Lecture Notes

Professional Communications OER: Foundations

# How to Use this Document

Slide decks, instructional notes, and lecture components have been provided for each of the module topics. Instructional notes—labelled “Notes” in this guide—contain pointers, tips, ideas, supplementary material, and information to help you plan your lecture. Scripted lecture components—labelled “Lecture” in this guide—provide sample scripts for *parts* of your lecture (to aid you in covering the essentials), but we encourage you to use these as a springboard.

These materials have been created for your convenience, but feel free to modify, customize, and flesh out all these components. Please add or remove content to suit your lesson goals and the length of time you have available. You may also wish to use these materials as part of a blended or fully online course plan. Where additional documents are referenced in the lecture notes, you will find links here. The instructional notes and scripted lecture components are also supplied in the form of “presenter notes” within the slide decks. If you are unfamiliar with using Google Slides, see the [Google Docs help file](https://support.google.com/docs?hl=en&p=#topic=2811776).

This project/resource was funded by the Alberta Open Educational Resources (ABOER) Initiative, which is made possible through an investment from the Alberta government.

# Introduction Slide Deck

# This slide deck is intended to be heavily modified by the instructor, depending on how you like to conduct the first lesson(s) of your course. The slide deck assumes that introductions and course setup will be conducted at this stage, as will a short introduction to communications theory. If possible, students should read eTextbook Chapter 1: Introduction to Communication Theory prior to or as a follow-up to these lessons.

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name.

## About Me

**Notes:** Introduce yourself as the instructor and mention a little bit about your background and experience in this field.

## About You

**Notes:** A good way to break the ice on the first day is to ask students to each tell the class their name and a little about themselves. For example, what did they do over the summer, what do they want to do when they finish school, or what are their hobbies.

## Course Essentials

**Notes:** Hand out the course syllabus or point to its location online. Go through it and explain

* what online tools will be used (i.e., LMS or course website);
* what textbook will be used and how students access it (you may be using the OER textbook, a course pack or a third-party text that they need to purchase from the bookstore);
* your office hours, location, and contact details and preferred method of communication, as well as what you (and the college) expect of them in terms of attendance and participation (e.g., will they gain/lose marks in this area, is there a limit to the number of lessons they can miss unexcused?);
* How should they submit assignments (on paper or digital, at the beginning/end of class, or by midnight on the submission date, formatting guidelines, how late assignments will be handled).

## Assessments

**Add to slide:** list of assessments and their percentage value

**Notes:** Students will need to know what assessments are part of the course, along with the order and percentage value of each. They may also find it helpful to know what type of assessments they will have (exams, papers, project-based assessments) and whether these are done solo, in pairs, or in a group.

## How to Access Course Materials

**Add to slide:** Link or screenshot

**Notes:** Explain to students how they will access the course materials. Will you put lesson slides on an LMS for them before/after each class? Will assessments, handouts, and other materials be made available online?

## What is Communication?

**Notes:** Discuss the definition of communication. What does the word mean to students?

## Communication in Daily Life

**Notes:** Facilitate class discussion.How many different means of communication do the students use in their daily lives? What communications have been directed at them so far today? Get students thinking about the ads they saw on the way to school, whether they checked email or text messages when they got up this morning, whether they have sent texts to friends or made phone calls, whether they have read newspapers or books, etc.

## The Communication Process

**Notes:** Communication Process Diagram. See eTextbook Chapter 1: Introduction to Communication for explanations of each part of the diagram.

* **Source:** the sender of the message
* **Message:** the information being shared
* **[Encoding]:** the message may be *encoded* in the form of words, images, sounds, body language, etc.
* **Channel:** verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital types (i.e., email or phone call)
* **[Decoding]:** method of understanding the message
* **Receiver:** the person(s) for whom the message is intended
* **Environment:** the physical or psychological space
* **Context:** psychological and psychosocial expectations of source and receiver
* **Interference:** also referred to as *noise*; this includes anything that inhibits the communication (poor audio quality, bad phone reception, etc.)

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

# Audience Analysis Slide Deck

# This slide deck works as a companion to eTextbook Chapter 2: Getting to Know Your Audience. It includes an in-class exercise, Performing an Audience Analysis, for which students will need access to [this worksheet.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dTFJE5rCZd59xkWFytA6ScdsuZAucortzBT3TU_5V8Q/edit?usp=drive_web) You will also need to provide a link to (or printout of) this article: [*The Globe and Mail*: “Straight Outta Sunnyvale](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/straight-outta-sunnyvale-yahoo-manager-gone-after-racy-e-mail/article26342191/)”

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name. Reminders from previous class.

**Lecture:** Even though the communications landscape changes rapidly over time, one element of successful communication remains the same: the need to know who your audience is and to understand their needs.

We will begin by watching a video to help you distinguish between primary, secondary, and hidden audiences. Then, using the AUDIENCE acronym as a tool, you will participate in activities that will help you flesh out information you need to know about your audience in order to persuade, inform, or entertain them.

You will have at least three chances to practise your audience analysis skills and get peer feedback; then, near the end of this lesson, you will craft a message that considers your audience’s needs and expectations. This process will help you become an effective communicator who persuades, informs, or entertains an audience because you have done your best to get to know them, their needs, and expectations first.

