

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE WORKPLACE

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INTRODUCTION

How many people with poor communication skills have made a strong impression on you? There's no doubt that our ability to speak and write effectively is directly related to our personal potential in life and in the workplace. In fact, studies show that over 87% of the money we earn is directly related to our communication skills.

Although technology has made communication faster and more global than ever before, there is still nothing more important than the ability to listen, speak, and write with ease and confidence. Whether it's talking with a co-worker or addressing an audience of thousands, expressing our ideas clearly is one of the most valuable advantages we can have in the career world. Good communicators have the power to share their ideas, persuade others and get themselves noticed.

Even when strong speaking and writing skills are not required for a job, they still make an employee more valuable. Simple things, like good eye contact or good proofreading skills, can give workers a definite edge. With letters being replaced by email and voice mail, everyone must think more quickly and communicate their ideas more concisely. Today more than ever, technical, specialized language must be understood, filtered and shared in a way that everyone can understand.

In the video *Communication Skills for the Workplace*, viewers will learn to meet these challenges by exploring and practicing the habits of good communication in several key ways.

The first way that we become better communicators is through exposure. Listening to others and them helps us learn more about language and how to use it. Some of the exercises in this Teacher's Resource Book will help students utilize different mediums by reading, observing, and taking notes with a specific purpose in mind.

Another way that we learn to communicate is to practice. The more we listen, the more we learn about clues that help us understand the speaker and the message. The more we write, the better we understand our own voice and what it has to say. The more we speak, the easier it is to feel comfortable and confident addressing others. The following pages will offer students plenty of opportunities to sharpen these skills through practice.

People also learn to be good communicators by being good observers. Paying attention to the atmosphere in a room or the mood of an audience can be crucial, especially at the workplace. Even a simple suggestion is communicated more efficiently when the speaker knows how and when to deliver the suggestion.

A final way that we learn to communicate is by focusing on things that are interesting and important to us. We are more likely to write and speak well if we are writing and speaking about something we care about. Many of the activities allow students to choose their own subject matter, whether for an oral presentation or simply a session of note taking.

By viewing the video *Communication Skills for the Workplace* and working on the activities in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will learn valuable techniques to help them communicate effectively.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the videotape *Communication Skills for the Workplace* and participating in class activities and discussions, your students should be able to:

- understand the importance of good communication in the workplace
- understand specific ways to improve their listening, speaking and writing skills
- identify communication barriers in the workplace and search for solutions
- recognize the importance of good listening skills
- work with others to become stronger communicators
- organize and express their ideas in an oral presentation
- understand the need to use clear, concise language
- express their opinions in a polite, assertive manner
- appreciate how strong speaking skills can be a powerful asset in the workplace

PROGRAM SUMMARY

“Nothing in life has more impact than the ability to communicate effectively.”
--former U.S. President Gerald Ford

Communication Skills for the Workplace opens with two young narrators in a modern business setting. They talk about the growing number of communication tools in the workplace, from cell phones to teleconferencing to online messaging. However, as the narrators explain, all of this technology is useless unless workers can express their own thoughts and understand what others are saying. Classic communication skills--speaking, listening and writing--are as valuable as ever.

There are three main reasons why communication is vital in the business world. First, clear communication makes a business run more effectively. Second, good communication helps everyone at a company keep track of the company's goals. And third, good communicators can identify potential problems and potential opportunities, and that can benefit the entire workplace.

Dave Zavarelli, Director of Grocery for a large grocery store chain, gives another reason for good communication when he says, “Number one, you've got a lot of different languages. Number two, everyone has a different perspective. Communication is important because you have to bring all that together. You have to get everyone on the same page.”

Stephen Giordano, Communications Trainer for Giordano Associates, offers what might be the most important reason for learning communication skills. He says, “Most people in a professional environment are looking for people who can communicate, and I think those are the people who stand out on the job.”

In a series of interview segments, several people from various fields offer tips on how to develop good communication skills. They talk about making good eye contact, letting the speaker know that you understand, and listening to the whole idea before jumping to any conclusions.

Next, the narrators define communication as “the giving of information or messages.” As they point out, this is only the beginning of communication. In addition to delivering a message, good communicators must also be able to hear the messages of others. Listening, though it is often taken for granted, is a skill that cannot be overlooked. Stephen Giordano says that many people automatically assume they can listen because they have two ears. On the contrary, listening is something that takes practice.

