

How to communicate

1. Listen to the audio and decide if the statements are True (T) or False (F).

1. Neil and Georgie are communicating face-to-face.
2. Neil prefers arranging things by phone.
3. Georgie doesn't like talking to her family on the phone.
4. Georgie prefers people to arrange phone calls in advance.
5. Neil thinks people use mobile phones mainly for talking.
6. Georgie finds texting less distracting than phone calls.
7. Neil likes using emojis and sending pictures.
8. Georgie often makes group calls.
9. Georgie writes letters to her friends regularly.
10. Neil thinks letters can be more meaningful than messages.
11. Georgie used social media for teaching content in her old job.
12. Neil enjoys commenting on public posts.

2. Fill in the missing words.

1. "I like to speak to my friends _____."
2. "I probably prefer to arrange things using _____."
3. "I don't like it when people call me without telling me they're going to call me _____."
4. "I usually just like to communicate with people via _____."
5. "I find it less _____."
6. "You can send _____. You can send pictures."
7. "You can _____ and pick up the conversation over many hours."
8. "When it's someone's birthday or a special occasion, I write _____."
9. "It takes more _____, doesn't it?"
10. "It's a difficult place to be, the _____."

3. Choose your answer:

- A. I love it ❤️ B. It's OK 😊 C. I avoid it 😬 D. It depends 🙋

How do you feel about:

- phone calls
- voice messages
- text messages
- emails
- video calls
- social media comments
- group chats
- face-to-face conversations
- handwritten letters

Explain your answer. Use useful language:

- *I prefer ... because ...*
- *I'm not a big fan of ...*
- *I find ... more convenient.*
- *For me, ... is the easiest way to ...*
- *It depends on ...*
- *I'd rather ... than ...*

4. The Communication Dilemma - Discuss these situations.

Situation 1: Your friend keeps calling you without warning. You are usually busy when they call.

👉 Would you ask them to text you first? How?

Situation 2: You need to tell someone something important, but you don't want to have a long conversation.

👉 Would you text, email, or call them?

Situation 3: It's your friend's 30th birthday.

👉 Would you send a WhatsApp message, a voice message, a card, or a handwritten letter?

Situation 4: You disagree strongly with someone's opinion on social media.

👉 Would you comment or stay silent?

Situation 5: Five friends want to organize a weekend together.

👉 What's the best way to communicate: group chat, email, phone call, or video call?

2 Work in pairs or small groups. Do you agree with these statements?

- 1 People shouldn't use social media in class or at the office.
- 2 Chatting with colleagues is a waste of time.
- 3 The most important communication in the workplace is formal communication.

3 Read the article quickly. Match the headings (a-d) with the correct section (1-3). There is one extra heading you do not need to use.

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a Give workers some privacy | c Keep meetings short |
| b Encourage small talk | d Stay connected – but be careful! |

Three tips for effective workplace communication

Good communication is very important for success and happiness in all areas of life – including the office. According to business expert Allan Webster, lack of communication and teamwork can make projects fail. Here are three tips from around the world for developing good communication at work.

1 _____

According to business blogger Tim Eisenhauer, if managers encourage more water-cooler chat (informal office conversation), their employees will become happier, more productive and more interested in their work. Scott Bedbury, who worked as Nike's head of advertising, agrees. He said that the really useful conversations between colleagues generally took place at the vending machine, in the cafeteria or in the gardens outside the office. Bedbury says that a company's internal communication needs to be both formal and informal to help build the relationships necessary for success.

2 _____

Juriaan van Meel, author of *The European Office*, says that almost every office worker in both Sweden and Germany has a private office. Though open-plan offices are intended to improve communication, research shows that the background noise often makes it difficult for workers to concentrate – and to communicate. Sound expert Julian Treasure says that it's impossible to understand two people when both of them are speaking. Office design expert Alexi Marmot believes that if companies provided a choice, productivity and happiness would increase. She says that people need both private space for concentrating and public space for open communication.

3 _____

According to the *South China Morning Post*, the WeChat social media app, with 889 million monthly active users in China, is quickly replacing phone calls, emails and even business cards for professional communication in China. Though the app wasn't designed as a business communication tool, every day, 87.7 percent of its users use it for work communication, while phone, fax and text message are used by only 59.5 percent, and email by only 22.6 percent. Many Chinese businesspeople now connect on WeChat instead of giving each other business cards. However, the convenience of the app may have a downside. Some users say that messages come in 24/7, and it's rude not to reply, so they feel they're always at work – a case of too much communication.

4 Read the article again and answer the questions.

- 1 According to Allan Webster, what happens without good communication?
- 2 What increases workers' productivity and happiness at work?
- 3 What effect does the combination of formal and informal communication have?
- 4 According to the text, what's the biggest problem with open-plan offices?
- 5 What does Alexi Marmot recommend?
- 6 What form of business communication is the least used, according to the *South China Morning Post*?
- 7 What's the biggest problem with using social media for business purposes?

5 Work in pairs. Of the three tips in the article, which one do you think is the most useful for improving workplace communication?

6 Read sentences 1 and 2 from the article. Then answer questions a–c about each one.

- 1 *If managers encourage more water-cooler chat, their employees will become happier, more productive and more engaged with their work.*
 - a What tense is used in the *if*-clause?
 - b What time is the result clause referring to: future or present?
 - c Is the situation described in the sentence likely or unlikely?
- 2 *If companies provided a choice, productivity and happiness would increase.*
 - a What tense is used in the *if*-clause?
 - b Is the sentence referring to the past?
 - c Is the situation described in the sentence definitely going to happen, or is it less probable?

7 Complete the conditional sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1 If you use social media for work, you _____ (be) connected 24/7.
- 2 We _____ (not have) space for private offices if we move to a smaller location.
- 3 If we give workers more breaks, they _____ (spend) more time chatting.
- 4 We _____ (have) better coffee breaks if we had a nice break room.
- 5 You would know your colleagues better if you _____ (talk) to them more.
- 6 If the management stopped workers using social media, people _____ (be) unhappy.
- 7 If we had our meetings in a café, they _____ (feel) less formal.
- 8 If you _____ (turn) off your phone at six o'clock every night, your kids would be happier!

The two parts of a conditional sentence often have their own stress and intonation patterns.

For example:

If you're ready, / we can go.

We can go / if you're ready.

1 P8.01 Work in pairs. Listen and mark the main stress in each part of each sentence.

- 1 If we give workers private offices, they'll be less distracted.
- 2 I'd stop to chat more often if I wasn't so busy.
- 3 If we encourage our employees to chat with each other, they'll get to know each other better.
- 4 I'd stop using social media at work if I were you.

1 Underline the main stressed word in each part of these sentences.

- 1 If we held our meetings in a café, they'd feel less formal.
- 2 If she kept her office door open, she'd be easier to talk to.
- 3 If I wasn't so busy all the time, I'd get more work done!
- 4 They'd probably get more work done if they didn't chat so much.
- 5 If I were CEO, I'd give everyone a private office.
- 6 You'd know your colleagues better if you talked to them more.
- 7 Employees would be more productive if they had private offices to work in.
- 8 If you turned off your phone at six o'clock every night, your kids would be happier!

2 P8.01 Listen and check, then listen again and practise the sentences.

1 Rewrite the underlined words using contractions.

- 1 I will not *won't* be at work tomorrow, so I cannot _____ help you.
- 2 I could not _____ understand the instructions and I did not _____ know what to do.
- 3 The office furniture does not _____ look very attractive but it will _____ be OK for another year
- 4 It seems that the problem has _____ been solved.
- 5 The order had not _____ been checked.
- 6 The company has _____ been taken over.
- 7 You must not _____ forget to update the stock records.
- 8 I would _____ like to make some recommendations, if you have _____ got time to meet.

2 P8.02 Listen and check, then listen again and practise the sentences with contractions.

3 P8.03 Listen and complete the conversation.

- 1 A: _____ been any problems, have there?
B: Well, _____ been a few, actually.
- 2 A: Why _____ you just follow the instructions?
B: _____ told you, I _____ understand them.
- 3 A: _____ heard that the company _____ taken over.
B: The company _____ been taken over!
- 4 A: I hope the report _____ ready tomorrow.
B: Don't worry, _____ be.

1 Complete the conversation using the missing phrases.

- a if the staff don't see the benefits
- b if we all keep documents there
- c it won't work
- d if there are fewer walls
- e people will communicate better

A: I hear your offices are being redesigned. How do you feel about it?

B: I'm not sure. The management think it will improve communication.

A: Really? What's their thinking?

B: If there are soft areas for chatting, ¹ _____.

A: Oh, I see. What about the open plan offices?

B: They think that ² _____, people will talk more.

A: And are there any other changes?

B: Yes. There is a new platform for sharing information internally. Everything will be much more efficient ³ _____. I think it's a good idea. But ⁴ _____ if certain people refuse to use it.

A: And do you think that will happen?

B: Well ... it's like all changes – ⁵ _____, they won't use it. If they do, ...

2 Match 1–6 with a–f to complete the sentences.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 If we didn't have so many deadlines, | a I think we'd get more business. |
| 2 Would the team understand more | b everything would take much more time. |
| 3 If we used social media more, | c they would get the information immediately. |
| 4 You would make a lot of contacts | d if the project leader explained things more clearly? |
| 5 If you sent it by email with a link, | e if you went to some conferences. |
| 6 If the technology didn't exist, | f I wouldn't be so stressed. |

3 Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

didn't doesn't don't might will won't wouldn't

- 1 I _____ call a couple of customers if I have time this afternoon.
- 2 If I were you, I _____ spend so much time catching up on emails.
- 3 If she _____ spend so much time on the phone, she could finish earlier.
- 4 If we don't finish this report on time, I _____ go to the meeting.
- 5 I think we _____ be more efficient if we worked from home one day per week.
- 6 He won't meet our Dutch customers if he _____ attend the webinar.
- 7 If I _____ see you this afternoon, I'll definitely see you tomorrow.