## Who Is Your Audience?

**Lecture:** Your audience is the person or people you want to communicate with. By knowing more about them—their wants, needs, values, etc.—you can better craft your message so that they will receive it in the way you intended.

## Intro to Audience Analysis (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Introduction to Audience Analysis” video, generate discussion. **Lecture**: Based on the video you just watched, who can answer these questions?

1. What is a primary audience?
2. What is a secondary audience?
3. What is a hidden audience?
4. What are explicit expectations?
5. What are implicit expectations?

## AUDIENCE

**Lecture:** To help you get to know your audience even more, we will begin by working through this set of steps that spell **AUDIENCE** to give you an idea of what questions to ask and what information can be useful in better connecting with your audience.

A - **Analyze**. Who is/are the recipients of your message?

U - **Understand**. What is their knowledge about your intended message?

D - **Demographics**. What is their age, gender, education level, position?

I - **Interest**. What is their level of interest/investment in your message (What’s in it for them?)

E - **Environment**. What setting/reality is your audience immersed in and what is your relationship to it? What is their likely attitude to your message? Have you taken cultural differences into consideration?

N - **Need**. What information does your audience need?

C - **Customize**. How do you adjust your message to your audience?

E - **Expectations**. What are your audience’s expectations?

## Types of Audience

**Lecture:** Your **primary audience** is your intended audience; it is the person or people you have in mind when you decide to communicate something.

However, when you are analyzing your audience, you also must beware of your **secondary audience**. These are other people you could reasonably expect to come in contact with your message. For example, you might send an email to a customer, who in this case is your primary audience, and send a copy (cc:) your boss, who would be your secondary audience.

Beyond these, you also have to consider your **hidden audience**, which are people who you may not intend to come in contact with your audience at all, such as a colleague who gets a forwarded copy of your email.

## Desired Outcomes

**Lecture:** When you communicate with an audience, you are normally trying to achieve one or more of the three following broad outcomes:

1. **Persuade** - convince your audience to do something or take some action
2. **Inform** - raise their awareness and/or understanding about a situation or issue
3. **Entertain** - capture their attention in order to distract and delight

Your success as a communicator partly depends on how well you can tailor your message to your audience.

## When Audience Analysis Goes Wrong ...

**Notes:** Reference for real-life example in this lecture: [*The Globe and Mail*: “Straight Outta Sunnyvale](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/technology/straight-outta-sunnyvale-yahoo-manager-gone-after-racy-e-mail/article26342191/)”

## Can you Identify …?

**Lecture:**

1. For this email, who was the
   1. primary audience?
   2. secondary audience?
   3. hidden audience?
2. Did the writer do an audience analysis? Was it effective?
3. What elements of AUDIENCE might you have used to get a better result?

## Audience Scenarios (Group Activity)

**Notes:** Assign one scenario to each group and hand out (or supply links to their copy of) the Audience Planner.

## Scenarios

**Lecture: Scenario 1** — ***Persuade***

You have the opportunity to scuba dive off Yap Island in Micronesia with a team of ecologists. It is your favourite activity in your dream location, and it will also help your education objectives. The problem is you do not have the money to do it, but you believe you can raise the money by participating in a fundraising event. You want to persuade the people you know who you think would have money and sponsor you. The five people you immediately think of are your wealthy grandparents, whom you have not called in over two years, two friends from elementary school you are still somewhat close to and have high-paying jobs, and your mom, who will do anything for you but struggles a bit financially since losing her job five years ago.

**Scenario 2** — ***Inform***

You work in a medium-sized two-storey building, where about 150 people work at the company ACME Inc. Fifty people make up a mobile salesforce, and they are in and out of the office all the time, always on their smartphones. Another 50 people have flexible work arrangements and do a lot of work from home. Another 25 people do call-centre work and are usually on their headsets and on computers solving client problems. You are the person responsible for communicating safety issues, and your boss asks you to inform everyone in the building about an upcoming fire alarm testing procedure. Your boss explains that the last time this testing was done, several people complained about not having been informed in advance about the alarms and had difficulty doing business because of the noise.

**Scenario 3** — ***Entertain***

Your boss selects you to be the master of ceremonies for your company’s upcoming 50th anniversary celebration. You find out that the ceremony will be attended by international dignitaries; local politicians; and the board of directors; as well as most of the company’s 50 employees—largely middle-aged engineers and some disgruntled support staff, mostly in their 20s, who believe they are being underpaid.

## Write Your Own Message

**Lecture:** Now that you have your completed, peer-reviewed audience analysis using AUDIENCE and the audience planner sheet, select ONE of the previous three scenarios to compose your own original message. Keep the following in mind: Scenario 1 has an objective to persuade and could take the form of an email, phone call, or in-person meeting (draft a script if using a phone call or in-person meeting). Scenario 2 has the objective to inform and could take the form of a memo, email, and/or an announcement over the company’s speaker system (draft a script if you select the company loudspeaker). Scenario 3 has an objective to entertain and can take the form of speech notes, agenda, or short report (script highlights) to your boss about your planned speech topics in sequence.

## Review

**Notes:** Recap today’s lecture, touching on key points (*“Today you have learned…”*).Types of audience, aims, and the AUDIENCE acronym.

