideas already possessed. On the other hand, a message may be sent for the purpose of seeking information from the receiver. In any event, the message should affect the receiver's behavior in some way, influencing him or her to act or not to act as the sender of the message requests.

Sending Media Messages may be sent in the form of pictures (photographs, drawings, or motion pictures), but most frequently messages are in the form of written or spoken words.

Receiving Media Messages are received either by reading or by listening. Although these skills are just as important as the writing and speaking skills, reading and listening are often overlooked in communication courses. The most effective letter writer will exert little influence over a reader who has a poor command of the language. An outstanding speaker will have little influence over an audience whose vocabulary level is considerably lower than that used by the speaker.

To both sender and receiver, therefore, a knowledge of words—their spelling, their pronunciation, their meaning, and their implications—and a knowledge of language structure are necessary skills if there is to be effective communication.

Data Communication

When a message is sent from one machine to another machine, this type of communication is called data communication. In data communication, machine language or symbols may substitute for words. Since data communication is widely used today, it is discussed more thoroughly in Section 2.

Nonverbal Communication

Very often a message may be sent or received without an exchange of words. A facial expression, such as a frown or a raised eyebrow, or a body gesture, such as shrugged shoulders, may convey a message even more effectively than words. Silence, the absence of any words, may also convey a message. The message probably is, "I don't have any interest in what you are saying, so I am not responding." These forms of communication that do not involve the use of words or pictures are referred to as nonverbal communication, and the term "body language" has been popularized by some writers to designate this form of communication.

GOALS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

To further our knowledge of what contributes to effective communication, we need to know *why* we communicate. Earlier, we defined communication simply as a sender transmitting a message to a receiver. However, this simplified definition is really not sufficient for most purposes. It does not give any indication that the message was received, that it was received exactly as the sender intended it to be received, or that it affected the receiver's thinking or behavior in any way. To determine the effectiveness of communication, we must determine first the goals of communication and second whether these goals have been met.

Precise Interpretation

The first goal of effective communication is to convey a message that the receiver perceives exactly as the sender intends, with no difference in meaning in the minds of the two parties. In other words, the interpretation of the message by both the sender and the receiver should be identical. To achieve precise interpretation, therefore, it is the responsibility of the sender to make certain that the message is perfectly clear and that it is complete. The receiver has the responsibility of reading or listening to the message carefully. Whenever the receiver's interpretation of the message differs from that of the sender, regardless of whose fault it is, we have a breakdown in communication. Can breakdowns in communication be avoided?

Communication breakdowns can be avoided by the use of a technique called "feedback." In the process of transmitting a message, the sender uses devices to determine if the receiver is interpreting the message correctly. In face-to-face oral conversation, feedback is more easily achieved. The receiver frowns or says, "I don't understand," thereby signaling the sender that the message is not being received clearly. The sender can then reexplain or ask questions in order to clarify the message. The sender can ask questions during the process of sending the message, questions that will provide the feedback to determine whether the message is being received precisely.

Feedback is not achieved so easily in written communication until there has been some kind of response from the receiver of the message. The wrong response from the receiver, questions asked by the receiver, silence on the part of the receiver—all may indicate that there has been a temporary breakdown in communications. However, the fact that there has been some feedback gives the sender an opportunity to mend the breakdown in communication by providing additional information or by correcting a wrong interpretation of the message.

Favorable Response

We have already briefly mentioned the second goal of effective communication: to obtain a favorable response from the receiver of the message. It is not always possible to determine whether this second goal of effective communication has been achieved. The receiver may make no response for a long period of time because he or she may be reflecting on the message or may not be in a position to take action immediately. However, we can claim success whenever a favorable response is obtained, whether immediately or at some time in the future.

Favorable Relations

As we have indicated, it is not always possible to achieve the second goal of effective communication, a favorable response. However, regardless of the kind of response obtained from the receiver, the message should always help to develop favorable relations between the sender and the receiver. With favorable relations, the door is left open for future communication that may result in a favorable response at a later time.

Without favorable relations, the door may close and the process of communication may cease.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Although the sender of a message knows the goals he or she seeks to achieve, the sender must keep in mind that there are a number of factors that influence the communication either favorably or unfavorably. Senders who are aware of the factors control them so that they will have a favorable effect on the communication process. Among the major factors that influence the communication process are (1) the background of the receiver, (2) the appearance of the communicator or the communication, (3) the communication skills of the sender and the receiver, and (4) distractions.