PROGRAM SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

There are several tips that can help anyone become a better listener. Good eye contact, a smile, and positive body language are all important. If you give people visual clues that you are listening, they will feel more comfortable and have more confidence in your ability to understand them. Taking notes is also a good way to show people you are listening. However, from time to time it's important to look up from notes and repeat what the speaker is saying. This can clear up any misunderstandings before they cause serious problems.

Sometimes, communication is blocked by barriers. As the narrators explain, it is important to spot these barriers early and work to break them down. Strong emotions are one common barrier. Marya W. Holcolme, Communications Consultant for Strategic Communications, suggests taking a mental break to ease strong emotions. Sharing personal opinions can also block communication. Likewise, harsh judgments based on biases can be very damaging, both to a listener and a speaker. A final communication barrier is bad timing caused by work overload or stress. For example, if you don't have time to chat with someone, it's important to reschedule the conversation.

The narrators invite viewers to use a STOP TAPE break to think of other communication barriers, both at work and at home.

When the video returns, the narrators are in an auditorium. Here, they talk about the important skill of public speaking. Sharpening this skill can give workers an invaluable edge in the business world. Even so, one-on-one communication is just as important. The narrators offer some tips for effective speaking, including good eye contact, a friendly smile and confident voice, and a professional attitude. Slang and informal language can be confusing, alienating and frustrating to an audience.

When you speak, the only thing that endures is what people remember. When you write, you are providing a lasting impression of your work skills. Every letter, memo and email deserves your time and attention to detail. On this note, the narrators offer some rules of thumb for effective writing. As with speaking, informal language should be avoided. Great care should also be taken to avoid spelling and grammar errors. Writing should be brief and to the point. And finally, if your workplace has a particular style, you should learn to use it.

As the narrators review the main points of the video, they remind viewers that, "communication is the ship that you will use to navigate your life in the workplace. And it can take you far."

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STUDENT WORKSHEETS

REVIEW TEST

Based on what you learned in the video *Communication Skills for the Workplace*, answer each question below.

1. The video mentions at least three reasons why communication skills are necessary for every type of job. In your own words, describe one of those reasons.

2. Employees without a lot of experience should spend most of their time:
 - a) giving information to others.
 - b) listening to others.
 - c) writing down what they know.
 - d) speaking in front of groups.

3. Which of the following was not a tip for being a better listener?
 - a) repeat the speaker's message
 - b) take notes
 - c) avoid using slang
 - d) look at the person who is talking

4. The video discusses several barriers to good communication. List two of those barriers.

5. Imagine that you're rushing to get a task done and your boss comes in to chat about something less important. What could you do to communicate your needs clearly and respectfully?

6. The video says that your writing at work is:
 - a) not as important as your speaking
 - b) more important if you are in charge of others
 - c) the only clear way to communicate
 - d) a permanent "snapshot" of your professional image

PROFESSIONAL FIX-UPS

Slang, informal language, or rudeness can make letters, memos and emails unprofessional and unsuccessful. Read each example of business writing below. Use better language to make each example more courteous and professional.

1. It's obvious that you messed up your power drill yourself by not taking care of it. That's why we cannot refund your money or give you a new drill.
2. I can't believe you're asking for another extension on your deadline. Have you lost your mind? We have to make money around here, you know.
3. Your last shipment of bananas was awful. Most of the bananas were totally black and had to go straight to the trash. We want a full refund and a new shipment of bananas for all of the trouble you caused us.
4. You guys are cool, so I'm sure you won't mind if we change your original meeting to 3 PM. It shouldn't take that long anyway since most of the eggheads on your staff are fast learners.
5. We just got a letter from the big boss over at headquarters. Watch out for orders asking for 100 boxes of Ivory paper. They might be fake orders from a prankster trying to rip us off.

CONFLICT COMEBACKS

In the workplace, tension and stress are common realities. If we can spot conflict situations and react to them in respectful, proactive ways, we can prevent problems from growing.

Read each statement below, then write a professional response that could help to solve the problem.

1. I know you already have more work than you can handle, but could you make copies of these reports for me? I need about 50 copies of each one. Thanks!

2. I'm fed up with you guys in sales! You never know what's going on! What's the problem in this department anyway?!

3. The 516 was never designed to go with the G-73. Those models only have one input and no bi-code outputs. You *do* know what a bi-code output is, right? Someone with your job certainly *should* know.