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

# Communication Channels Slide Deck

# This slide deck works as a companion to eTextbook Chapter 3: Choosing a Communications Channel. There are a few activities/assessment sheets needed for this lesson set:

# “[That’s Not What You Said” Activity Instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eCVlIjG9fa4wR54TeUIXaZ8BrkN8o98u12Ry6PzcQs/edit)

# [Recommending a Communications Channel Activity instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17dKDEp1P_rVMlxtdR2_ZwjP6dpM8ikpYsZQ-7C0MmJs/edit).

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name. Reminders from previous class.

**Lecture:** Today we will be discussing **Communication Channels**. You will learn to figure out which channel is best suited to your **message** and what considerations you need to make when using each channel.You will use what you have learned about audience identification to assess whether or not a communication channel is appropriate for a message.

Our goals for today: You should be able to

* categorize elements into **verbal, non-verbal, written, or digital channels**;
* determine if the appropriate communication channel was implemented; and
* recommend the appropriate communication channel(s) based on purpose, audience, and message.

## The Medium Is the Message

**Lecture:** Have you heard the phrase “The medium is the message”? The phrase was coined by Canadian communication theorist Marshall McLuhan. What do you think it means?

## The Medium Is the Message (Video)

**Lecture:** Let’s watch a short video to get us thinking about how the **medium** (or, channel) and the message are connected.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ko6J9v1C9zE>

McLuhan’s phrase tells us that the medium (channel) influences how the message is perceived. Do you think that’s true?

## Types of Channels

**Notes:**

Summary of Types of Channels:

* **Verbal -** spoken language (i.e., conversation, presentation)
* **Nonverbal** - unspoken (i.e., gestures, facial expressions, body language)
* **Written -** text (i.e., letters, memos, reports)
* **Digital** - technology-enabled (i.e., social media, text messaging); a subset of the other channels

## Introduction to Communication Channels (Video)

**Notes:** If using, the OER “Introduction to Communication Channels” video, use the follow-up notes, below.

## Which is Which? (Class Activity)

**Notes:** Have students put examples into a diagram on the board, categorizing them as **verbal, non-verbal, written, or digital.**

Here are a few suggested items:

* Video
* Presentation
* Letter
* Tone of voice
* Tweet
* Poster
* Handshake
* Speech
* Frown
* Clothing style
* Glance at the clock
* One-on-one chat
* Phone call
* Blog post
* Report
* Eyebrow raise
* Magazine
* Interview

## Verbal

* One-on-one conversation
* Group conversation
* Meeting
* Presentation
* Speech

Ask students what else they can think of.

## Non-Verbal

* Tone
* Facial expression
* Body language
* Gestures
* Dress
* Space/proximity

Ask students what else they can think of.

## That’s Not What You Said (Group Activity)

That’s Not What You Said [Activity Instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eCVlIjG9fa4wR54TeUIXaZ8BrkN8o98u12Ry6PzcQs/edit)

## Written

* Letters
* Memos
* Reports
* Email

Have students consider correct grammar and punctuation, print or digital, possible misinterpretation.

## Digital

* Email
* Intranet
* Instant messenger
* Social media
* Video conference
* Apps

Ask students what else they can think of.

## Considerations and Caveats of Digital Channels

**Lecture:**

* Check: Does my audience have access to the medium I am using to communicate with them?
* Email and social media posts are easy to forward and share. Be cautious and do not put anything in an email you would not want the whole company to see.
* We live in an always-on society where most of us are walking around with devices in our pockets. Consequently, you can interrupt your receiver at all times—but should you?
* Digital channels tend to be informal, so the direction of your communication is a consideration here. An instant message might be OK for a colleague but probably not for your boss!
* If you have older generations of workers at your company, remember that they may not be as accustomed to using digital channels (particularly mobile communication, IM, etc.) as younger generations are. Digital might not be the most appropriate channel to reach those people, *but* you may be surprised at how savvy some are. It is all about knowing your audience.

## Information Richness

**Lecture:** The concept of *information richness* describes how much sensory information is transmitted through a given medium. For example, videoconferencing is highly information rich because verbal communication is transmitted, as are nonverbal cues such as facial expressions and body language. In this channel, you can see and hear your receiver. Blogs and letters have the ability to transmit text and images, both visual information, whereas formal document are low in information richness because they are standardized and lack nuance.

In highly rich mediums, more information is being transmitted via multiple channels, leaving less room for misinterpretation and helping to reach an understanding more quickly.

## Non-Verbal Communication (Group Activity)

**Notes**: Divide students into groups and instruct them to play a charades-style game in which one person acts out the name of a book, movie, TV show, famous person, character, or other cultural reference. Their group guesses while keeping time (one minute). After everyone has had a turn to act out, lead a discussion about which items are easier or more difficult to explain through non-verbal cues only. Did the messages come across? Why or why not? What kinds of non-verbal communication are misinterpreted? What types of cues did they use? miming, body movement, facial expressions, gestures? What did they assume about their audience’s prior knowledge or understanding?

Here are some possible items to act out. Hand out a selection of these to each group.

