

Communication Skills: Definitions and Examples

By **Indeed Editorial Team**

Updated 28 November 2022

Published 12 September 2019



The Indeed Editorial Team comprises a diverse and talented team of writers, researchers and subject matter experts equipped with Indeed's data and insights to deliver useful tips to help guide your career journey.

Communication skills allow you to understand and be understood by others. These can include but are not limited to effectively explaining ideas to others, actively listening in conversations, giving and receiving critical feedback and public speaking.

Top job searches near you

Part-time jobs >

Full-time jobs >

Work from home jobs >

Hiring immediately jobs >

What are communication skills?

Communication skills are abilities you use when giving and receiving different kinds of information. They involve listening, speaking, observing and empathising. It is also helpful to understand the differences in how to communicate through face-to-face interactions, phone conversations and digital communications, such as email and social media.

Examples of communication skills

There are different types of communication skills you can learn and practise to help you become an effective communicator. Many of these skills work together, making it important to regularly practise communication skills in different contexts.

Active listening

Active listening means paying close attention to the person who is speaking to you. People who are active listeners are well-regarded by their coworkers because of the attention and respect they offer others. While it seems simple, this is a skill that can be hard to develop and improve. You can be an active listener by focusing on the speaker, avoiding distractions such as mobile phones, laptops or other projects, and by preparing questions, comments or ideas to thoughtfully respond.

Adapting your communication style to your audience

Different communication styles are appropriate in different situations. To make the best use of your communication skills, it's important to consider your audience and the most effective format to communicate with them in.

For example, if you are communicating with a potential employer, it may be best to send a formal email as opposed to a text. In the workplace, you may find it's easier to communicate complex information in person or via a video conference than in a long, dense email.

Friendliness

In friendships, characteristics such as honesty and kindness often foster trust and understanding. The same characteristics are important in workplace relationships. When working with others, approach your interactions with a positive attitude, keep an open mind and ask questions to help you understand where they're coming from. Small gestures such

as asking someone how they're doing, smiling as they speak or offering praise for work well done can help you foster productive relationships with both colleagues and managers.

Confidence

In the workplace, people are more likely to respond to ideas that are presented with confidence. There are many ways to appear confident, including by making eye contact when you're addressing someone, sitting up straight with your shoulders open and preparing ahead of time so your thoughts are polished. You'll find confident communication is useful not just on the job but during the interview process as well.

Giving and receiving feedback

Strong communicators are able to accept critical feedback and provide constructive input to others. Feedback should answer questions, provide solutions or help strengthen the project or topic at hand.

Volume and clarity

When you're speaking, it's important to be clear and audible. Adjusting your voice so you can be heard in a variety of settings is a skill, and is critical to communicating effectively. Speaking too loudly may be disrespectful or awkward in certain settings. If you're unsure, pay attention to what other people are doing and use this as a guide.

Related: [Interpersonal Skills: Definitions and Examples](#) 

Empathy

Having empathy means that you can understand and share the emotions of others. This communication skill is important in both team and one-on-one settings. In both cases, you will need to understand other people's emotions and select an appropriate response. For example, if someone is expressing anger or frustration, empathy can help you acknowledge and diffuse their emotion. At the same time, being able to understand when someone is feeling positive and enthusiastic can help you get support for your ideas and projects.

Respect

A key aspect of respect is knowing when to initiate communication and respond. In a team or group setting, allowing others to speak without interruption is seen as a necessary communication skill tied to respectfulness. Respectfully communicating also means using your time with someone else wisely — staying on topic, asking clear questions and responding fully to any questions you've been asked.

Understanding nonverbal cues

A great deal of communication happens through nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions and eye contact. When you're listening to someone, you should be paying attention to what they're saying as well as their nonverbal language. At the same time, you should be conscious of your own body language when you're communicating to ensure you're sending appropriate cues to others.