4. Did you see that show last night about UFO hunters? What are you working on there? Do you watch a lot of science fiction? Science fiction movies are the best thing to watch after midnight. What kind of movies do you like?

5. Don't you hate it when she tries to act like she's our boss? Who does she think she is anyway? I mean really...do you hate her as much as I do?

MEMO REWRITE

The guidelines below can make any type of writing clearer and more professional:

- Check carefully for spelling and grammar errors
- Get to the point
- Be clear and specific with details
- Use professional language

With these tips in mind, rewrite the memo below to make it more professional. You can use your imagination to add details or to make the information clearer.

MEMO

Date: October 5
To: Carpet King Headquarters
From: Barry Hollen
Subject: Shipment of samples to showroom

Hey fellas. How are things up there at headquarters? Things are fine down here. We're busy as usual. Everyone wants to get tickets to the big game.

Anyway, this memo is to let you guys know that some samples are on their way to your place. There are four or five big boxes so make room. I'm not exactly sure what's in them, but it should be everything you asked for. The first box contains the new samples that we talked about on the phone, remember?

By the way, what I really need from you is approval of all the samples. Just put a checkmark or whatever on each sample card to let me know that they're okay. If you have a problem with any of the samples, just jot down your thoughts on the card and I'll figure something out.

Well that's it. Let me know when you get them. You know my number right? Talk to you soon.

Barry

MEMO REWRITE (CONT'D)

MEMO

Date: October 5
To: Carpet King Headquarters
From: Barry Hollen
Subject: Shipment of samples to showroom

SPOTTING BARRIERS

Here are some common barriers that can prevent good communication:

- strong emotions
- stress or work overload
- judging others unfairly
- confusing language
- low attention span
- bad timing

For each situation below, you are shown the dialogue *and* the thoughts of the people involved.

1. Buddy says: What's going on in shipping? Why are these orders late!?

Miko says: I don't know. I guess we're doing the best we can.

Buddy thinks: No one in shipping knows what they're doing, including this guy.

Miko thinks: I'd like to tell him that it's not my fault. A few guys who goof off are the cause of all the delays in shipping. But I can't deal with him when he's in a bad mood.

What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation?

What could Miko say to improve communication?

2. Nina says: Never load the printer from the left side through portal C. Always put A4-sized paper in portal B and B5-sized paper in portal A. Understand?

Dawn: Sure.

Nina thinks: I don't have time to explain every little detail. I'm too busy right now. She'll have to figure some of it out for herself.

Dawn thinks: I don't understand what she's talking about, but she's so bossy. I don't feel comfortable asking for more information.

What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation?

What could Dawn say to improve communication?

SPOTTING BARRIERS (CONT'D)

3. Jack says: Hey, what's going on? Did you see what the boss is wearing? Where do you think he got that tie anyway?

Harrison says: Gee, I don't know.

Harrison thinks: I only have a few minutes to finish this order before the truck arrives, and I don't have time for Jack's interruptions right now. Plus it makes me really irritated and nervous when he says rude things about the boss, especially when the boss is right around the corner.

What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation?

What could Harrison say to improve communication?

4. Roy says: We call this thing a "wandoozle." I don't even know the real name. The point is, when you attach it here—that's called a "sock fit." You should have seen this guy last year who put it on backwards. We call that a "backwards horn."

Kevin says: Uh huh.

Kevin thinks: He's using totally different words than the guy who trained me yesterday. I'm not even sure if this stuff is important. And all these boring stories...I can barely stay awake. I wonder when people go to lunch around here.

What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation?

What could Miko say to improve communication?

GETTING YOUR GOALS

One of our primary reasons for communicating is to get what we need. If we keep clear goals in mind, we will have a better chance of meeting those goals.

Choose a partner for this activity. Pretend that your partner is a co-worker. Use the goals listed below to have three different conversations with your co-worker. In each conversation, you will have one goal and your co-worker will have another.

Remember these guidelines for good communication:

- Listening is just as important as talking.
- Maintain good eye contact with the other person.
- Try to repeat the other person's important points.
- Don't judge the other person unfairly.

1. **Person 1:** You are busy with a project and would like Person 2 to help you.

Person 2: You don't have much spare time, but you would be willing to help with the project because you want to learn the software used to develop the project.

2. **Person 1:** You would like Person 2, a fellow sales representative, to share some of his/her secrets with you. Person 2 has been salesperson of the month many times during the last year.