* *Twilight*
* *The Hunger Games*
* *To Kill a Mockingbird*
* *Charlotte's Web*
* *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*
* *Romeo and Juliet*
* *The Little Mermaid*
* *The Godfather*
* *Alice in Wonderland*
* *The Lord of the Rings*
* *Titanic*
* *Home Alone*
* *Forrest Gump*
* *The Big Bang Theory*
* *The Jetsons*
* *Two and a Half Men*
* *Big Brother*
* *Arrested Development*
* Marilyn Monroe
* Elvis Presley
* Michael Jackson
* Madonna
* Michael Jordan
* Lady Gaga
* Garfield
* Harry Potter
* King Kong
* Peter Pan
* Mary Poppins
* The Grinch
* Aladdin
* Homer Simpson

## How Communication Flows

**Notes:**

* Upward - i.e., to boss
* Downward - i.e., to subordinates
* Sideways - i.e., to colleagues

It can also flow outward (to external stakeholders and customers).

Which channels are appropriate in which directions?

## Identifying the Right Channel

**Lecture:** Answering the following questions will help you to identify the right channel for your message:

* What is the purpose of your message?
* Is the message instructional or informational?
* Who is the audience? (group or individual? internal or external to your company?)
* What are the key points?
* How urgently do you need a response?
* Do you need a record of the message being sent and replied to?
* Are there implications that you need to watch out for in terms of who sees the message and when?
* Does your recipient need sensory cues to understand the message?
* How complex or *rich* is your message? Will it need further explanation?
* Will it likely evoke an emotional response?
* Which communications channels are available to you/within your budget?

## Considerations and Caveats

**Lecture:** Consider the following elements when choosing a channel and crafting your message:

* Formal vs. informal
* What is right for the sender might not be right for the receiver
* Be cautious about language choice (gendered language, cultural nuances)
* Access, cost of message

## Channel Selection (Class Activity)

**Lecture:** As a class, let us choose a channel for each of the following scenarios. Which would you choose? Why? What would your message say?

* You work for city government, and there has been heavy rain. The level of water in the river that goes through the centre of your city is dangerously high and likely to flood within the next 24 hours. You need to advise residents to stay out of the area.
* You work for a growing oilfield company with a head office and two satellite offices. Your company has just hired a new Human Resources Director. You want the staff to know who he is and make him feel welcome; he will visit all three offices over the next two weeks to get to know them and will be holding informal fireside chats.
* You work for a university in marketing and are working on a major advertising campaign with a recently hired colleague. Your colleague has been absent from work several times over the last few weeks, and, when you are working on the project together, she is constantly texting and using Facebook on her phone rather than contributing to meetings. You think it is time to raise a concern with your boss, as you do not think the project will be successful.

## Similar Messages via Different Channels

**Lecture:** Companies often run marketing campaigns that send the same or similar messages across multiple channels, including print, video, social media, and even through the behaviour of their customer service employees. By doing this, they combine the benefits of verbal, non-verbal, written, and digital communication to promote their message. You should show a few examples on-screen, for example Toyota’s “Let’s Go Places” campaign, or Telus’s “Expect More.”

## Multichannel Campaigns (Group Activity)

**Notes:** Divide students into groups and ask them to research a company that they have purchased from to find out how companies transmit similar messages across channels. After 10 minutes, have the students report their findings to the class.

Here is what the students should be looking for:

* Who do you think is the target audience for the message?
* How is the message similar across channels?
* Why do you think certain channels were chosen?
* Do you think the multichannel campaign is successful? Why or why not?
* What might you do differently?

## What Did You Find Out? (Discussion)

To follow up the activity they have just conducted, lead a class discussion of the discoveries.

* Who is the target audience?
* How is the message similar across channels?
* Why were certain channels chosen?
* Is the campaign successful?
* What would you do differently?

## Review

Review the key concepts from the lesson(s):

* Medium and Message
* Types of Channels
* Information Richness
* Communication Flow
* Choosing a Channel
* Multichannel

## Recommending a Communications Channel (Homework)

**Notes:** Students are asked toselect a communications channel and explain their choice in a one- to two-page response to a scenario. [Recommending a Communications Channel Activity instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17dKDEp1P_rVMlxtdR2_ZwjP6dpM8ikpYsZQ-7C0MmJs/edit).

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

# Plain Language Slide Deck

# This slide deck works as a companion to eTextbook Chapter 4: Crafting Your Message with Plain Language. If you would like to provide it, there is a [Plain Language Reference (Infographic)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3IVvwBUCTdCUVVXUDQySThHUk0) available for this lesson. If you are using the [Plain Language in Your Day-to-Day Life activity,](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1i0D5hm6B90BiZCuylT7Jx2Gn4BFf1UZwv5xJmXU88B0/edit#heading=h.2rpmfidby8v6) you will need to assign it during the previous lesson and bring it to this lesson to complete.

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name. Reminders from previous class.

## Use the Smallest Word That Does the Job

**Notes:** (E. B. White quotation): “It is often harder to write short and simple than it is to write long and complicated. Keep that in mind as you learn plain language skills—it can be more challenging and time consuming, but the results are worth it.”

## What Is Plain Language?

**Notes:** Plain language is clear, succinct writing that is easy to understand for as wide an audience as possible. In many countries, public organizations (such as government departments) are mandated to use it in their public communication to make sure that as many people have access to services as possible.