1 First if we / not be / satisfied, we / complain / social media	2 Second they / not care / if you / ignore / their calls	3 First if you / want / more money, they / give / you extra work	4 Second if she / organise / her emails, she / not be / overloaded
5 Second you / not have to / worry / if you / protect / your passwords	6 First we / work / harder / if you / give / us nicer offices	7 Second he / fix / your phone / if you / ask / him nicely	8 First if you / listen / carefully, you / understand / how they feel
9 First they / not like / it / if you / charge / money for wifi	10 Second you / have / more free time / if you / stay / off social media	11 First she / lose / the document / if she / not save / it	12 Second I / start / my own blog / if I / have / the time
13 Second we / feel / happier / if they / encourage / us	14 First if you / not speak / clearly, no one / understand / you	15 Second if everyone / help, we / finish / the project on time	16 First they / enjoy / social media more / if they / not rely / on it so much
17 First I / open / an account if they / give / me a discount	18 Second we / not succeed / if we / not have / this technology	19 First if he / send / another text, I / just / delete / it	20 Second if they / speak / clearly, there / not be / problems

1 8.01 Listen to the podcast and put the topics in the order they are mentioned.

- a communication skills needed by a good manager ____
- b choosing the right language to use ____
- c coming to a conclusion through discussion ____
- d deciding whether to email or phone ____
- e being quiet if you don't know the answer ____

2 Listen again and choose the correct option.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Andreas Hammer believes certain people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a speak without thinking.b don't like meetings.c never know the answer. <p>2 He thinks that in meetings people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a talk too much.b need to share ideas more.c discuss ideas too much. <p>3 According to Andreas the workplace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a is like college.b is usually casual.c is more formal than university. | <p>4 What does Andreas say people need to learn to do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a write emailsb make phone callsc choose the right way to communicate <p>5 Managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a usually communicate well.b need to be better communicators than others.c are not always good communicators. <p>6 Managers have to communicate to their team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a in writing.b as a group.c on a personal basis. |
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3 Complete the notes in the table.

Skills to develop	How to communicate	Good managers
Learn how to say ¹ _____ at first and think about the question.	Decide the best ³ _____ of communicating: face to face, email, etc.	They have to communicate to the staff ⁵ _____ made by the directors.
Learn how to share ideas to ² _____ a decision together.	In writing your view is fixed but by phone you can ⁴ _____ it during the conversation.	They need to communicate with each ⁶ _____ personally.

Communication problems

- 1 Workers don't know each other very well. There isn't a strong sense of teamwork.
- 2 The open-plan office is too noisy to make phone calls easily.
- 3 We don't have a place where workers naturally meet for informal chats.
- 4 Employees complain that even when they're at home, they feel they're at work because of the constant texts and emails on their smartphones.

8A Work in pairs. Match each communication problem (1–4) with two possible solutions (a–h).

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Possible solutions

- a Take the entire team (75 people) on an adventure holiday.
- b Move to a building that's three times bigger and give every employee a private office.
- c Encourage more informal communication.
- d Provide a few small, private rooms for employees to use when needed.
- e Buy every employee a smartphone for work that they can turn off when they go home.
- f Create a small break area near the water cooler with a couple of sofas and comfortable chairs.
- g Encourage employees not to respond to work texts and emails outside of office hours.
- h Buy the café next to the office building and turn it into a private break room.

B Discuss the problems and possible solutions. Use the first conditional for more likely solutions and the second conditional for less likely solutions.

If we wanted to develop a sense of teamwork, we could take the entire team on an adventure holiday.

If we encourage informal communication, workers will get to know each other better.

C For each problem, think of one additional solution. Explain it using the first or second conditional.

1) Explain the meaning of the idioms:

1-I'm looking for a job. Please **drop me a line** if you hear of any good opportunities!

2-I need to **get hold of** Tina to tell her that tomorrow's class is canceled.

3-**Keep me posted on** your plans for this weekend – maybe we can meet up.

4-I **heard through the grapevine** that Dan and his wife split up. Is it true?

5-Stop **beating around the bush** and just tell me what happened to the camera I lent you.

6-I like having meetings with Nate because they're so short – he always **gets right to the point**.

7-The two politicians were **talking at cross purposes** during the debate – one argued strongly for immigration control, whereas the other was entirely focused on the educational system.

7-Sorry, we must've **gotten our wires crossed**. I wanted you to come at 7 PM, not 7 AM.

9-I haven't actually talked to my sister yet – we've been **playing phone tag** all day.

10-At parties, I always end up saying something stupid and **putting my foot in my mouth**.