Person 2: You want to help Person 1, but you believe that his/her talents would be more useful in Development, not Sales. Person 1 is very creative and intelligent, but you don't think he/she is a very good sales person.

3. **Person 1:** You would like to design your company's magazine ads, something the boss (Person 2) does now in her spare time. It would give you a chance to learn more about graphic design and it would make your job more interesting.

Person 2: You like the idea of Person 1 taking over the ads. You don't have the time needed to make them effective. However, you can't afford to give Person 1 a pay raise, and the ads might require him/her to work late or on weekends. However, if the ads are good for business, you will be able to give Person 1 a raise within a few months.

MEMO TO THE BOSS

You work at a gourmet grocery store. Your boss has asked you to find a hot new trend in gourmet food. Using the Internet and food industry magazines, research current trends and focus on a particular food item. Present information about the item to your boss in a memo.

Remember to:

- communicate the information clearly, selecting the most important facts
- explain why you think the trend could be important to your store
- provide information about your sources
- emphasize the important facts
- explain what you think should be done next and who should do it

MEMO

Date:

To:

From:

Subject:

AD STRATEGY

Read the ad below, then answer the questions on the following page.

Computer Classes That Are Really Good!

So you don't know a mouse from a monitor. That's no reason to shy away from computer technology. Today there are a million jobs, in the want ads and online, that require a knowledge of technology—a knowledge that you can learn through hard work, study and experience—and you can get that knowledge with courses offered by Go-For-It Tech Classes, Inc.

Our classes show you how to use multiple platforms, hypertext and program translators to increase format capabilities and make user interface more productive for you and your company. You will learn from highly qualified instructors using state-of-the-art computers. Our courses will go beyond teaching you basic technology. Go-For-It Tech Classes will help you find a better job, make more money, have more fun at work and get more out of life.

Sign up today and receive a free credit hour!

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Choose a partner for this activity. You and your partner will role-play the following situations. In each situation, you will face a communication barrier. Use respectful language and an understanding attitude to work through the barriers.

1. **Situation:** You both work in a hip furniture store. Person 1 wants to change an order for 30 clocks because the clocks have not been strong sellers in the past. Person 2 wants to keep the clocks because they were recently featured in a popular magazine and might become a hot new trend.

Barrier: Person 1 is sometimes a harsh judge of Person 2's abilities to spot trends. Person 2 is very angry about Person 1's suggestion to change the order.

How did you try to talk out the problem? What happened?

2. **Situation:** You both work at a company that makes custom furniture. The company is taking out an ad in a local magazine. Person 1 thinks the ad should feature pictures of the company's furniture styles. Person 2 thinks the ad should talk about the company's terrific reputation for good service and high quality.

Barrier: Person 1 has been working long hours and doesn't have time to write or prepare a complicated ad. Person 2 has already written the ad copy describing the company's reputation and he/she doesn't want the copy to go unused.

How did you try to talk out the problem? What happened?

3. **Situation:** You both work at a record store that is part of a large chain. The store must prepare a report describing local musical styles.

Barrier: While Person 1 is rushing to write the report, Person 2 keeps interrupting with suggestions about what to include.

How did you try to talk out the problem? What happened?

KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

For this activity, find an article in a business, technology or trade journal. To get you started, several journals are listed below. Make sure the article is aimed at a specific audience, such as mechanics or musicians. It will help if you are familiar with the subject that the article addresses (car repair or musical instruments.)

Look for words and phrases that are aimed at a particular audience. What parts of the article would someone unfamiliar with the subject have trouble understanding? Rewrite the article using language that will be clear and interesting to the general reader. You may have to look up some terms in the dictionary or encyclopedia.

Turn in the original article, along with your rewrite.

Motor Trend...automotive

PC World...computers and technology

Forbes...business and finance

Scientific American...science

Education Week...education

Wired...technology

American Cinematographer...film production

Forbes...business and finance

OMNI...science and technology

Variety...music and entertainment

Gourmet...cooking and restaurant management

EMAIL EDITS

Edit each email below to make it clear, to the point and free of spelling and grammatical errors.

1. Dear Mr. Brown,

I herewith submit a response in regard to your statement concerning our product line. It is the belief of myself and the company that our products are neither unsafe nor of poor quality. Attached, please find several testimonials that will verify the statement made hereinabove.