## Intro to Plain Language (Video)

**Notes:** Consider using the OER “Intro to Plain Language” video.

## Principles of Plain Language

**Notes:**

1. Use active voice
2. Use common words instead of complex words or jargon
3. Use a positive tone when possible
4. Write for your reader
5. Keep words and sentences short

[Plain Language Reference (Infographic)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3IVvwBUCTdCUVVXUDQySThHUk0)

## Active Voice

**Lecture:**Which sentence uses active voice?

*Vacation time must be approved by senior managers.*

or

*Senior managers must approve vacation time.*

(Answer: Sentence 2)  
How do you know?

*Who* is doing the action in this sentence? (senior managers)  
Keep the *who* (subject) up front. This helps to highlight the focus of the sentence and keep your sentences short.

## Common Words

**Lecture:** Can anyone come up with a simpler word to get the same idea across?

* expedite → hurry
* advantageous → helpful
* terminate → end
* proficiency → skill
* leverage, utilize → use
* regarding → about
* endeavour → try

## Buzzwords and Jargon

**Lecture:** If your audience does not work in the same industry as you do, they may not understand what you are trying to say. Industries such as law, medicine, business, and technology often use jargon—vocabulary specific to that industry—that is difficult for outsiders to understand and should be avoided.

* acronyms (AWOL, BTW)
* scientific terms
* buzzwords (words that are so overused that they become meaningless, e.g., paradigm shift, innovative, framework)
* slang
* codes (code eleven)

## Positive Tone

**Lecture*:***

*I did not forget to attend the meeting.*

or

*I remembered to attend the meeting.*

Which is clearer? (Answer: Sentence 2)

Avoid statements that use negative words like *not, don’t, can’t.* It is easier to get your point across without them. Using a positive tone typically shortens your sentences and also makes your writing more approachable and friendly for your reader.

## Write for Your Reader

**Lecture:**

* Know who your audience is and write for their reading level.
* Use *you* and other pronouns to speak directly to readers; this pulls them in and makes the information feel relevant.
* Think through the questions your readers are likely to ask and then organize your document to help them get the answers they need as quickly as possible.
* Create logical paragraphs. Use a new paragraph for each idea/topic. Use connecting phrases (transitions) to guide the reader through the material.

## Short Words and Sentences

**Lecture:** Use one idea per sentence.

Wordiness complicates your writing and makes your sentences longer than necessary. Can you find simpler ways to say the following?

* due to the fact that → because
* in addition to → also
* for the purpose of → for
* at this point in time → now
* in order to → to
* there is a possibility that → might
* on the occasion that → when

Try removing words from your sentence. If you can remove a word and (1) the meaning of the sentence remains clear and (2) the grammar still works, do so.

## Redundancy and Empty Words

**Lecture:** Delete empty words from your writing, such as the following:

* generally
* really
* very
* in some ways
* various
* in my opinion
* the fact that
* basically

Watch for the following (and similar) redundancies:

* red in colour → red
* many different ways → many ways
* appear to be → appear
* completely finished → finished
* previous experience → experience
* forward planning → planning
* terrible tragedy → tragedy

## Nominalizations and Clichés

**Lecture:** Look out for nominalizations—verbs (actions) and adjectives turned into nouns (person, place, thing). These make sentences more complex than necessary. Our minds have an easier time processing verbs and adjectives than the nouns that can be derived from them. Common culprits are words ending with *-tion*, -*sion*, *-ment*, *-ance*, *-ence*. You are often better off recasting the sentence using verbs/adjectives. The following are examples of nominalizations:

* difficulty (use *difficult*)
* intensity (use *intense*)
* reaction (use *react*)
* refusal (use *refuse*)
* investigation (use *investigate*)
* demonstration (use *demonstrate*)
* elimination (use *eliminate*)
* reduction (use *reduce*)
* discovery (use *discover*)
* failure (use *fail*)

Keep away from **clichés**, such as

* shed light
* missing link
* silver bullet
* low-hanging fruit
* think outside the box
* push the envelope
* bring to the table

## Plain Language in Your Day-to-Day Life

**Notes:** To complete this activity, you will need to assign it in one class and then resume it in the following class. [Plain Language in Your Day-to-Day Life](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1i0D5hm6B90BiZCuylT7Jx2Gn4BFf1UZwv5xJmXU88B0) instructions.

## The Plain Language Writing Process

1. Determine what you want the reader to know
2. List the critical information
3. Write your document
4. Check the structure
5. Modify according to the plain language items we have discussed
6. Ask someone to read it over and comment
7. Proofread
8. Revise, as needed

## Six-Word Story (Solo/Pair Activity)

[Six-Word Story Instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yzSjGejnl7PMNgtcJBrsh4N_bUAVKQEQrpo0QEMtJrI/edit)

## Review

**Notes:** Review this lesson’s key points:

* Active Voice
* Common Words
* Positive Tone
* Reader Focus
* Keep It Short
* The Plain Language Writing Process

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

# Using Visuals Slide Deck

# This slide deck works as a companion to eTextbook Chapter 5: A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words: Using Visuals. For this lesson set, you may also wish to access the following activity documents: [Visuals in your Day-to-Day Life](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q4GsMtK49B9q48girbmCQWcC4Eo30nBFu8ngPoE72UQ/edit#heading=h.hsowbn9dm39v), [Using Visuals in a Presentation](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16VtBWYezfGdgYOXMOnM6-kYCwKvJVMPvSVlqWw9LlF0/edit), [Using Visuals in a Document](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ozHcxSdJ4WqpSzHP4ZCCVMr8StqxcSe5cnYv_7m1BOs), [How to Find Creative Commons Materials (Job Aid)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ENkgqP18xUqSSsqUCQpor2F5nBwQBVDKa5jyjt5X91I)

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name. Reminders from previous class.