The Background of the Receiver

Background refers to the following four elements:

1. The *knowledge* already possessed by the receiver as related to the facts, ideas, and language used in the message.
2. The *personality* of the receiver, particularly the emotions, the attitudes, and the prejudices that are likely to exert influence on the message.
3. The *experiences* the receiver has had related to the message content.
4. The *interest and motivation* of the receiver regarding the subject of the message.

These background factors play an important role in determining the reaction of the receiver to the message. For example, suppose you receive a letter urging you to buy diamonds. The writer of the message says diamonds are an excellent investment. You have no *knowledge* about the value of diamonds for investment purposes. Thus your reaction to this message will be quite different from that of the person who is very knowledgeable about diamond investments. Your *personality* is one of extreme conservatism; you seldom take risks. This personality characteristic will also affect your reaction to the message. In addition, last year you invested in a supposedly "safe" investment and lost a lot of money. This *experience* has a negative effect on your view of diamonds as an investment. If, instead, you had made a considerable gain, your reaction might be quite different. The thought of owning diamonds for their sheer beauty interests you, and this *interest* might motivate you to look further into the possibility of making an investment in diamonds.

Obviously the writer who weighs all these factors before preparing the message stands a greater chance that the message will be accepted than the writer who ignores these factors.

Appearance of the Communicator or Communication

A disheveled-looking speaker or salesperson, a rasping, unclear telephone voice, a sloppy letter filled with erasures—all these would certainly "turn off" the receiver of

a message. Therefore, it is extremely important to make a favorable visual and aural impression if a positive reaction is desired, and such a reaction is, of course, the goal of every communication.

Communication Skills of Sender and Receiver

The tools of language include selecting words accurately to express meaning and spelling and pronouncing them correctly. How well the sender of a message uses these tools and how well the receiver interprets their use are major determinants of the effectiveness of the message. Using the wrong word, making a major grammatical error, or misusing a mark of punctuation may change the intended meaning of the message. Even if the receiver understands the message, the receiver's opinion of the sender of the message is certain to suffer.

Although each of these tools of language is discussed much more thoroughly in later sections of this book, at this point you should be aware that there is a very definite relationship between these tools and reading, listening, and speaking—and not just a relationship to writing. If the communication process is to be successful, the sender of a message must be an effective writer and speaker, and the receiver must be an effective reader and listener. Since all of us are sometimes senders and sometimes receivers, we must strive for efficiency in using the basic tools of language for reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Distractions

Under what environmental conditions is the written or oral message received? Is the room noisy? Too warm or too cold? Poorly lighted? Is the receiver of the message more concerned about some personal event at the time the message is received? All of us are subject to distractions that draw our attention away from what we are reading or listening to. As we read or listen, many thoughts may pass through our minds. Sometimes these thoughts are triggered by something we read or hear or see. Whatever the reason, the result is that we do not concentrate on the message and may miss important data that can cause us to reach erroneous conclusions.

Some distractions can be prevented by the sender, particularly in an oral communication situation where the environment can be controlled. But even in the case of written communication, the sender can prevent certain distractions. A sloppy-looking letter, for example, may distract the reader.

NEED FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential for the success of every activity, whether it is an individual or a group activity. Every individual requires effective communication for a happy and successful home life, school life, and vocational life. A breakdown in communication can lead to serious problems in our personal lives as well as in our business lives.

Effective communication is equally necessary for success in government, in business, and in personal activities. Although this book is concerned primarily with effective communication in the world of business, you should keep in mind that improving your communication techniques will favorably affect *all* aspects of your life—not just your business life.

YOU AS A BUSINESS COMMUNICATOR

To ensure personal success, as well as the success of the company in which you are employed, you and every other employee must be skilled business communicators. No matter how extensive or elaborate a communication system may exist, effective communication still depends upon each individual who functions within the organization. What are the requirements of a skillful business communicator that you should strive to acquire?

Language Facility

Because every business employee is involved in some form of communicating, you must have facility in using the language to both send and receive messages. A skilled communicator must be able to communicate facts, ideas, opinions, and instructions with a minimum of effort and with clarity, confidence, and knowledge. Therefore, you must know how to use language correctly. You must command a broad vocabulary, which involves not only the ability to spell and pronounce words but also the ability to select words precisely. You must be able to speak and write without error, with as much clarity and in as few words as possible. Not only must you be familiar with the many media available for communication, but you must also have the ability to select the best medium to convey a particular message. Also, you must be able to read and to listen with understanding.