Please correspond with other questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Dave Johnston, president

2. Dear Susan,

To complete the stage construction, my team needs to have more paint, tools, and get the colors picked out. We have not only gotten behind on our deadlines but neither is our schedule working. It is our strong recommendation that your company needs to help us out, and it would be good if soon.

Kate

EMAIL EDITS (CONT'D)

3. Dear Ms. Powells,
I believe that, more or less, our employes would be excited about idea of having something like what you suggested, a company picnic. Please let us knwo what we can do to help plan or carry out the activities needed to make such an event happen.
Thank you,
Jane Curry

4. Dear Tom,
Thank you for your questions toward the Halloween costumes we offer. It will be our hope that the costumes will be exactly what you have needed. We have many styles and are custom fitted for many, many sizes. Do you have a particular one in mind? Thank you for your questions.
Sincerely,
Harold Letterman
The Costume House

FACT SHEETS

TIPS FOR BUSINESS SPEAKING**A good business speaker:**

- knows the audience well
- chooses language that is clear and interesting to the audience
- has a clear purpose in mind (to inform, persuade, encourage, etc.)
- makes eye contact with the audience, whether it is one person or a large group
- smiles and has a pleasant attitude
- speaks with confidence and authority
- is familiar with the subject matter
- has a professional attitude
- listens to what other people are saying
- pays attention to the body language of those who are listening
- makes sure the main points are getting through to the audience
- uses interesting facts, quotes and personal stories
- checks all facts to make sure they are accurate and up-to-date
- works through stress and strong emotions before communicating important ideas

A good business speaker *does not*:

- get off the subject or ramble
- use slang or informal language
- try to memorize every word
- wait until the last minute to practice a written presentation
- use language that is confusing or overly technical
- prejudge the audience
- think he/she knows everything about the subject

TIPS FOR BUSINESS WRITING

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORDS

- Too informal:** Our team is pretty hip to the ideas that were thrown around at the meeting.
- Better:** Our team agrees with the ideas generated at the meeting.
- Too technical:** The subtext of the article alluded to various literary motifs that created parallels to the fairy tale genre.
- Better:** The article was similar in structure and form to a fairy tale.
- Impolite:** We have no idea how you have stayed in business this long without knowing about the company's standard return period.
- Better:** We trust that you are aware of the company's 30-day standard return period.

USE CLEAR SENTENCES

- Confusing:** Before placing the pigment in the mixture, shake it for 20 seconds.
- Better:** Shake the pigment for 20 seconds, then place it in the mixture.
- Wordy:** Our studies have pointed quite strongly to the fact that workers are more productive on Monday and Tuesday than on Wednesday and Thursday, and, without a doubt, they are least productive on Friday.
- Better:** Our studies strongly suggest that workers are most productive early in the week and least productive later in the week.
- Vague:** We need a few more tools to complete this job on time.
- Better:** We need a glass cutter, a small handsaw and a dozen nails to complete Order #342 by February 6.
- Run-on sentence:** The 321 mixer has the best guarantee, it's also our best seller.
- Correct:** The 321 mixer has the best guarantee and it is our best seller.
- Fragment:** You ordered the first item listed on the product sheet. A blue parka with fleece lining.
- Correct:** You ordered the first item listed on the product sheet—a blue parka with fleece lining.

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS**LOW ATTENTION SPAN**

- If you have trouble paying attention, try taking notes.
- If your thoughts wander for a moment, don't be afraid to ask the speaker to repeat the information.
- When you're a new employee, try to spend more time listening than talking.

STRONG EMOTIONS

- If you're feeling too frustrated or angry to communicate effectively, ask for a moment to get back on track.
- Give other people space when they need it.
- Don't spend all of your energy on strong emotions. Learn to vent by closing your door for a few minutes, taking a walk, or talking with someone about the problem.
- Use the energy from strong emotions to get things done.

STRESS

- If you're overworked or short on time, politely let other people know.
- Don't feel pressured to engage in small talk when you don't have time.
- If you already have more work than you can handle, try to suggest solutions for getting the jobs done without overloading yourself.
- Know when you need to slow down. You may be able to do twice as much when you're rushed, but will the quality of your work suffer?

HARSH JUDGEMENTS

- Don't disregard a speaker because of appearance, position or job status.
- Be aware of your own biases and work to challenge and overcome them.
- Learn to respect people, even when they disagree with you.

CONFUSING LANGUAGE

- Don't use language that is too technical for your audience.
- Be careful with "insider" language that may exclude some people.
- Understand that impressive words don't automatically make you look smarter.
- If someone is using language you don't understand, ask them to clarify.