Responsiveness

Whether you're returning a phone call or sending a reply to an email, fast communicators are viewed as more effective than those who are slow to respond. One method is to consider how long your response will take: is this a request or question you can answer in the next five minutes? If so, it may be a good idea to address it as soon as you see it. If it's a more complex request or question, you can still acknowledge that you've received the message and let the other person know you will respond in full later.

Related: [Social Skills: Definition and Examples](#) 

How to improve your communication skills

With experience and practice, you can learn and improve your communication skills. Start by identifying your strengths and then work on practising and developing them.

- **Ask a close friend or colleague for constructive criticism.** It can be hard to know how you are perceived as a communicator. To get an objective opinion, ask a trusted friend for honest feedback. Understanding your areas of improvement for communication can help you identify what to focus on.
- **Practise improving communication habits.** Many communication skills are habits you have developed over time. You can improve those skills by practising new habits that make you a better communicator. That might include being more responsive to communications when they are sent, reminding yourself to make eye contact, practising giving positive feedback and asking questions in conversations.
- **Attend communication skills workshops or classes.** There are several online and offline seminars, workshops and classes that can help you be a better communicator. These classes may include instruction, roleplay, written assignments and open discussions.
- **Seek opportunities to communicate.** Find opportunities both on and off the job that require you to use your communication skills. This will improve your clarity and confidence.


[Upload your resume on Indeed](#) 

Let employers find you when you create an Indeed Resume

How to highlight communication skills

You will use your communication skills during every step of the job search and on the job. Everything from your resume to the job interview and beyond will require different types of communication skills. Here are a few ways you can highlight those skills at each step.

Communication skills for resume


A well-written resume is itself a demonstration of strong communication skills. Ensure that your resume is structured appropriately and free of spelling and grammatical errors. Additionally, you may also want to include some positive communication skills in your resume skills section, especially if the job description calls for specific communication skills. You can add skills to your [Indeed Resume](#)  to improve your chances of being found by employers searching for candidates with your skill set.

Communication skills for cover letter

Your cover letter is a great opportunity to elaborate on your communication skills. While you can talk more directly about how effectively you communicate here, at a high level, your cover letter is one of the employer's first impressions of your skills. You will want to make your cover letter brief, well-written, free of spelling errors and tailored to the position you're applying for.

Related: [How to Write a Cover Letter](#) 

Communication skills for the job interview

It's important to make a [great first impression](#)  in your interview and you can do this in a number of ways. Show up for the interview 10–15 minutes early and dress appropriately for the job you're applying for. Pay attention to the nonverbal cues you're displaying through your body language.

Avoid actions such as slouching or checking your phone during the interview. Looking your interviewer in the eye, employing active listening skills and displaying confidence are all positive ways to communicate during your interview.

Almost everything you do, both on the job and in life, can be seen as a form of communication. By focusing on refining your communication skills every time you put them

to use, you can improve the way you connect with others.

Explore your next job opportunity on Indeed

[Find jobs](#)

Explore more articles

[What Are Perfect Resumes? \(With Steps and Examples\)](#)

[10 Tips for Writing an Assistant Manager Resume Objective](#)

[Childcare Worker Cover Letter Examples \(Plus Tips\)](#)

[A Guide to Writing a Part-Time Job Resume Objective](#)

[How to Write a Shelter Manager Resume \(Including Example\)](#)

[How to Write a Compelling Team Lead Resume Objective](#)

[How to Write a Cover Letter for an IT Role \(With Example\)](#)

[10 Common Cashier Skills to Include In Your Resume](#)

[7 Powerful Ways To Start a Cover Letter \(With Examples\)](#)

[How To Write a Cover Letter](#)

[How to Write a Sports Therapist Resume \(With Example\)](#)

[120 Action Verbs to Make Your Resume Stand Out](#)

© 2022 Indeed

10 Collyer Quay #24-01 | Ocean Financial Centre | Singapore 049315 | Singapore

[Cookies](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Security](#)

[Terms](#)

[Accessibility at Indeed](#)

[Privacy Centre](#)

[Contact us](#)