In recent years, business people and the general public have become increasingly aware of the need for improving every business worker's communication skills—particularly the skills of workers who come in contact with the public. Today, courses in effective speaking and writing, as well as in reading improvement, are offered not only by colleges and universities but also by companies themselves. Businesses know that the time and money spent to improve the communication skills of their employees represent dollars saved in time and understanding in day-to-day business operations.

Acquiring Knowledge and Using It

To be a skilled business communicator, you must be well-read and well informed about your field of work, your company, and your particular function in that company. You must learn how to acquire information by using research techniques, and you must learn how to send information to others. To send messages, you must know how to outline, draft, and perfect each message so that it fits your purpose and suits your medium.

Understanding Human Relations

No matter how well you develop the first two requirements of a skillful communicator, unless you understand and practice good human relations, you will have great difficulty in achieving success in business, not just in communicating but in all aspects of your job. Human relations involves the ability to understand and to deal with people in such a way that a favorable relationship is maintained. Skill in human relations cannot be learned mechanically as can structure and usage or vocabulary and spelling. Although these mechanics contribute to skill in human relations, they are only basic tools for making communication in any human relations situation more effective.

Employees who are skilled in human relations have learned to consider carefully each situation in which they are dealing with others, taking time to consider the feelings and goals of those with whom they are dealing. They remember that every person believes that his or her own opinion is founded on good reasons. They give instructions clearly and carefully, taking time to make sure that they are correct. We might say that they practice "business diplomacy."

Sales representatives dealing with irate customers hear the customers out and then try to satisfy both the customers and their companies by understanding both sides of the issue. Employers dealing with employees who have a grievance try to show the workers that they understand their problems, and they remember to give reasons for the company policies they must uphold. Supervisors who must change the jobs of employees let the workers know why they are being given a different kind of work. In all phases of activity today, the business community is interested in improving human relations. That is why studies of personnel relations, labor relations, management relations, and public relations are being given a great deal of attention.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND YOUR FUTURE

Perhaps the way you can best prove your ability to accept leadership responsibilities is through communication. By your facility in expressing ideas, you can convince others of your merits.

As you study the material presented in this book and obtain valuable practice in building your communication skills, keep in mind the important role that communications can play in helping you achieve a successful future in the business world. And remember, too, that every hour of study is time spent in working for yourself, for your own personal advancement.

COMMUNICATION PROJECTS

Practical Application

A. As you are writing these practical applications, make a list of the distractions that are occurring.

B. Think back to some recent situation in your life in which you had trouble communicating with someone.

1. Who was the individual with whom you had difficulty communicating?
2. What was the cause of the difficulty in communicating?
3. How could the difficulty have been avoided or corrected?

C. Your instructor will identify an object for each member of the class to observe. Write a brief but complete description of that object. Each member of the class will read his or her description. Is all members' perception of that object the same? What are the probable reasons for any differences?

D. Give an example showing how each of the following factors may cause a difference in perception: age, sex, race, religion, educational background, financial status, physical handicap.

E. Every communication requires a sender and a receiver, and both must have the same perception of the message. Are you able to receive the following messages? If not, use the dictionary to determine the meaning of the word that prevents you from receiving the message precisely. Explain each message.

1. The lawyer prepared his brief.
2. His joie de vivre was catching.
3. The electrical appliance was grounded.
4. The will was probated.
5. Do you like ecru?

Editing Practice

Sound Alikes In the following sentences, replace each incorrectly used word with the correct word that sounds like it.

1. The land was least by Mr. Yates.
2. What is the principle river in your state?
3. My library book is overdo.
4. You chose a lovely sight on which to build your house.
5. Good speakers should use plane, concise words.

Case Problem

Office Grooming Don Vitt was quite concerned when Ruth Conrad, his secretary, arrived at the office with her hair in curlers and a scarf over her head. There has always been an unwritten rule that both men and women in his office dress in a manner acceptable for business.

1. What should Don say to Ruth?
2. Should Don send Ruth home as a disciplinary measure? Under what conditions?