**Lecture:** Today, we will be discussing “Communicating with Visuals.” Have you ever heard the saying **“A picture is worth a thousand words”**? In this class, we will be talking about how to choose **visuals** to enhance your textual messages and how to sometimes even replace them entirely.

You will draw on what you know about your audience to select images that fit your message. You will find out what types of images to use, where you can **source** them, and how to **attribute** them.

Later in the course, we will go into images in more detail, discussing concepts like colour and typography choice. For now, our focus is on selecting **images** that are a good fit for your message.

Our goals for today are that you should be able to

* match appropriate images to a message,
* search the Internet for images and attribute them, and
* complement or replace text with images.

## Image Use Quiz

**Notes:** The following are questions you can ask your students. For each question, ask students to raise their hand to vote yes or no. Then explain the correct answer.

**Lecture:**

**Image Search**

*You have searched on Google Images and found an image you like. Can you use it in your annual report if you have an image credits page at the end that lists the photographer by name?*

ANSWER: No. Unless the photographer has listed the image as Creative Commons or public domain, you need to have their permission to use their image for any purpose.

**Creative Commons**

*You have searched on Flickr and found an image that is CC-BY-4.0. Can you use it in a blog post if you write “Photo by: [Username]” with a link to the user’s Flickr page?*

ANSWER: Yes. Always double-check the license to make sure that you are attributing the photo the way the photographer has requested.

**Your Own Photography**

*Your company held a promotional event and you took some photos. The people in the photo are identifiable. You did not get model release forms signed, and no signs were posted at the event to say that photographs might be taken. You want to share these photos on the company Facebook page. Can you?*

ANSWER: Maybe! If the people in the images are staff, you may be able to contact them and ask their permission before posting the photos. If you cannot get the written consent of every person in a photo, however, you cannot use it.

Your company held a promotional event and you took some photos. The people in the photo are identifiable. You did not get model release forms signed, and no signs were posted at the event to say that photographs may be taken. You want to share these photos on the company Facebook page. Can you

ANSWER: Yes. Always double-check the license to make sure that you are attributing the photo in the way the photographer has requested

## Visuals in Your Day-to-Day Life

**Notes:** You may conduct this activity in two different ways: (1) Assign the activity beforehand so that students can collect information in their own time and bring them to a class discussion. Or (2) Assign the activity in class and allow time for the activity to be done entirely within the class. See the [Visuals in Your Day-to-Day Life](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q4GsMtK49B9q48girbmCQWcC4Eo30nBFu8ngPoE72UQ/edit#heading=h.hsowbn9dm39v) assignment sheet for details.

## How to Select an Image

**Notes:** Summary of how to identify the communications channel (e.g., for web, print)

1. Determine the purpose of the visual
2. Identify the key information in the communication
3. Identify the appropriate style of the image (photograph, cartoon, line drawing, chart, etc.)
4. Consider: size, clarity/relevance, simplicity, consistency with visual style, colour palette
5. Insert the visual and position it appropriately

## The Purpose of Visuals

**Lecture:**

There are a number of reasons you might consider including visuals in documents, presentations, and other communications. Four reasons are detailed below:

1. **Decorative:** Visuals added that do not represent objects or actions within the text but instead are added for aesthetic effect would be considered decorative. Decorative visuals are often added to gain attention or increase the audience's interest. Visuals can be used this way but can detract from the message you are trying to communicate, and thus should be used with caution.
2. **Representational:** These visuals physically represent, or share, physical resemblance to objects or actions in the text and are relevant to the content of the text. For example, rather than giving a detailed textual description of a new playground, you might include an image or render of the new playground and use the text to highlight specific features or information.
3. **Analogical:** These visuals are used to compare and contrast two things, and explain their likeness or correspondence. For example, a marketing consultant might try to clarify the difference between targeted marketing and mass marketing by including images of a single fisherman with a single fishing rod and line next to an image of a bigger boat with a fishing net. By using the fishing analogy, the marketing consultant is attempting to connect possible prior understanding of the audience, a visual, and the concepts of targeted marketing versus mass marketing.
4. **Organizational:** The purpose of organizational images is to provide structure to information, visually define relationships, and illustrate connections. A chart of the hierarchical structure of a company is one example of an organizational image.

## Searching for Images

**Lecture:** You have a few options when sourcing images for your work:

1. **Creative Commons** (free, must be attributed)
2. Stock websites (pay-per-use)
3. Work with a graphic designer/photographer
4. Create an image yourself

Here are some sources of Creative Commons images:

* Wikimedia Commons
* Flickr Creative Commons

Caution: Please do not take images from Google Image Search. You may not be able to tell who the original creator of the image is, or whether or not it can be legally used in your work. If you use an image without appropriate clearance, you can get yourself and your company into legal hot water!

If you are provided with an image and asked to use it, make sure you know where it came from. If you are not sure, you can use Google’s Reverse Image Search feature to find the image online and try to track down its source.

If you would like to distribute it to students, a [How to Find Creative Commons Materials (Job Aid)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ENkgqP18xUqSSsqUCQpor2F5nBwQBVDKa5jyjt5X91I) is available.

## Attributing Images

**Notes:** Show the class the various symbols for Creative Commons and public domain licenses and ask them to explain what each one means. They should be able to get this information directly from reading the chapter.

**Lecture:**

The images you discover will usually indicate how they need to be credited. There are several components of Creative Commons licensing. The image you choose may have some, or all, of these attached to it:

**Attribution -** Licensees may copy, distribute, display, and perform the work and make derivative works based on it only if they give the author or licensor the credits in the manner specified by these.

**Non-Commercial -** Licensees may copy, distribute, display, and perform the work and make derivative works based on it only for non-commercial purposes.

**ShareAlike -** Licensees may distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the license that governs the original work.

**No Derivatives -** Licensees may copy, distribute, display, and perform only verbatim copies of the work, not derivative works based on it.

**Public Domain -** Content is free to be used globally without restrictions.

## Using Visuals in a Document/Using Visuals in a Presentation

**Notes:** You will probably want to choose one of these activities as a homework assignment and then delete the slide that you do not need. Activity Instructions can be found here:   
[Using Visuals in a Presentation](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16VtBWYezfGdgYOXMOnM6-kYCwKvJVMPvSVlqWw9LlF0/edit), [Using Visuals in a Document](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ozHcxSdJ4WqpSzHP4ZCCVMr8StqxcSe5cnYv_7m1BOs)

## What Type of Image?

**Lecture:**

Choosing the right image depends on how you plan to use it.

**Photograph**

Works well for a variety of uses (e.g., in reports and newsletters).

Watch out for obviously posed images of people, as these tend to feel contrived. [Suggestion: supply one or two examples of posed images for the class.]

**Cartoon/Clip-Art**

Not recommended, unless the content you are producing is for children.

**Illustration/Graphics/Icons**

These can work well (if professionally developed) in marketing/communications material (i.e., brochures, newsletters, posters).

**Chart/Diagram**

If you are working with numbers, a chart or graph is often easier to understand than a table. A diagram is helpful when trying to explain scientific details.

## Cropping and Sizing

**Lecture:**

* Do not **crop** people at joints.
* What is happening in the background? Be cautious about any crop/alteration that might change the way your message is received. [Suggestion: search Obama’Change photo for an example to present in class.]
* Do not stray from the standard photo size/dimensions.
* When **resizing**, do so proportionally so that you don’t squash the image.
* Get the largest size of the photo you can, and work downwards; scaling a photo up will degrade the image, making it pixelated—something you should avoid.

## Review

**Notes:**

Ensure that you have covered all of the following:

* Copyright types: All Rights Reserved, Creative Commons, public domain
* Selecting images: think about the channel, purpose, style, position
* Sourcing: use CC images, create your own, work with a professional
* Purpose: decorative, representational, analogical, organizational
* Types of images: photos, illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs
* Cropping and sizing: common pitfalls

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits

# Feedback for Communication Success Slide Deck

# This slide deck works as a companion to eTextbook Chapter 6: From Shotgun to Boomerang: Using Feedback. If you intend to use the [Gathering Feedback via Surveys](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RGKK_5WZgtd-leY8pThzJXJGs5jWO_L5FyhZCrvTaWo/edit#heading=h.yewvwb5narfv) activity, you will need to assign it during a preceding class (ahead of time) so that students have time to draft their surveys. You may also need to distribute the [Exploring Feedback Tools](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nK76y-HFFHl5wCPyDAGosIO0TQxXSmNNBBYaElypuYA) assessment.

## Cover Slide

## Welcome

**Add to slide:** course name, dates, location, instructor name. Reminders from previous class.

**Lecture:** Today we will be talking about how you can **evaluate** the success of your own or other people’s messaging. We will think about how you can gather feedback and how you might use it to improve your messages.

You will draw on what you know about analyzing and audience, and touch on some writing techniques that will be further explored when we get to the Writing module.

After today’s class, you should be able to

* explain the ways in which communication effectiveness and feedback are related to one another,
* identify which type(s) of feedback may be available in a particular scenario and how feedback may be gathered,
* identify elements that contributed to the success or failure of the communication in a scenario, and
* evaluate the effectiveness of the message based on the message and feedback received.

## Introduction to Feedback (Video)

**Notes:** Consider using the OER “Intro to Feedback” video to introduce the topic.

## Social Media Feedback

**Lecture:** In today’s world where instant feedback is demanded via social media, companies are posting effective (and ineffective!) messages online every day. Here are some examples of messages that got a reaction—good and bad. We will take a look at the messages and the feedback they received. In your opinion, were they effective? What did the companies do right, or what should they have done differently?

**Notes**: Here are a few examples to share with your class:

* [Oreo Tweets](https://twitter.com/oreo/status/298246571718483968) during the Superbowl power outage
* Global Village Duluth announces a sale on their [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/162887113803624/photos/a.162904430468559.37165.162887113803624/563056780453320/?type=1) of “everything black” on Martin Luther King Day
* American Apparel posts a [Challenger explosion photo](http://mashable.com/2014/07/04/american-apparel-challenger/#3zHePr5pekqj) instead of a fireworks photo on Tumblr, 4th of July
* Chipotle’s [Scarecrow movie](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUtnas5ScSE) on YouTube

## Where Does Feedback Come From?

**Lecture:**

Where does feedback come from? Well, that depends on the channel you use.

**Verbal and Non-Verbal**

These two channels usually exist together. When you are speaking with someone directly, you will generally be able to get a feel for their reaction by watching their body language and facial expression, as well as listening to their responses—the words they use and their tone of voice. Here is where having active listening skills is key.

**Written**

When you are using a written message (e.g., a letter or an email), your feedback will most often come in the form of a **reply** from your recipient. You might also send around a company memo about an event or new policy, in which case you will find out how successful you were when you see the attendance numbers for the event or the uptake on the new policy.

**Digital**

Digital channels can be easier to track, quantifiably, than the others. If your message goes out via social media, for example, you will have a **dashboard** with analytics (number of clicks, replies, number of people reached, number of shares, etc.) to tell you whether or not your message made an impact. You will also be able to see how often your message was shared, replied to/commented on, and how many people responded to a call-to-action (i.e., how many bought a product through an advertising link, how many signed up for a newsletter, etc.)

## Forms of Feedback

**Lecture:** In your reading, you learned about the different forms that feedback can take. To review, who can define and give an example of the following types of feedback for the class? [Call on a student for each.]

* Indirect Feedback
* Direct Feedback
* Internal Feedback
* External Feedback
* User-Generated Feedback

What types of feedback might you get electronically?

## Determining Message Effectiveness

**Notes:**

Teach students to get into the habit of asking the following questions:

1. What is your Initial reaction/gut feeling?
2. Can you identify the audience?
3. Can you identify the purpose?
4. Is the channel the best choice?
5. What kind of language is being used in the message and the response to it?
6. How does the message look?
7. Has the message received the intended results?
8. Then you can decide if the message has been effective.

## Recognizing Barriers to Communication

**Lecture:** A number of different factors can lead to a message being poorly received; poor reception does not always happen simply because the message was poor. For example, let’s say you are scheduling an event at work and you send an invitation to the members of your team, but when the day arrives, you have a low turnout. The low turnout could indeed be because your invitation wasn’t a successful message, but it could also be because your event was scheduled in mid-summer, when a lot of people are away on vacation!

The following barriers can get in the way of your message being received as intended:

* Either party has an agenda orbias
* Receiver is distracted/not actively listening
* Both parties are emotionally invested
* Situations that are beyond the control of either party

## Eliciting Feedback

**Lecture:** How would you get feedback about a communication that was distributed through the following channels? [Call on students to respond.]

* Presentation
* Letter
* Blog post
* Email
* Website
* Social media

How can you get feedback for your communications in order to improve them? Your options are different depending on the channel you are using. At work you might have a performance review with your boss, who will give you areas for improvement and commendations. By communicating with others, you will get feedback from many sources. For example:

* Verbal and Non-Verbal: Be a good listener, ask questions to clarify, ask for your receiver’s opinions and reactions.
* Written: Ask for a response by a specific date at the end of your letter.
* Digital: Prompt for feedback on social media, ask a question at the end of a blog post to encourage comments, conduct a survey.

## Gathering Feedback via Surveys

**Notes:** If assigned during the previous class, students will swap their surveys with a partner and then revise, finalize, and distribute. [Assignment instructions.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1RGKK_5WZgtd-leY8pThzJXJGs5jWO_L5FyhZCrvTaWo/edit#heading=h.yewvwb5narfv)

## Using Feedback Constructively

**Lecture:** While at work, you might receive feedback about your communication on a more personal level. For example, you might meet with your line manager regularly to chat about progress and opportunities for advancement, or your workplace might use a team feedback program.

Sometimes these occasions can bring up issues that might not be received positively. For example, perhaps you don’t respond to emails as quickly as your co-workers would like, or your peers misconstrue your leadership style as bossiness. In situations like this, it can be tough not to take these things personally, but if you can use this information constructively, you will have an opportunity to improve your communication style for the benefit of everyone on your team. Here are a few tips for using constructive feedback to your advantage:

* Resist the urge to “bite back.” Sometimes, when you hear a negative word from someone, your instinct will be to retort by telling them what their undesirable habits are. But try to remember that the other person is (usually) trying to be helpful and they might be nervous about sharing their feedback with you.
* Listen closely and repeat back what you heard (“So, you’re saying that I could improve on…”) to make sure you understand correctly.
* Ask questions to clarify the issue and look for ways to address them. Try to get examples of when the undesirable behaviour occurred, and figure out whether it is an isolated mistake (e.g., you reacted abruptly to someone’s idea in a meeting on one occasion) or a recurring concern.
* Ask for suggestions on what you might do differently in future.
* Now for the really tough part: Thank the person for their feedback and tell them how you are going to use it. It will close the conversation on a positive note and let your co-workers know that you are approachable.

## Exploring Feedback Tools (Homework)

**Notes:** Assessment instructions for [Exploring Feedback Tools.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nK76y-HFFHl5wCPyDAGosIO0TQxXSmNNBBYaElypuYA)

## Review

**Notes:**

Review this lesson set’s key points.

* Sources of Feedback
* Forms of Feedback
* Evaluating Effectiveness Based on Feedback
* Barriers to Communication
* Eliciting Feedback
* Constructive Use of Feedback

## Closing Slide

**Add to slide:** Any readings, homework, preparations, or reminders that students need before next class.

## Credits