ANSWER SHEETS

REVIEW TEST - ANSWERS

Based on what you learned in the video *Communication Skills for the Workplace*, answer each question below.

1. The video mentions at least three reasons why communication skills are necessary for every type of job. In your own words, describe one of those reasons.
Answers will vary, but should reflect one of the following: 1—Clear communication makes a business run smoother, with fewer mistakes. 2—When communication is strong, everyone in the organization understand’s the goals and has a better chance of meeting them. 3—Good communication can identify potential problems and potential opportunities.
2. Employees without a lot of experience should spend most of their time:
b) listening to others.
3. Which of the following was not a tip for being a better listener?
c) avoid using slang
4. The video discusses several barriers to good communication. List two of those barriers.
Answers will vary, but should reflect two of the following: 1—emotion; 2—frustration or stress; 3—getting too personal; 4—prejudging the speaker; 5—technical language or language specific to a certain group; 6—bad timing
5. Imagine that you’re rushing to get a task done and your boss comes in to chat about something less important. What could you do to communicate your needs clearly and respectfully?
Answers will vary, but should resemble the following: Take a moment to listen carefully to your boss, then ask if you can postpone the rest of the conversation until your task is completed.
6. The video says that your writing at work is:
d) a permanent “snapshot” of your professional image

PROFESSIONAL FIX-UPS - ANSWERS

Although answers will vary, examples are given.

1. It's obvious that you messed up your power drill yourself by not taking care of it. That's why we cannot refund your money or give you a new drill.
(After inspecting the drill you returned, we have found strong evidence that it was given inadequate care. Therefore, we cannot grant your request for a refund or a replacement drill.)
2. I can't believe you're asking for another extension on your deadline. Have you lost your mind? We have to make money around here, you know.
(Perhaps you do not understand the pressure we are under to deliver our product on time. It is impossible for us to grant another extension on your deadline. If you feel uncomfortable with the work level, we have no choice but to select another writer for the job.)
3. Your last shipment of bananas was awful. Most of the bananas were totally black and had to go straight to the trash. We want a full refund and a new shipment of bananas for all of the trouble you caused us.
(The last shipment of bananas we received from your company was unacceptable. Thirty of the thirty-five bananas were overripe and inedible. We hope you will agree to a total refund of the cost, as well as a new shipment to compensate for our inconvenience.)
4. You guys are cool, so I'm sure you won't mind if we change your original meeting to 3 PM. It shouldn't take that long anyway since most of the eggheads on your staff are fast learners.
(Due to an error in scheduling, we would like to change your meeting time to 3PM. This change should allow adequate time for your staff to receive the information they need.)
5. We just got a letter from the big boss over at headquarters. Watch out for orders asking for 100 boxes of Ivory paper. They might be fake orders from a prankster trying to rip us off.
(Headquarters has advised us to be cautious of orders specifying 100 boxes of Ivory paper. The orders could be false and should be checked thoroughly before being submitted.)

CONFLICT COMEBACKS - ANSWERS

Although answers will vary, examples are given.

1. I know you already have more work than you can handle, but could you make copies of these reports for me? I need about 50 copies of each one. Thanks!
(I'm sorry. I'd love to help, but I can't take on any more responsibilities right now.)
2. I'm fed up with you guys in sales! You never know what's going on! What's the problem in this department anyway?!
(Maybe we could have a sales meeting to find out why people in the sales department aren't getting the information they need.)
3. The 516 was never designed to go with the G-73. Those models only have one input and no bi-code outputs. You *do* know what a bi-code output is, right? Someone with your job certainly *should* know.
(I'm not sure why this wasn't covered in my training, but it sounds pretty important. Could you spend a few minutes going over it with me? Or maybe I could read over a manual on the subject.)
4. Did you see that show last night about UFO hunters? What are you working on there? Do you watch a lot of science fiction? Science fiction movies are the best thing to watch after midnight. What kind of movies do you like?
(I'm pretty busy right now. I have a lot to do before lunch. Could we talk about it when we take our break this afternoon?)
5. Don't you hate it when she tries to act like she's our boss? Who does she think she is anyway? I mean really...do you hate her as much as I do?
(I don't really have an opinion. Did you see the work order that was posted this morning? What was your assignment?)

