



U1Ch3. Exploring the communication process

PAPER 01 — Communicative Skills

Unit 1 · Fundamentals of Communication

Chapter 3 · Exploring the Communication Process

(Sender, Message, Channel, Receiver, Feedback, and Noise)

1 Seeing the Whole Picture

Imagine communication as a **circular conveyor belt**: an idea travels from one mind to another, is examined, and then loops back with a response. The belt has **six key stations**—sender, message, channel, receiver, feedback, and noise. If any station stalls or malfunctions, the cargo (meaning) wobbles, spills, or vanishes. Mastery lies in keeping every station well-tuned.

2 The Six Core Elements in Detail

Element	What It Is	Key Questions to Ask	Common Pitfalls	Quick Fixes
1. Sender (Source)	The originator of the idea, feeling, or information	<i>Do I understand my goal and my audience?</i>	Unclear purpose, weak credibility	Clarify objective, research audience, build trust
2. Message	The content: data, emotions, requests, or stories encoded into symbols	<i>Is my content accurate, relevant, and well-structured?</i>	Information overload, ambiguity, emotional leakage	Outline main points, use plain language, control tone
3. Channel (Medium)	The pathway that carries the message (face-to-face, email, video, memo, etc.)	<i>Which medium suits urgency, complexity, and audience preference?</i>	Wrong medium (e.g., firing by text), tech glitches	Match richness to complexity, test tech beforehand
4. Receiver	The target who decodes and interprets the message	<i>What is the receiver's context, knowledge level, and mindset?</i>	Misinterpretation, distractions, bias	Use audience analysis, invite clarifying questions
5. Feedback	The receiver's response—verbal, non-verbal, or written—that shows understanding or need for revision	<i>How will I elicit and interpret feedback?</i>	Ignoring cues, defensive reactions	Ask open-ended prompts, paraphrase, adjust message
6. Noise	Any interference that distorts or blocks meaning (physical, physiological, psychological, semantic, cultural)	<i>What types of noise might appear, and how can I reduce them?</i>	Overlooking hidden noise (e.g., jargon)	Anticipate obstacles, provide redundancy, simplify

2.1 Sender: Crafting Credibility

- **Ownership of Idea** – Speak about what you know; cite experience or evidence.
- **Emotional State** – Calm > clarity; anger or anxiety bleeds into tone.
- **Encoding Skills** – Choose symbols (words, images, gestures) your audience actually understands.

Mini-check: Before you hit “Send,” can you summarise your goal in one sentence? If not, re-frame.



2.2 Message: Shaping the Cargo

Structure Template (ACE):

1. **Aim** – Thesis or request in one line.
2. **Content** – Supporting facts, reasons, or feelings.
3. **End** – Clear action step or conclusion.

Example

Aim: “Team, the client demo has moved up by two days.”

Content: “We must finalise slides and rehearse twice.”

End: “Please send updated sections by 5 p.m. today.”

2.3 Channel: Choosing the Highway

Richness Level	Typical Media	Best For	Watch-Outs
High (face cues, immediacy)	Face-to-face, video call	Sensitive topics, negotiations, brainstorming	Requires scheduling, may cause stage fright
Medium	Phone, voice note	Quick clarifications, emotional support	Lacks visuals; tone can mislead
Low (lean)	Email, text, memo	Detailed records, non-urgent info, large audiences	Slow feedback, easily misread tone

Rule of thumb: **Complex emotion = richer channel**. Routine data = leaner channel.

2.4 Receiver: Decoding with Filters

- **Prior Knowledge** – Novices need explanations; experts expect conciseness.
- **Mindset & Bias** – Confirmation bias may twist new facts; address it.
- **Physical State** – Fatigue lowers attention; schedule accordingly.

Encourage receivers to **summarise back** (“So you need...”)—misunderstandings surface fast.

2.5 Feedback: Closing the Loop

Types of Feedback

1. **Immediate** – Nods, “Hmm,” facial expressions in live talk.
2. **Delayed** – Email reply, sales numbers, survey scores.
3. **Formal** – Performance review, customer report.
4. **Informal** – Casual comments, emojis, hallway chat.

Golden Rule: Treat feedback as data, not a personal attack. Adjust content or approach, then test again.

2.6 Noise: The Ever-Present Distorter



Noise Category	Example	Reduction Tactic
Physical	Jackhammer outside window	Move location, use mic, close windows
Physiological	Headache, hunger, hearing loss	Provide breaks, visual aids, written summary
Psychological	Stress, anger, prejudice	Set empathic tone, acknowledge feelings
Semantic	Technical jargon, acronyms	Define terms, use analogies
Cultural	Idioms, power-distance expectations	Use neutral language, research customs

Noise rarely vanishes; aim to **out-signal** it—repeat key ideas in multiple forms.

3 Putting It Together — A Step-by-Step Scenario

Scenario: Online medical webinar

1. **Sender:** Dr Meera (expert).
2. **Message:** “Explain new tele-ICU protocol.”
3. **Channel:** Live video with slide deck.
4. **Receiver:** 150 nurses across India.
5. **Noise:** Patchy rural internet, medical jargon, after-shift fatigue.
6. **Feedback:** Chat questions, post-webinar quiz.

How She Optimises:

- Sends slides in advance (redundancy).
- Uses simple metaphors; limits session to 30 min (cognitive load).
- Inserts polls every 7 min (active feedback).
- Records session; provides YouTube link (overcomes physical noise).

Outcome: 92 % quiz pass rate; protocol adopted hospital-wide.

4 Practical Toolkit: Enhancing Each Element

Element

One High-Impact Practice

Sender Open with credibility: share a brief relevant success or qualification.

Message Distil into a headline first, then flesh out details.

Channel When in doubt, *stack* channels: talk + email summary

Receiver Start with “What do you need from this?”—tailor on the spot.

Feedback End every interaction with “Next steps I heard: ... Did I miss anything?”

Noise Use the “Rule of Two”: state vital data twice, in two formats (spoken + written).

5 Self-Practice Corner

1. **Process Mapping:** Choose a recent miscommunication. Draw the six-element chain. Mark where the breakdown occurred and rewrite that section.
2. **Channel Swap:** Take a 100-word email and convert it into a 60-second voicemail script. Note how tone and details change.
3. **Noise Simulation:** Pair up. Speaker A explains a recipe while Speaker B plays soft background music (physical noise). Switch roles and discuss coping tactics.
4. **Feedback Fast-Pitch:** Deliver a 45-second explanation of your hobby. Listener must paraphrase it in 15 seconds. Compare for accuracy.



Chapter Takeaways

- Communication is a **living loop**; each element depends on the others for meaning to arrive intact.
- **Sender and receiver** form the human core; empathy and clarity keep them aligned.
- **Message and channel** are the vehicles; design them to fit terrain and cargo.
- **Feedback** is the GPS; it tells you whether you are on course or lost.
- **Noise** is inevitable—plan for it, cushion against it, and keep your signal stronger than the static.

Master the mechanics now, and you will navigate more advanced skills—persuasive speaking, intercultural negotiation, crisis messaging—with confidence and precision.

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