SPOTTING BARRIERS - ANSWERS

1. What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation? **(strong emotions, judging others unfairly, stress or work overload)**

What could Miko say to improve communication? **(Answers will vary, but should resemble the following: There are some things going on in shipping that I'd like to talk about, but right now is not a good time. Can we meet around 4:00 and talk it over?)**

2. What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation? **(bad timing, confusing language, stress or work overload)**

What could Dawn say to improve communication? **(Answers will vary, but should resemble the following: I'm not completely familiar with those terms yet, but I can see that you're very busy. Maybe we could do this later, or I could go over it with someone who has more time.)**

3. What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation? **(bad timing, strong emotions)**

What could Harrison say to improve communication? **(Answers will vary, but should resemble the following: I really need to get this order done before the truck arrives. And I don't like talking about the boss when he isn't around. It makes me uncomfortable.)**

4. What barriers are preventing good communication in this situation? **(confusing language, low attention span)**

What could Miko say to improve communication? **(Answers will vary, but should resemble the following: Could we stick with the real terms? I'm getting a little confused.)**

AD STRATEGY - ANSWERS

Although answers will vary, examples are given.

1. Which sentence in the ad is too wordy? Rewrite the sentence and omit information that is unnecessary or obvious.
Today there are a million jobs, in the want ads and online, that require a knowledge of technology—a knowledge that you can learn through hard work, study and experience—and you can get that knowledge with courses offered by Go-For-It Tech Classes, Inc.
There are many jobs that require a knowledge of technology, and you can get that knowledge with courses offered by Go-For-It Tech Classes, Inc.
2. Which sentence in the ad contains too much confusing technical language? Rewrite the sentence to express the same basic selling point, using language that is more familiar.
Our classes show you how to use multiple platforms, hypertext and program translators to increase format capabilities and make user interface more productive for you and your company.
Our classes show you how to use the latest technology to make computers more productive for you and your company.
3. Which sentence in the ad could be seen as condescending? Rewrite the sentence using more respectful language.
So you don't know a mouse from a monitor.
Even if you're completely unfamiliar with computers, you can learn the basics of computer technology.
4. Which sentence in the ad promises too much? Rewrite the sentence with language that is more realistic.
Go-For-It Tech Classes will help you find a better job, make more money, have more fun at work and get more out of life.
Go-For-It Tech Classes will help you learn the skills needed to find a better job, increase your money-making potential and get more enjoyment out of your workday.
5. What's wrong with the ad's headline? Rewrite the headline to make it more effective.
The title doesn't say much that is new or interesting about the company. It doesn't grab the reader's attention.
"Our Computer Classes Are the First Step Toward a New Future"

EMAIL EDITS

Although answers will vary, examples are given.

- 1. Dear Mr. Brown,
In response to your concerns about our product line, we have included several testimonials that support our high standards of safety and quality. Please let me know if you have further questions or comments.
Sincerely,
Dave Johnston, president**

- 2. Dear Susan,
My team has missed several deadlines and could use some help with stage construction. Can your company spare four or five members to help us with this challenge? We would be grateful for any assistance you could offer.
Thanks,
Kate**

- 3. Dear Ms. Powells,
I am certain that our employees would enjoy a company picnic. In addition, we would be glad to help with planning or other responsibilities. Please let us know what we can do.
Thank you,
Jane Curry**

- 4. Dear Tom,
Thank you for your interest in our Halloween costumes. We have many styles, all of which can be custom fitted for a wide variety of mens' sizes. Do you have a particular costume in mind?
Sincerely,
Harold Letterman
The Costume House**

ADDITIONAL READING

- Blicq, R.S., & Moretto, L.A. (1995). *Writing Reports to Get Results: Quick, Effective Results Using the Pyramid Method*. Piscataway, NJ: IEEE.
- Boiarsky, C.R., & Soven, M.K. (1995). *Writings from the Workplace: Documents, Models, Cases*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Forbes, M. (1992). *Writing Technical Articles, Speeches, and Manuals*. (2nd ed.). New York: Krieger.
- Partridge, E. (1995). *Usage and Abusage: A Guide to Good English*. New edition. Whitcut, J., ed. New York: Norton.
- Smith, T.C. (1991). *Making Successful Presentations: A Self-Teaching Guide*. (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Strunk, W., & White, E.B. (1995). *The Elements of Style*. (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Williams, J. (1996). *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. (5th ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Zimmerman, D.E., & Muraski, M.L. (1994). *The Elements of Information Gathering*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx.