

# **APPENDIX I**

## **Interviewing Materials**

Students learn best when they have a clear idea of what is expected of them, and when they receive detailed and continuous feedback. Appendix 1 offers assignment descriptions that can be used to communicate your expectations to students.

This appendix covers two types of assignments—major assignments and adaptable assignments—as well as samples of student work. Major assignments are those that require a substantial amount of outside-of-class time for students to complete. These assignments are generally long-term and are weighted heavily in the course grade. Look at them carefully before you include them on your syllabus, and estimate the amount of time you'd like students to spend on them.

In contrast, adaptable assignments can be used with the content from any chapter (e.g., Memo to Your Instructor, Student Performance Appraisal, Acronym Speech, Public Service Announcement, and Research Report).

Examples from the student sample section can be shown to students who would like to see examples of what the finished product is supposed to look like. It may also be useful for first-time instructors who are not sure what to expect from students.

These assignments may be altered to fit your own teaching style and course syllabus. To help you generate ideas, some assignments are presented in a variety of possible formats. You may also choose to condense some of the assignments found here and use them as short in-class assignments. Similarly, you could transform some of the class activities described for each chapter in Section 3 of this manual into longer, major assignments.

Regardless of whether the assignments you use are more or less extensive than these models, explicit guidance is a crucial element of the learning process. On or before the day you explain the assignment in class, provide a complete description of the assignment that includes the learning objective, advice on how students can prepare for the assignment (e.g., pages to read or materials to gather), a description of the product you seek, and your criteria for evaluation. It is also helpful to provide samples of previous student work.

Appendix I concludes with a sample Informational Interview and a sample Employment Interview.

## **Major Assignments:**

Improving Interpersonal Communication Proposal  
Organizational Communication Proposal  
Career Research Interview  
In-Class Mock Interviews  
Cover Letter and Resume Assignment  
Group Problem-Solving Project  
Group Decision-Making Project (Version A)  
Group Decision-Making Project (Version B)  
Individual Proposal: Improving Group Communication  
Professional Speaker Observation (Version A)  
Professional Speaker Observation (Version B)  
Informative Speech with PowerPoint  
Persuasive Speech

# Improving Interpersonal Communication

**Objective of the Assignment:** Your underlying task is to demonstrate that you understand communication concepts taught in this course. To do this, you'll need to define and explain appropriate communication terminology. This assignment offers you an opportunity to:

- apply your understanding of communication theory toward improving your communication competence
- practice writing a professional proposal (proposal writing is a typical workplace form of communication)

**Brief Assignment Description:** You'll submit a word-processed individual proposal in which you (a) analyze your use of a communication concept of your own choosing and (b) propose one or two concepts from the text you can apply to improve this aspect of your communication. Both the problem and solution must involve communication concepts taught in this class.

## **Preparation:**

1. Think of one specific unwanted communication habit you are currently using but would like to improve upon. Please note: it is only your own ways of interacting that you can change; do not expect or attempt to change **another person's** communication habits. **Examples:**
  - improve your communication in a team project (such as the one you've just completed)
  - monitor your own nonverbal messages during interviews
  - listen more attentively in your classes
  - interact more productively with an uncooperative co-worker
  - negotiate rather than act combatively during conflicts
  - deliver less ambiguous instructions to co-workers
  - respond more constructively when you receive critiques from your instructors
  - organize your oral presentations more clearly (peek ahead to Chapter 9)
  - manage your anxiety about public speaking (Chapter 11)
  - work more effectively with a classmate from another culture (Chapter 2)
2. Now, identify one or two of the specific communication concepts we've studied in this course that might help you improve your communication competency. It will be easier to write your proposal if you chose a narrowly focused concept (e.g., use of the communication model; listening; nonbiased language; unequivocal messages; upward, downward or horizontal communication; formal or informal networks; organizational culture; clarity of messages; nonverbal expression; etc.).
3. Review the course material regarding your chosen concept. Mark the pages where you found this material; you'll need to cite specific pages from the text in your proposal.

**Audience Analysis:** The purpose of a proposal is to persuade your reader (in this case, your instructor) that your proposal will bring about positive, lasting results. Consider the following as you adapt your proposal to your reader's interests.

Your proposal makes a statement about who you are, so be sure it reflects the best you can be. Aim for ZERO errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If your proposal is sloppily written, your reader is likely to assume you are a careless person and will not be likely to value your recommendations. If your proposal is flawless, you will be credible. Your reader will be much more likely to accept your ideas. To "sell" your proposal, you'll need to supply convincing evidence that

- your plan is feasible, is cost effective, can actually be implemented, and will produce results (citations from your text are an effective form of evidence).

- you have a strong grasp of communication knowledge (i.e., evidence that you know what you're talking about). You can do this by including vocabulary and principles you've learned in class and by describing specific examples of how you can apply these principles.
- You can communicate effectively via written language. Grammar, spelling, neatness, and format will add to or detract from your credibility (see Adler & Maresh-Fuehrer, Appendix II, Business Writing, Writing Well).

**Content and Format for this Proposal:** Your proposal should be arranged under several headings, as follows. Use a heading for each section except the title page.

**Title Page:** On the title page, center the following information. Each item should be on a separate line, single-spaced: title of the report; (skip two lines); Submitted by [your name]; college name; class and section; date submitted.

**Overview:** Start the overview on a new page. This section serves as a preview of the contents of your report. This section should only consist of about six to ten sentences.

Your goal in the overview is to convince the reader that your proposal is worth reading. One effective approach is to briefly summarize the problem, then briefly state how your proposal will solve that problem. End with a strong constructive statement about the value your recommendations will bring to the organization, team, class, friendship, or family. In the overview, be very brief and get right to the point. Reserve the details about your proposal for later. Use powerful language (recall Chapter 4), but be very sincere... don't oversimplify or exaggerate your claims. It wouldn't be realistic to expect to evolve to instant, perfect communication overnight. Communication habits take a LONG time to change.

**Description of Problem:** Convince your reader that a communication weakness exists that needs to be managed. Be specific. Integrate terminology from the text as you identify what is wrong. Include page references from the text. Provide one or two specific examples of the weakness. It might be helpful to include quotations of words you've said that were problematic and a description of the ways others have reacted to your communication. Consider how these drawbacks impact the organization, team, friendship, or family as a whole.

**Resources and Constraints:** This section will be probably be shorter than the problem description and recommendations sections. Take stock of the current situation. What resources can you identify that could help you improve your communication? The text is one example. Excellent role models might be another resource. How can you use these resources to help you improve your communication? Describe any constraints that are likely to impede your progress in improving your communication habits. For example, if you are working three jobs and taking a full-time class load, your ability to put time and effort into this project is likely to be curtailed. (If this were the case, you might realize that improving your communication habits can bring lifelong benefits, so you might suggest in your recommendations that you will drop one job or not take as many classes at a time, to enable you to work on your life skills.)

**Recommendations:** This is the most crucial section of your proposal. This will probably be the longest section of your entire document. Propose how you plan to improve the communication weakness. Describe exactly what you plan to accomplish. Detail the specific steps you will take to achieve your objectives. Be realistic. Be specific. If you quoted examples of detrimental language in your problem description, it would be helpful to include here some examples of effective phrases you could substitute. Explain why your plan is desirable for the organization,

team, relationship, and for you. Show why it is feasible. Your recommendations should demonstrate that you are personally "engaging" with the concepts learned in this class. You don't need to quote directly from the text, but include page references so the reader can look up the concepts easily.

**Summary:** Summarize the problem and the recommendations. Explain how these recommendations, if adopted, would improve communication. Be as specific as possible. End with a strong, constructive message about the importance of this proposal. Add a gracious closing statement (e.g., you are looking forward to implementing the plan, you are expecting constructive results, etc.).

**Works Cited:** You are required to integrate several references from your communication text. Identify your sources in two places.

-Use parenthetical cites within the body of your paper when you refer to information from your readings. Here's an example: (Adler & Maresh-Fuehrer, p. 23).

- At the end of your report, include a section titled Works Cited. Here you will list your sources in alphabetical order, according to authors' last names. For example:

Adler, R & M. Maresh-Fuehrer (2019). Communicating at Work (12e). Boston: McGraw-Hill Education.

### **Grading Criteria for this Proposal**

To receive an "A," your paper must:

1. follow a proposal format (following instructions is an essential element of communication)
2. demonstrate your understanding of the communication concepts you have chosen
3. show that you have learned to apply communication concepts
4. explain insights you've gained about interpersonal communication
5. present a plan that is feasible (could be realistically implemented)
6. include references
7. use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
8. exhibit a professional appearance

# Organizational Communication Proposal

## Objective

For this assignment, you'll assume the role of organizational consultant. You will submit to me a proposal for improving communication processes in a bona fide organization. Your underlying task is to demonstrate to me that you understand the concepts of communication taught in Chapters 1-5. To accomplish this, you'll need to define and explain appropriate communication terminology in your proposal. This assignment offers you an opportunity to:

- (a) apply your understanding of communication theory in solving an organizational problem.
- (b) practice writing a professional proposal.

## Preparation

1. Think of one specific communication problem you have experienced in an organizational context. Please focus on ONE specific problem (e.g., an uncooperative coworker, a supervisor who does not listen well, a conflict among workers of different ethnic backgrounds, receiving ambiguous instructions, information overload, a defensive climate). Don't attempt to solve all of your organization's problems at once!
2. Identify one of the **communication concepts** we've studied in this course that might help explain or solve that problem (e.g., use of the communication model, listening; verbal or nonverbal messages; ambiguity, upward, downward or horizontal communication; formal or informal networks; organizational culture; communicating across diversity.). Note that both the problem and the solution must involve communication concepts. Thus, a proposal to award bonuses or send employees to a marketing class would not be appropriate for this assignment.
3. Review all portions of your text and class notes related to the communication concept you've chosen. You must cite references in your proposal.
4. Write a four- to five-page proposal in which you recommend a plan for remedying this single communication problem. Your proposal should be very specific and concrete. Proposing that all employees should take a class in communication is *not* specific. Instead, you could detail the step-by-step contents of a one-hour training session. Stating that your supervisor should use more supportive communication is neither specific nor realistic. (Can we really change other people by talking about them behind their back?) Instead you could develop a word-by-word role play of how you would explain to your supervisor (or the supervisor's manager) that you would like more specific feedback about your performance.
5. Proposals must be typed, and the pages must be stapled together. Do **not** use paper clips, folders, or cover pages.

## Writing the Proposal

### **Purpose**

The purpose of a proposal is to persuade your reader (in this case, me) to accept your plan (i.e., to hire you for the consultant job). You may assume that I am the person in your organization who is vested with the authority to decide whether to adopt your plan. To persuade me to adopt your idea, you'll need to supply convincing evidence that your plan is feasible and cost-effective, can actually be implemented, and will produce results. You'll also need to supply evidence of your competence in organizational

communication (i.e., using vocabulary and principles you've learned in class). Grammar, spelling, and neatness will also add to or detract from your credibility (see the Appendix of your text).

### **Content**

Your proposal should be arranged under several headings (e.g., description of problem, description of solution, summary). You should include the following sections in your proposal:

Introduction (Traditionally, the heading label for this first section is omitted.)  
Provide a brief overview of what you are proposing (two or three sentences).

#### Description of Problem

Convince your reader that a communication problem exists. (Be specific. Use terminology from the book to explain what is wrong. Include your references.)

#### Description of the Proposed Solution

Explain exactly what you plan to accomplish. Outline the steps you will take to achieve your objectives. Explain why your plan is desirable and feasible. Your solution must integrate communication concepts from this course. Include references, indicating the text pages you are drawing from.

#### Summary

Summarize the most important reasons why I should adopt your proposal (one or two sentences). End with a closing statement (e.g., you are looking forward to implementing the plan, you are sure this will bring about constructive results, etc.).

#### Works Cited

You must have at least one credible reference (permissible references are your communication text or one of my lectures). Identify your sources in two places:

1. Use parenthetical cites (Adler & Maresh-Fuehrer, 2019, p. xx) within the body of your paper when you refer to information from your readings or from lecture.
2. Include a complete bibliography at the end of your paper. For instructions on formatting your references, visit <http://www.stylewizad.com/apa/apawiz.html>. Alphabetize items by authors' last names. Format with "hanging" indentation.

#### ***Sample Reference***

Adler, R., & Maresh-Fuehrer, M. (2019). *Communicating at work* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

### **Criteria for Grading**

To receive an "A," your paper must:

- follow a proposal format (following instructions is an essential element of communication).
- demonstrate your understanding of the communication concept you have chosen.
- present a plan that is feasible (could be realistically implemented).
- include references.
- be written in clear, grammatically correct sentences, with meticulous spelling and punctuation.
- exhibit a professional appearance.

# Career Research Interview

## **Objective:**

This assignment is designed to help you obtain career information and to enhance your competence in interviewing.

## **Assignment Description:**

You will conduct a 15- to 20-minute information-gathering interview (see Chapter 6) of a professional in your field of career interest. You will be the **interviewer**.

CAUTION: You should **not** use this interview to seek employment or a promotion. You are simply seeking knowledge about a career you might be interested in,

## **Materials to submit:**

The written portion of the assignment consists of **four documents**, described below.

1. An **outline** to use as your script during the interview (for an example, refer to pages xx-xx of your text): Explain your interview strategy, and include your plan for the body, opening, and closing of your interview. In the body of your interview, arrange your questions under two or three topics that you wish to ask about. Compose several primary questions for each topic. Also, prepare some follow-up questions for each primary question in case the interviewee doesn't give you as much information as you'd like. Label each question as open or closed. Most of your questions should be open-ended.

The Preliminary Checklist (see next page) will help you plan your interview and contact your interviewee.

2. A **memo** summarizing what you learned. Include a heading for each of the topics you investigated. Under each heading, write a brief paragraph summarizing what you learned about that topic. Add a final heading under which you describe what you learned about the interviewing process. This critique is an important part of the assignment. Clarify your learning process in depth, explaining what you could do to improve your performance on your next interview.

3. A copy of your **thank-you letter**. Write and mail a thank-you letter to the person you interviewed. Submit a copy of that letter with this assignment. Use a formal, block-style letter format. Successful professionals write and send letters of gratitude promptly. The letter should be sincere and to-the-point. It is best to focus on **one or two specific items** that were meaningful to you. Develop them briefly, but in a personal way. End with an original expression of thanks (e.g., mention how you have been helped or recognize the generosity of the interviewee). Don't overstate your thanks; it will seem insincere.

4. **Evaluation form**. At the time of the interview, give a copy of the evaluation form to your interviewee. Ask him or her to complete it while you wait or to return it to you within the next day or two, so you can submit it to me with your assignment.



# Career Research Interview

## STUDENT PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTIONS:

### BEFORE MAKING CONTACT WITH THE PROSPECTIVE INTERVIEWEE:

- \_\_\_ Begin by reading Chapter 6 and [instructors fill in: outlining the chapters, completing the homework, taking a test, etc.].
- \_\_\_ Keep a log of all activities connected with this assignment, and all correspondence, phone calls, personal contacts, etc.
- \_\_\_ Identify by name, position, and title an appropriate interviewee. Include name, title, organization, address, and phone number.
- \_\_\_ Explain how you found out about your subject, and describe the research findings you gathered about your subject and her or his organization and field before making contact with the subject.
- \_\_\_ Make a preliminary plan for the interview by describing your general and specific purposes.
- \_\_\_ Plan how to contact the person to request an interview. In your log, indicate the **channel** you plan to use (phone, correspondence, etc.) to make contact, and include a copy of intended written correspondence. (See the text for a sample.)
- \_\_\_ Include an entry to **justify** your choice of channels.
- \_\_\_ Include an entry describing your career goals and how they led you to this choice for an interviewee.
- \_\_\_ Turn in everything for a check with your instructor at this point.

**IF THIS PRELIMINARY CHECK IS DONE WELL BEFORE \_\_\_\_\_ IT IS WORTH \_\_\_\_\_ POINTS TOWARD FINAL PROJECT GRADE.**

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ on time \_\_\_\_\_ late

Total points \_\_\_\_\_

## **In-Class Mock Interviews\***

Each student will participate in class interviews, once as the interviewer, once as the interviewee, and once as observer. The instructor will assign the interview situations (see Interview Types on the next page of this manual), partners for the assignment, and the dates on which the interviews will take place. Use the information below to develop these assignments. On the date following the interview have each student hand in a sheet describing:

- a. Your preparation for the interview, including:
  - specific objective(s)
  - pre-interview analysis of the other participant
  - topics to cover during the interview
- b. A description of the content areas in the interview (interviewer only):
  - information covered in the opening, body, and closing of the interview (orientation, motivation, etc.)
  - questions, labeled by type (primary or secondary; open or closed)
- c. A description of the outcome of the interview:
  - assessment of the participants' (both interviewer's and interviewee's) competency during the interview process
  - the likely results of the interview, if it were a real-life interview
  - recommendations for improvements (for both interviewer and interviewee)

### **Types of Interviews that could be used with this assignment:**

#### **Information-Gathering Interview:**

1. This is one of a series of preliminary interviews you are conducting to learn about services students would like the college to provide.
2. Find out about the interviewee's favorite hobby.
3. Discover your interviewee's top three challenges to successfully completing a college degree. Probe the nature of the challenges, find out ways the student is attempting to cope with them, and inquire what resources the student might find helpful.
4. Explore with the interviewee the reasons for problems in a specific class: low enrollments, high dropout rate, and low test scores.
5. Explore with a department manager how to control the rapid growth in the use of the copy machine.

#### **Career-Research Interview:**

1. Discover what knowledge or experience your interview partner has that is useful to your job.
2. Use this interview to elicit your partner's ideas for how you could locate an interviewee who would be knowledgeable about a career field you'd like to explore. Next, ask your interviewee to help you think of topics you'd like to explore and effective interview questions you could ask to learn more about the career field. Finally, request your interviewee's help in designing the opening and closing of your upcoming interview.

#### **Employment Interview:**

Each interviewee should suggest a position they are currently qualified to apply for. They should answer using real, not imaginary, experiences and qualifications. If a student can't think of a job they might be qualified for, they could interview for a volunteer position such as a grade-school tutor, server for a homeless shelter food line, picking up litter along a hiking trail, etc.

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\* Based on an assignment suggested by Cynthia Knox, Texas Southern University.

# Cover Letter and Resume Assignment

**Purpose:** This assignment is designed to improve the written skills you'll need in applying for employment.

**Materials to Submit:** This assignment consists of two documents:

## **1. Cover Letter:**

Identify an existing job related to your field of interest. This must be a job that you would be **currently** qualified for. Write (but do not send) a hypothetical cover letter requesting an interview for this specific position.

A cover letter molds your prospective employer's first impression of you. To be sure you are establishing an impression of professional competence, you'll need to proofread your letter carefully. The letter must exhibit impeccable grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A sloppy cover letter is likely to discourage your reader from turning the page to view your resume.

Following the content suggestions from your text, use one of the formal letter formats displayed in your text. Always use the name of a specific person in the inside address and the salutation. Don't use a general phrase such as "Dear Sir" or "To Whom it May Concern." You might have to do some research to determine to whom you should address the letter.

## **2. Resume:**

Prepare an **accurate** personal resume aimed at the same position. Do not use any imaginary credentials that you have not yet earned.

The resume serves as a screening device. Its main function is to attract enough attention to get you an interview. Take pains to give your resume a professional and attractive appearance.

# Group Problem-Solving Project

**Objective:** For this project, you will be assigned to a team whose members will serve as human resource specialists. Your team's task is to analyze a bona fide communication problem related to small group or organizational communication. Your underlying task is to demonstrate that you understand the concepts of communication taught in this course. To do this, you will need to define and explain appropriate communication terminology in your presentation. This assignment offers you an opportunity to apply your theoretical understanding of group problem-solving skills, to gain skills in creating agendas and conducting effective meetings, and to practice presenting your results in formal report format.

**Preparation:** With your team, think of one specific communication problem that one of your teammates has experienced in a small group setting (for example, the leader of the cheerleading team doesn't give clear instructions; you've been assigned to do a group presentation, but one member has trouble participating because she is not a native speaker of English; you are members of a successful rock band that is becoming tense because one member insists on making all the decisions). Please focus on ONE specific problem. The communication problem must fit the following requirements:

- it must be a **communication** problem.
- it must involve communication among members of a "**work team**."
- it must be a problem that one of your teammates has experienced or is experiencing (in other words, a **real-world** problem, not a make-believe problem).

**Procedure:** Using Dewey's reflective-thinking sequence, your team will:

1. state the problem as an **open-ended question**.
2. **investigate** the problem you have selected.
3. establish **criteria** (to be used in evaluating your proposed solutions).
4. **brainstorm** several communication-based solutions to the problem (list them all **without evaluating** them).
5. **analyze** each solution in terms of each criterion. Create a table showing your rankings.
6. produce a final **recommendation** aimed at remedying the problem. The solution you select must be based on communication concepts learned in this course. Explain why you chose this solution. Reconsider the solution to be sure there are no significant drawbacks that you hadn't thought of earlier. Modify your solution if you need to. Explain how you would **implement** the solution and **follow up** on it.

Time will be provided in class for conducting several meetings. Your team should develop an **agenda** for each meeting and conduct each meeting according to the guidelines in your text for effective group work and meetings.

**Materials to Submit:** Type the complete name of each of your team members on the first page of the report. Please spell first and last names correctly. Submit **one** copy per team of a Feasibility Report (see Chapter 13) that includes the following information:

- a description of each step you followed in the process
- a complete list of sources consulted
- agendas from each of your group meetings

**Evaluations of Team Members:** All team members will receive the same grade on the written presentation of this project. To earn credit for this assignment, the student must participate in the research, discussion, and writing stages of the project. Individual grades will be assigned for the quality of each member's contribution to the team effort. As a team, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire (see Section 5 of this manual) in which you will distribute participation points to the members of your team, in proportion to their contribution to your team project.

# **Group Decision-Making Project (Version A)**

In this assignment, apply skills and insights you gained from reading and discussing Chapters 7 & 8.

You and four classmates will be assigned to a committee with one of the missions listed below. You will be given three meeting times during class, and you may also meet on your own to carry out the task. You will present your results to the class in a manner you decide (e.g., panel, video presentation).

After completing the assignment, you will be asked to analyze the group work based on these topics from Chapters 7 and 8: task and social issues, the group's cohesiveness, conformity, methods of problem solving, and leadership. Use the guidelines for successful meetings described in the text to evaluate group meetings, and suggest ways your committee could have communicated more effectively.

## **Assignments**

1. The Communication Department has been authorized to add a new member to their faculty. The committee has been appointed by the administration to develop a job description and a list of criteria for that position. These criteria should meet the needs of all parties who will be affected by the new position: students, other faculty in the department, and the administration.
2. Present to the class three methods that college students can use to increase their income and/or lower their expenses. These methods should be realistic and useful. The methods suggested should not be ones already used by large numbers of students in your class.
3. Financial problems have forced the administration of the university to cut its overall budget for the upcoming year by 8 percent. The student committee's job is to propose where those cuts should be made.
4. The student committee has been charged to develop a list of communication needs for college students seeking employment or career advancement. Using your campus as a representative sample, develop such a list of needs. Students should be prepared to explain and defend their list.
5. You are members of a management team for a startup company that has developed a new product. Decide what your product is. Write a mission statement for your company. Design an advertising flyer for your product.
6. You are officers of your school's student body. Your task is to implement a service project that any member of the student body can participate in during either the fall or spring semester for one unit of extra credit. Investigate actual needs on your own campus or in your own community and choose one or two appropriate projects. Then set up a method through which students could sign up, participate, be evaluated, and receive credit.

# **Group Decision-Making Project (Version B)**

(for use in writing-intensive classes)

I. **Purpose of this Project:** Solving problems and writing reports are typical workplace tasks. This project provides an opportunity for you to try out the skills you are learning in small-group communication by applying the reflective decision-making protocol to solve a problem. This assignment is also designed to improve your writing skills. You will submit your results in a formal written report.

II. **Policies:** Each group will submit ONE report. Writing the report must be a team project. All members must participate. The report must have a consistent tone. That is, it should read as if one person had written it. All members are responsible for the accuracy of the report. Read one another's contributions to make certain you agree on what you are submitting.

III. **Use of References:** You are required to use several references from the text and/or class lectures. You will cite your references in two places in your report.

-In the body of the report, cite references in parenthetical notation, included right in the same sentence where you refer to the material (Adler & Elmhurst, p. 322).

-At the end of your report, include a section titled Works Cited. Here you will list your sources in alphabetical order, according to authors' last names. Indent the first line of each item closer to the margin than the second line. For example:

Adler, R., & Elmhurst, J. (2013). *Communicating at work: Principles and practices for business and professionals* (11<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

IV. **Occasion and Audience Analysis:** Before writing a document to submit, it's important to analyze the expectations of the occasion and of the audience you are writing for.

**Occasion Analysis:** This report requires a professional style of writing. You are expected to follow a specific format, with a professional appearance. Your document should have a consistent tone throughout, so make certain to proofread each team member's work carefully. The document you submit makes a statement about who you are, so be sure your document reflects the best you can be. Write in appropriate business language. Your report should explain academic concepts in a style that is easy to read. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling need to be flawless. A sloppy style will probably convince your audience that it's not worth reading any further than the executive summary.

**Audience Analysis:** Your primary audience (intended reader) is me, your professor. A potential secondary audience is other students. I will be looking for evidence that:

- you have successfully completed all the steps of the reflective-thinking problem-solving sequence.
- your problem analysis was conducted thoughtfully, using effective critical thinking and analysis.
- your proposed solution is achievable and will solve the problem adequately.
- your report includes all of the required content.
- your report follows the required format.

**Format for the Report:** Typically, each company has its own preferred format for proposals. For this class, please use the following format. Include a heading for each section **except** the title page.

**Title Page:** On the title page, center the following information. Each item should be on a separate line, single-spaced:

- a short title for the problem your group selected
- (skip two lines)
- submitted by
  - list all actively participating group members, in alphabetical order by LAST name
- (skip one line)
- college name
- class and section
- date submitted

**Table of Contents:** List each section in order (flush left). List the page number for each section on the right side of the page.

**Executive Summary:** Don't let the title of this section intimidate you. This section is actually just a preview of the contents of your report. This summary allows a busy executive to quickly determine whether a report is worth reading. An Executive Summary is like a cover page, separate from the report.

The Executive Summary briefly summarizes the content each section of the report. Include only the most important specifics from each section. Some writers find it helpful to build the Executive Summary by including the topic sentence of each of the report's sections.

**Project Description:** Write a two-paragraph overview of what your group accomplished. Identify the problem. Describe your group's purpose and why it's important to find a solution to the problem.

**Methods:** Begin this section with an introductory statement, explaining that your team used the reflective-thinking process to arrive at a solution. Briefly describe the purpose of the reflective-thinking process (in general, not as applied to your project)...Then explain that you will describe each step your group took in accomplishing your purpose (e.g., what your group did at each meeting), and you will provide a brief description of your group's end-product.

Now for each step in the reflective sequence, create a subheading. Under each subheading include a detailed description of your team's findings. Remember to discuss (in the section explaining your final solution) potential limitations of the solution (which you uncovered when you discussed what could possibly go wrong with your solution) and how you will manage them if they occur. (These steps are reviewed below.)

**Conclusion:** Your conclusion will include a brief recap of your main points, along with a statement about why your solution is excellent.

**Works Cited:** Include a complete bibliographical reference for the text, class lectures, or any other materials you have cited in your report.

**Appendices:** You'll attach three appendices. Each appendix should have its own title at the top of the page, and should include:

1. a copy of your comparison chart that you used to analyze your potential solutions.
2. a copy of your Team Contract.
3. the participation points you assigned to each member, with an explanation of why you assigned those points. Arrange in alphabetical order: last name, first name.

# **Individual Proposal: Improving Group Communication**

## **(for use in writing-intensive classes)**

**Purpose of the Assignment:** This assignment is designed to improve your group participation competency as well as your writing skills. Teamwork and proposal writing are typical workplace tasks.

**Assignment Description:** You'll submit a word-processed individual proposal (approximately 1700 words) analyzing your group's performance during the group project and recommending changes you would make the next time you are involved in a group project. Before you write your report, review Chapters 7 & 8, which explore group dynamics and effective meetings. From these chapters, select two concepts your group excelled in and two concepts where your group needs improvement. Because this project has been a learning situation, there will be some concepts you have applied well and others that need improvement. Your instructor expects an honest assessment.

**References:** You are required to use references from the text and/or class lectures. You will cite your references in two places in your report.

1. In the body of the report, cite references in parenthetical notation, included right in the same sentence where you refer to the material.
2. At the end of your report, include a section titled Works Cited.

**Occasion and Audience Analysis:** Before writing a document to submit, it's important to analyze the expectations of the occasion and of the audience you are writing for.

*Occasion Analysis:* This proposal requires a professional style of writing. You are expected to follow a specific format, with a professional appearance. Your proposal makes a statement about who you are, so be sure it reflects the best you can be. Aim for ZERO errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If your proposal is sloppily written, your reader is likely to assume you are a careless person, and she or he probably will not value your recommendations. If your proposal is flawless, you will be credible. Your reader will be much more likely to accept your ideas.

*Audience Analysis:* Your primary audience (intended reader) is your professor. A potential secondary audience is other students. Your instructor will be looking for evidence that you have participated with your group and have learned about the group process. See Grading Criteria, below.

**Format for the Proposal:** Typically, each company has its own preferred format for proposals. For this class, please use the following format. Include a heading for each section **except** the title page.

*Title Page:* On the title page, center the following information. Each item should be on a separate line, single-spaced: title of the report; (skip two lines); Submitted by [your name]; college name; class and section; date submitted.

*Table of Contents:* List each section in order (flush left). List the page number for each section on the right side of the page.

*Overview:* This section serves as a preview of the contents of your report. Your goal is to convince the reader that your proposal is worthwhile. One effective approach is to summarize the problem and then explain how your proposal will solve that problem. End with a strong constructive statement about the value of your recommendations.



*Project Description:* Summarize what your group accomplished. Include your group's purpose, each step your group took in accomplishing your purpose (e.g., what your group did at each meeting), and a brief description of your group's end-product.

*Group Assets:* Describe two strengths your group exhibited. Each strength should correspond to a group communication concept or a critical thinking concept you've learned in this class. In this section you should do the following:

- Define and describe each concept (include a reference from the text or class lectures) in some depth. Explain why this concept contributes to effective team work. Prove to your reader (me) that you know what this concept means. Think of this as a take-home essay exam.
- Then, explain how your group illustrated this concept. Be specific. That is, if you claim that your group avoided groupthink, include specific examples of devil's advocate questions your group members asked.

*Group Limitations:* Describe two weaknesses your group exhibited. Each weakness should correspond to a group communication concept or a critical thinking concept you've learned in this class. In this section, you should:

- define and describe each concept (include a reference from the text or class lectures). As in the section about assets, provide an in-depth description of what the concept means and why it's important in group work.
- explain how your group did *not* demonstrate this concept. Be specific. That is, if you claim that your group did not respect one another's viewpoints, include examples of exact statements that demonstrated this lack of respect.

*Recommendations:* This is the most crucial section of your proposal. It will probably be the longest section of your entire document. Propose what you would do to improve your team's work if you could do this project over again. For example, you might suggest a different way to organize your group or a better method of doing research. You might propose specific remedies to the limitations you described in the preceding section. Integrate explanations and references from the text. Explain how you will apply these recommendations in future group situations you may participate in. Be as specific as possible. Your recommendations should demonstrate that you are personally "engaging" with the concepts of group communication learned in this class.

*Conclusion:* Summarize your assets, limitations, and recommendations. End with a strong, constructive message about the importance of this proposal.

*Works Cited:* Include a complete bibliographical reference for the text and/or class lectures that you cited in your report.

**Grading Criteria for the proposal.** An "A" assignment will:

- follow a proposal format (following instructions is an essential element of communication).
- demonstrate your understanding of the communication concepts you have chosen.
- show that you have learned to apply concepts of group communication.
- explain insights you've gained about group communication.
- present a plan that is feasible (could be realistically implemented).
- integrate concepts from the course into your recommendations for improving your performance in future teamwork assignments.
- include references.
- use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- exhibit a professional appearance.

# **Professional Speaker Observation (Version A)**

## **Purpose:**

This assignment offers you an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of a professional speaker.

## **General Description:**

Attend a professional presentation of your choice. Take notes during the presentation, and submit a two-page (single-spaced) memo in which you analyze the topics listed below.

**Topics to Analyze:** Please discuss each of the following:

### **1. Organization**

Identify the speaker's thesis and organizational pattern. Describe the audience attitude and the occasion. Was the organizational pattern appropriate for this audience and situation?

### **2. Supporting material**

Analyze the speaker's use of supporting material, and classify it according to type. What functions did the support provide? Include specific examples.

### **3. Delivery**

What style of delivery did the speaker use? How effective were the speaker's visual, verbal, and vocal elements? What visual aids did she or he use? Did they add to or detract from the speech?

## **Format:**

Use memo format. Include a heading for each of the three topics you are analyzing.

## **Criteria for Grading:**

Your grade will be based on the following criteria:

- evidence that you understand the principles of public speaking we have studied in this class
- depth of thought
- clarity of your written expression
- punctuation, grammar, and spelling
- use of memo format

## **Professional Speaker Observation (Version B)**

**Objective:** After completing this activity, students should be able to assess the speaker's organizational plan when they listen to campus or community informative presentations.

**Procedure:** Distribute the form titled "Outside Speaker Observation/Critique" located in Appendix 2 of this manual. Assign students to critique an outside speaker. You can assign a speech for all students to observe, have students choose an outside speaker, or invite a guest speaker. Campuses and communities often present well-paid professional speakers. Political speeches abound, and speakers on special topics are usually noted in city or campus papers. Students might observe speakers at their workplaces or look for speakers who are covering topics (sales presentations, lectures, training sessions, etc.) related to a student's future career. Use the following form to evaluate the presentation and to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

**Class Discussion:** After students have observed their designated speakers, the following questions could foster class discussion:

- How effective was the speaker's introduction in gaining the audience's attention? Is there anything she or he could have done differently to increase effectiveness?
- What organizational pattern did the speaker use? Was it appropriate for the topic?
- How would you rate the speaker's delivery? Which elements were effective, and which were ineffective?
- Did the speaker use visual aids? Did this add to or detract from the speech?
- What types of verbal and visual support did the speaker use? Was there anything that you would change?

# **Informative Speech with PowerPoint**

## **Objective:**

This assignment will give you the opportunity to improve your professional presentation skills. You will present a four- to five-minute informative speech to the class. You are required to integrate research (at least three references) in developing the body of the speech. You must cite your sources in the speech. You will create PowerPoint slides to accompany the speech.

## **Preparation:**

1. Sign up for a specific day and time to deliver your speech. Consider this to be a contract. Our tight class schedule does not allow time for make-ups.
2. Select a topic about which you are already a “mini-expert.” The more narrowly you can focus your topic, the better.
3. Do additional research on your topic. You are required to integrate at least three credible references (in addition to yourself) in the speech. Include at least one reference that is not taken from the Internet. You will cite each of your sources verbally in the speech. You will also type a complete bibliography of your sources.
4. Prepare a typed outline of your speech. You will use this outline, not a word-for-word manuscript, when you deliver your speech. Use large type, and leave plenty of white space.
5. Prepare a set of PowerPoint slides to accompany your speech.
6. Practice, practice, practice. Practice out loud, standing up, in front of a mirror or an audience of friends. Practice with your slides and outline to be sure you can manage them easily. Practice pronouncing any unfamiliar words so they will roll easily off your tongue. Stumbling on words reduces your credibility. Practice pays off. Practice is reputed to be one of the most effective antidotes to nervousness.

## **Oral Presentation:**

On your assigned date, you will present your speech to the class, using PowerPoint technology. Deliver your speech extemporaneously—don’t read it or memorize it. If you read it, you will not receive a passing grade no matter how good the content. Bring your evaluation form for me to use as well as your peer evaluation forms. I will assign each student two other students to evaluate.

## **Written Materials:**

On the day of your speech, you should submit:

1. your typed outline.
2. a complete bibliography of the references you have cited out loud in the speech (at least three are required).
3. thumbnails of your PowerPoint slides, consolidated onto one page of paper.
4. your blank evaluation form with your name and topic filled in.

# Persuasive Speech

## **The Assignment**

Prepare and deliver, on the assigned speaking day, a five- to six-minute extemporaneous, persuasive presentation. The purpose should involve either changing or strengthening the audience's beliefs/attitudes or shaping the audience's behavior. The topic should relate in some way to issues within the world of organizations, business, professions, and public policy. The presentation can persuade the audience to:

Buy

Give

Act

Think or Feel

Consider

Goods or services

Money or time

In a desired way

Positively or negatively about a topic

A new or different viewpoint

## **Requirements**

1. Include all materials discussed in class: effective analysis of the speaking situation, clear purpose, good organization, and effective support. In addition, the presentation should be well delivered.
2. Establish credibility as a speaker on this subject by demonstrating authority via position, reputation, goodwill, integrity, knowledge, sincerity, and/or delivery.
3. Develop a thesis effectively by considering best placement of key ideas, making a one- or two-sided presentation, optimal positioning in the body of effective material, forewarning, appealing to the values of the audience, using appropriate emotional appeals, incentives to change, and other strategies discussed in class and the text.
4. Use supporting materials to prove *all* necessary points.

## **Submit on the Day of the Presentation:**

1. materials from all previous presentations
2. the evaluation form for this presentation
3. a neat, correctly organized outline including:
  - a. an audience analysis
  - b. written transitions
  - c. supporting material (label the type of support)
  - d. a complete list of references (at least three are required)

### ***Adaptable Assignments:***

Memo to Your Instructor  
Student Performance Appraisal  
The Acronym Speech  
Public Service Announcement  
Exploratory Speaking Assignment  
Oral Research Report  
Oral Briefing from Interview or Article  
Group Report  
Chapter Review Assignments

## **Memo to Your Instructor\***

Submit to your instructor a word-processed memo of approximately one page, introducing yourself. Use formal memo format, as described in the Appendix of your text. Use subheadings in the body of your memo. Cover the following three points:

### **1. Relevant personal information**

Provide information about yourself that will help your instructor learn important information about you. Include whatever information *you* think is significant. Areas you might cover include:

- personal interests that relate to the world of work.
- career goals.
- current or past jobs.
- places you have lived and worked.
- your cultural background.
- academic history and goals.
- personal skills you have or wish you had.
- any physical limitations that might affect your ability to participate in the class.

### **2. Personal goals for the class.**

Describe what outcomes would make this class a success for you. Don't make up anything here: Describe only the personal goals that are important for you. If you aren't sure, just say so.

### **3. Career goals for the class.**

Look over the course syllabus your instructor has given you. Peruse the first chapter and the Table of Contents of the text. Select three of four communication skills you believe you will develop during this class. Explain how these skills could help you in the career you intend to pursue. Give specific examples.

\*Adapted from an assignment suggested by Ron Adler, Santa Barbara City College

# Student Performance Appraisal

Writing a performance appraisal of their own class work, conduct, and contributions helps prepare students for this inevitable assignment in their own careers. It also trains students to be more astute observers of their own classroom performance. This activity can be conducted in several ways, depending on goals and on the time an instructor wants to devote to it. It can be introduced as a term project with an overview of the course, or connected to upward communication, organizational culture, workplace climate, unequivocal terms, interviews, group skills or meetings (such as nominal group technique).

The instructor could, using the sample formats provided below, simply assign a performance appraisal, as some employers do. This approach is quick, but students may not benefit as much from it. A second strategy is to collect ideas from students individually or in small groups. The instructor could then write the assignment based on the students' ideas. A third method is for the instructor to facilitate, but it should allow students near total responsibility for brainstorming, reaching consensus on the desired characteristics for class conduct, and creating and writing the appraisal assignment. Choose the method that best matches your available time and goals.

**Objectives.** Students will be able to perform the following activities successfully:

1. Think critically about and define what constitutes effective classroom conduct.
2. Take responsibility for monitoring their own progress toward identified goals.
3. Practice and gain competence in using language effectively to describe their own performance.
4. Periodically reflect on, monitor, and improve classroom performance.
5. Recognize, give concrete examples of, and build on their strengths.
6. Establish individual and common goals for classroom and individual learning.
7. Develop skills in presenting and discussing ideas and reaching consensus.
8. Improve group discussion and interaction skills.

Ask students to reflect and focus on, discuss, and debate what it means to be a professional or an ideal member of the class. How would a good student conduct herself or himself? What are the traits that make a student a competent class member?

An appraisal of "soft skills" may be less tangible, less measurable, and less subject to a numerical rating than other, more statistically measurable skills. However, supervisors frequently appraise these skills and ask employees to do the same. Students who can generalize about their own performance, and back up their appraisals with specific examples of how they've demonstrated these skills will have an advantage in their careers. Encourage students to peruse the text and determine some important competencies that could be appraised.



## Procedure

1. Describe the nature of performance evaluations as they are frequently used in business. Then, tell students that they are going to be writing their own performance appraisal as a member of the business and professional communication class.
2. Ask students to think about the characteristics of an ideal/professional member of this class that should be appraised. At this point, instead of Step 3, you could use one of these options:
  - a. Act as facilitator while the class brainstorms and then reaches consensus.
  - b. Ask students to come back to the next class with five characteristics written down, then go to Step 2a or Step 3.
  - c. Have each student write characteristics on Post-it<sup>®</sup> notes or index cards, one per card. Collect them all, and have volunteers create a master list, getting rid of overlap and duplicates.
3. Using a modified nominal group technique, have students sit in groups, and ask each person to silently write down five characteristics. Then have each member of the group report, and have the group record the characteristics and discuss, redefine, reword, revise, rank-order, and come to a consensus on five (or a number you designate) characteristics they could live with. At this point, some groups may see that there are some general traits with specific subcategories. Encourage students to present their traits in that way. Synthesizing ideas works well and later gives students multiple ways to evaluate themselves.

*At this point, be sure students know that their ideas will be pooled with those of classmates and that the class will come to an agreement on five to ten traits to be used for the final performance appraisal. Knowing they are going to share ideas and then come to agreement on them prevents students from getting locked into the “our group’s characteristics are right and yours are wrong” win/lose stance.*
4. Have each group put its ideas on a transparency or large sheet of poster paper and present them to the class. After all groups have presented their ideas, the class needs to come to a consensus on whatever number of characteristics you’ve selected. You could ask the class to achieve a consensus on three-to-six traits they all must use to evaluate themselves. An alternate (and easier-to-achieve) method is to have the class agree on ten traits from which each student may choose five for the basis of an evaluation. This is a good time to demonstrate facilitation skills. If your campus has trained facilitators, you could invite one. It would be a good opportunity for the class to see the advantages of using trained facilitators. From here on, class members can work in small groups, each developing the wording for one characteristic, or developing subcategories for it. At this point, you may want to utilize their ideas to create the assignment and bring it back to the class. You may find other methods that suit your goals and timeframe. If you don’t want to do this, or if you don’t have the time but you do want students to experience writing their own appraisal, you might modify one of the samples to suit your class.

Some advantages of this method are that students (1) take responsibility for their own learning and “behavior” in class; (2) focus on identifying and meeting goals; (3) learn to put their own performance in writing; and (4) become more aware of what constitutes a performance appraisal.

Original lists looked like these:

<b><u>Group 1</u></b>	<b><u>Group 2</u></b>	<b><u>Group 3</u></b>
Pronunciation	Attitude	Gestures
Listening	Getting Point Across	Participation
Concise	Content	Attendance
Courtesy	Presentation	Enthusiasm
Gestures	Attention-Keeping	Self-Starter
Posture	Movement	Motivates Others
Resolves Conflict	Listens	Assignments on Time
Dress/Appearance	Projection	Involvement
Participation	Facial Expressions	Feedback to Others
Motivation	Shows Initiative	Constructive Criticism
Honesty	Eye Contact	Smiles
Attendance	Speaking at Audience's Level	Is Prepared
Presentation Structure	Organized	Timeliness
Formality	Preparedness	Good Grooming
Compassion	Presence	Supportive/Respectful
Shows Interest	Promptness	Knows Material

Here is a sample of what one class designed as the actual assignment:

1. Attendance/Participation. Write a paragraph in which you appraise your attendance and participation as a member of the class. Include factual information: statistics on the number of classes attended, tardiness, and leaving early. Then discuss your participation strengths and weaknesses.
2. Classroom Climate. Discuss your performance with regard to creating a positive classroom climate. Using identifiable criteria from the text, compare your behaviors with those used to create positive climates. Include both verbal and nonverbal behaviors. These paragraphs must demonstrate your knowledge of what behaviors are desirable and your ability to analyze (i.e., break classroom conduct into component parts).
3. Listening. Discuss the development of your listening skills during lecture, class discussion, and classmates' presentations.
4. Portfolio of Ungraded Assignments. List the items in your portfolio: notes from videos, pop quizzes, library research, notes from impromptu speeches, announcements, etc. What did you learn from these materials? What progress do you see?

Along with this appraisal, keep a portfolio of your work: videotapes of speeches; self-evaluation of speeches; classmates' critiques of presentations; exams; attendance records; etc. Self-monitoring is a step toward taking responsibility for your own learning.

# The ACRONYM Impromptu Speech

At any point during the semester, students might distill what they have learned into an acronym. This speech could also be assigned as a prepared speech. It could be used as a midterm or final review.

Depending on the variation used, this assignment may meet any of these **objectives**:

- To reduce anxiety about impromptu speaking
- To reinforce key ideas about public speaking
- To provide variety in impromptu speaking
- To encourage students to think creatively
- To synthesize information in a creative way
- To provide a way of summarizing and prioritizing information
- To review information about memory, chunking, and listening
- To illustrate how much easier it is for an audience to remember key points when they are organized around an acronym

**Procedure.** This activity is useful as an impromptu speech or a speech assigned a class period in advance. Ask students to think about how they would summarize some key ideas they've learned in the last chapter, on a particular topic, or during the semester. For instance, after the chapter on delivery, you might ask them to summarize key elements of delivery. Similarly, at the end of the unit on research they can summarize key elements about research.

**Variation # 1:** Give students a specific audience to speak to, such as a group of new public speaking students; elementary school students (for this audience, students should try to simplify and boil down ideas; often helping them synthesize major elements); high school students; business professionals; politicians; or foreign students.

**Variation # 2:** Write down different types of audiences on slips of paper, and let students draw their audiences. In this way, students will be preparing similar content for different audiences.

**Variation # 3:** Use this to review a particular chapter: ideas about organizational patterns, types of attention getters, delivery pointers, etc.

**Variation # 4:** Have students videotape themselves and bring the video to class; watch several a day or all of them in one day.

**Variation #5:** At the beginning of the term, assign each student particular chapters to review. Have five acronym speeches as review at the end of each chapter.

**Variation # 6:** Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group a topic. Let one person deliver the group speech, or have students deliver it as a group, with each member taking one letter of the acronym. This works well as an end-of-the-class-period review.

## Samples

<b>OASIS*</b>	<b>TEAM</b> (what it takes to work	<b>LUCK</b> (what is needed to
Organize your attitudes	as a team)	organize a speech)
Analyze the audience	Teamwork	Language
Set goals	Everyone	Understanding
Integrate materials	Attitude	Clarity
Start your future	Motivation	Knowledge

Attributed to Roko Paskov, quoted on p. 50 in Wilder, C., 1994, *The presentations kit: 10 steps for selling your ideas* (NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

# **Public Service Announcement\***

**Instructions to Students.** Choose a service available to students at your campus: specific research resources, escort service, counseling, career aids, registration by phone or online, cafeteria, Internet access, campus bulletin boards (including electronic, bank machines, newsletters, health-center benefits, tutoring, job hotline, etc.). Choose either one you have used or one that you will research for this assignment.

Create a public service announcement following the Monroe motivated sequence explained in Chapter 12 in the text. Each of the five steps need not be longer than a sentence or two, and the whole announcement will take less than a minute. Your goals are to make your classmates aware of this campus resource and to motivate them to use it when appropriate. Indicate your choice on the sign-up sheet.

Your announcement will have these basic parts:

**Attention**  
**Need**  
**Satisfaction**  
**Visualization**  
**Action**

## **SAMPLE\***

**Attention.** (Student walks slowly to the front of the room, holding his stomach or head, pauses, looks pained or sick.) Have you ever come to class feeling sicker than a dog?

**Need.** You have an exam coming up. You have to be here, but your head or stomach hurts so badly you don't think you'll make it through the day. Nevertheless, you need to take that exam. There are no make-ups.

**Satisfaction.** What can you do? First, don't panic. And don't necessarily turn around and go home. What can you do? Visit the Student Health Center.

**Visualization.** Although you may not be the picture of health immediately, you can get relief for minor aches and pains, and you can usually get immediate attention for stomachaches and headaches. Imagine yourself feeling well enough not only to make it to class but to perform competently on that exam or presentation.

**Action.** Don't panic, and don't wait. And don't go around sick. If you are not feeling well on campus, visit the Student Health Center located in Montoya Hall, Room 301. Let the health professionals there assist you in becoming well again.

\*Adapted from an assignment by Rob Dewis, De Anza College.

# **Public Service Announcement Instructor's Notes**

**Objective:** After completing this assignment, the following objectives should have been fulfilled:

1. To give students a positive speaking experience early in the term
2. To reduce anxiety about speaking
3. To increase student awareness of resources on campus that they may need and want to use throughout the term
4. To introduce organizational and delivery principles in a minimum of class time
5. To give instructors a sense of the class's ability to work independently, research information, and deliver that information

**Some variations for use early in the term:**

1. If you want students to begin speaking before you've "covered" all the material, this assignment is ideal, because they can read far enough ahead to do the assignment, and then have this experience to refer to as they read and discuss presentations in greater detail later in the course.
2. The mild "commercial" nature of this assignment brings out creativity and lightheartedness in many students, so the experience can be positive rather than anxiety-producing. High-quality presentations may also result from:
  - a. Staggering due dates. This allows more reticent students to see a few samples before presenting their work. Because it is a one-minute presentation, there would be time to have all presentations in one day. However, limiting the presentations to five per day provides time for the class to discuss them. Consider awarding bonus points for early presentations.
  - b. Allowing students to work in pairs and collaboratively create one (or two) PSA(s).
  - c. Encouraging videotaping (works well in pairs) ahead of time and having students present the videotape on the day due (or the day ahead, if you want to preview it). This approach is time-efficient, and it encourages students to do their best, have fun, and be creative. It also reduces anxiety, because students can keep filming until they are satisfied.
3. Consider a pass/no-pass grade rather than a letter grade. This allows students to be creative without worrying if it is exactly what you want. In addition, offering suggestions for improvement makes the discussion less threatening. Students discuss freely without worrying that their comments will hurt a classmate's grade.
4. Students often find out things they didn't know that can benefit them: security will unlock your car; the Health Center does throat cultures; and shuttle buses run between campuses. If you have a small campus and a large class, consider including both campus and community resources.

# **Exploratory Speaking Assignment**

Deliver a four- to five-minute presentation on one of the following subjects:

1. Describe between two and five things you like best *or* least about a part of your current job. Be sure to use stories and examples to add interest. In addition, use quotations, definitions, comparisons, statistics, and visual aids to support your points. This presentation should follow a topical organizational plan.
2. Demonstrate a process or an article you used in a past or current job. The demonstration ought to provide information that is *useful for the audience*. Be sure to use visual aids (actual objects, photos, models, etc.) for clarity. In addition, use other types of supporting materials (quotations, definitions, etc.) to provide interest and clarity. This presentation should follow a topical organizational plan.
3. Give between two and five reasons why you have given your time and energy to work as a non-salaried employee. Use supporting material to make your reasons clear, interesting, and persuasive. This presentation should follow a topical organizational plan.
4. Explain to the class how to build and prepare a résumé. The discussion of building a résumé should include ways of adding relevant work and volunteer experience to the student's background. The part on preparing a résumé should explain the different formats students may follow. This presentation should follow a topical organizational plan.

**Sign-Up.** Choose a speaking date by signing your name on the sheet circulating through the class with the dates selected for these assignments. It is your responsibility to choose the date and then to be prepared.

## **Reminders**

1. Pick a focused topic you can discuss in some depth in five to six minutes.
2. Choose and develop the topic in a way that will appeal to the interests of your class members (audience).
3. Organize your speech according to the principles covered in the text. Choose a single, appropriate organizational plan.
4. Support each main point with one or more of the methods described in the text.
5. Use an effective introduction and conclusion, as explained in the text.
6. Use an extemporaneous delivery style.

## **Materials to submit**

On the day of your presentation, submit:

1. the evaluation form for this presentation, with your purpose, thesis, and organizational plan included.
2. a typed outline of the presentation.

# **Oral Research Report**

## **The Assignment**

Deliver a three- to five-minute presentation based on research that will be:

1. relevant to your career.
2. interesting to the class (the audience).

Choose a topic that we have discussed in this class. If you select a topic that we have **not** covered, obtain my approval at least 10 days before the date of your presentation. In your presentation, you will expand on what we have learned in class. Teach your classmates new and interesting information. You will prepare a PowerPoint presentation to accompany your oral report. Follow the rules for effective software presentations (see Chapter 11).

## **Sign-Up**

Choose a speaking date by signing the sheet that will be circulated in the class with the dates listed for the assignment. It is your responsibility to be ready to speak on the chosen date, or to arrange a trade of dates with a classmate if it becomes necessary.

## **Hand-In**

On the date of your presentation, submit the following materials:

1. A typed outline of your presentation that follows the format explained in the text and on the outline evaluation sheet. For each of your supporting materials, label what type it is.
2. A one-page rendition of all your PowerPoint slides (like the Slide Sorter view).
3. An annotated bibliography of the sources you used to develop this presentation. At least three references are required. One of those references must be a non-Internet reference.

## **Sample Topics for Research Report**

- Sexual discrimination in the field of \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment prospects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Comparisons of prospects for employment, advancement, and salary in the \_\_\_\_\_ field in several geographic areas
- Creating the best resumes on the Internet
- New ideas for creating graphics with new technology
- Groups versus teams
- Using Parliamentary Procedure in your club meetings
- A comparison of greeting rituals in three different cultures
- How to listen with empathy
- A case study illustrating win-win negotiation
- Speaking on camera

## **Oral Briefing from Interview or Article**

**Objective:** Students will develop and deliver a briefing based on an article or interview.

**Procedure:** Students should select a topic of interest to them and prepare a briefing to present to the class.

If students have done a career research interview (see the Major Assignments section of this manual), they can be instructed to use the information on communication skills emphasized by their interviewee to prepare a short briefing for the class. If students have not done a career research interview, you could assign a briefing topic and make library research part of the assignment. Alternatively, you can assign articles and ask students to report on them.

Presented together, these briefings give the class current information on the specific communication skills deemed necessary in a variety of careers by experts in those fields who were interviewed by the students. Staggered throughout the term as students finish their interviews, these briefings create a continuous reminder of the importance of communication skills in a variety of careers.



# Group Report

**Instructors:** This assignment exposes students to more material on business and professional communication than a semester normally provides. Students will research and report on current topics in business, prepare a handout for the class, and present an informative presentation to them. If you are pressed for time, done in groups this assignment gives students experience in working in teams, researching material, organizing and presenting a group presentation, and handling questions and answers. In addition, all class members benefit from the content of each group's presentation.

Plan A: Your work team has been assigned the topic checked below.

Plan B: Your work team must choose a topic from the list below to present to the class. You will be asked to decide today. The first group to notify the instructor of their choice gets that topic. Subsequently, a group that picks the same topic will have to make a second choice. The topics include:

*Constructing a Contemporary Resume: Current Trends & Resources.*

*Finding a Job Online: Using the Internet for Job Searches.*

*Creating Graphics for Presentations: Updating Your Presentation.*

*Emotional Intelligence: What Is It? Why Does It Matter?*

*Resumes Online*

*Balancing Work and Family*

*Privacy at Work: Laws and Legal Issues*

*Email Etiquette*

*Negotiation: Crafting a Win-Win Solution*

*Performance Appraisals: How to Prepare and Perform for Yours.*

*Conducting Virtual Team Meetings: Guidelines for Success*

*Parliamentary Procedure: How to Use It without Getting Bugged Down*

**Requirements:** This assignment replicates an assignment that might be given to a work team. You are to present a **15-minute group report** to your department (in this case, your classmates) on the designated topic, after which you will have **5 minutes to conduct a question-and-answer session**. Your challenge is to make your presentation informative, interesting, and applicable to your classmates. Follow the instructions for group presentations located in the Appendix of your text.

You will first need to work together to **research** your topic. You will need to use a minimum of six sources and turn in an **annotated bibliography** (one per group). The bibliography may include books authored by communication scholars or business professionals, newspaper articles, journal articles, ERIC resources, Internet and Web resources, interviews, films, etc. You must use at least two sources that are not from the Internet. **Duplicate an outline of your presentation and your bibliography**, and give copies to each class member at the close of your presentation. Follow the text's guidelines for developing and presenting reports (see Chapter 14).

The presentations will be given to the class on \_\_\_\_\_(date); groups will do a **dress rehearsal (with video) and self-critique** on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

# ***Chapter Review Assignments***

## **1. Round-Robin Chapter Review**

### **Objective:**

This activity actively involves students in reviewing chapter concepts prior to a quiz.

### **Procedure:**

Divide the material that will be covered on the test into five or six sections of relatively equal complexity. Assign each section to a group of students. Each group's task is to take notes on their assigned material so they can explain it to another student.

After groups have finished examining the material, form new groups. These new groups will be comprised of one member from each of the original groups. The new groups now work through the material, with each member explaining their section to the others.

### **Class Discussion:**

After the new groups have reviewed every section of material, inquire whether there are any more questions.

## **2. One-Minute Speech Concept Review**

### **Objective:**

This activity actively involves students in reviewing chapter concepts prior to a quiz.

### **Procedure:**

Assign one review concept to each student in the class. The student's task is to prepare a one- to two-minute speech reviewing the concept. The review should include a definition, an explanation of why the concept is important, and an example.

### **Class Discussion:**

After each speech, correct any misstatements, elicit additional remarks about the concept, and inquire whether there are any more questions.

## ***Student Samples:***

Sample Interview Schedule  
Sample Interview Analysis  
Sample Letter of Thanks for Interview  
Sample Cover Letter  
Sample Resume  
Sample Proposal for Improving the Group Process  
Sample Informative Speech Outline

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## STUDENT SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

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### Background Information

I will be interviewing Jake Williams, who is the community sports editor for *Globe News*. He also works with students for the student newspaper at our college. Our interview will be conducted in the college library. We both found this location to be convenient because Jake frequently visits there.

### Interview Schedule

#### *Opening*

Hi! I'm Jessica Smith. Thank you so much for coming to meet me. As I mentioned in our e-mails, I am doing this interview for my communication class. The assignment is to interview someone in a career field we're interested in. It's not easy to get in touch with people in this field, so I sure appreciate this! I want to ask you about a couple of topics today, specifically, your background and education, and your thoughts on the journalism profession. Is there anything you would like to know before we begin?

#### *Body*

### Background and Education

1. How did you get started in your profession? (primary, open)
  - a. What steps would you suggest others to take? (secondary, open)
2. Have you ever done any freelance writing? (primary, bipolar)
  - a. What would you suggest to someone who wants to explore that option? (secondary, open)

### Thoughts on Journalism

1. What are some essential skills needed to succeed in your field? (primary, open)
2. Does the information in your articles come primarily from observation or interviews? (primary, closed)
  - a. What makes a good interviewer? (secondary, open)
  - b. What are some techniques you use while interviewing or researching? (secondary, open)
  - c. What happens when things don't go as planned? (secondary, open)
3. How do you create a connection with your audience in your articles? (primary, open)
4. What makes your job interesting? (primary, open)
5. Describe a typical work day. (primary, open)
6. What's the most difficult thing about your job? (primary, open)
7. What's the most important thing you've learned through your experience? (primary, open)
8. What type of hours do you work? (primary, closed)
9. How do you define personal time from work time, given that news is always happening? (primary, open)

### Clearinghouse Question

1. What other advice do you have for someone pursuing journalism? (primary, open)

#### *Closing*

Thank you again for coming to meet with me. I appreciate your taking time out of your schedule for this.

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## STUDENT SAMPLE INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

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**DATE:** XX/XX/XXXX  
**TO:** Instructor's Name  
**FROM:** Jessica Smith  
**SUBJECT:** Interview Project

I interviewed Jake Warner, who has been a writer at the *Globe* for the past seven years. I chose to interview Jake to get more information about journalism reporting. Our interview took place in the library, which was convenient for the both of us. I arrived early to arrange the room for our interview. We discussed his background and education as well as his thoughts on journalism.

### **Background and education**

“Read everything you can get your hands on!” This was some advice Jake had for me during our interview. When I read, I will learn how different people tell a story. This will allow me to develop my writing style. Once I develop that style, I should do my best to get my work published. Where it is published is not the main concern, as long as I am getting experience. Formal education is a plus, but if I’m a talented writer, I could do fine without it.

### **Journalism hours**

Jake told me that as long as he’s been employed in the news industry, his job is always happening. His hours are pretty much “all the time”, and deadlines are tight. He is the first to inform people of events around them, so he must be ready to report at a moment’s notice. There are few 9–5 jobs in this industry.

### **Interview analysis**

I actually had fun doing this interview. Jake was easy to talk to. I learned so much about journalism. I learned even more about how to conduct an information-gathering interview.

#### *About the career*

Jake knows his work, and he is willing to share his information with anyone interested. Unfortunately, I discovered that reporting full-time is not the job for me, because I am a stay-at-home mom and plan to continue in that role. However, Jake and I discussed different options of freelance writing that I may like to explore.

Jake taught me aspects of journalism that I couldn’t have found anywhere else. He informed me that reporters have a serious ethical responsibility, because your audience gives you practically instant credibility when they “read it in the paper.” He also asserted that reporters are today’s historians and what a key role that is in society.

#### *About the interviewing process:*

What surprised me most was the time and planning it requires to conduct an interview that flows well. It’s harder than most people think. I had written my questions ahead of time, but I hadn’t really practiced saying them out loud. It seemed easy ahead of time to think about what I wanted to say and to envision how the interview would go. But once we sat down and I started asking the questions, I realized it was harder than I had originally thought.

Sometimes Jake would answer part of one of my later questions while I was asking him one of my original questions. This interrupted my logical organization of the interview. It was all really good

information, but it didn't seem very organized. I ended up losing track and skipping a few of my questions.

Hardest of all was to multitask. I tried to maintain eye contact with him, actively listen to what he was saying, remember his points, get ready to ask my next questions, and take notes all at the same time. Most of the time I found myself just listening to his stories. When I did write something, it would distract him a little. He thought he needed to stop or slow down so I could keep up. This made the overall interview jolty at times. I also ended up just reading my questions from the paper. It sounded kind of stiff. The ending was awkward too. On the feedback form, Jake mentioned that he never was quite sure when the interview was over.

Next time I conduct an interview I will become very, very familiar with all my questions so I can orchestrate the interview better. I'll practice them ahead of time with my husband, and I'll say the questions in shorter sentences, so it doesn't sound as though I'm reading them from the paper. I will also plan a definite closing statement like, "I think we've already run overtime, so I had better end this now. You have given me such useful information! Thank you."

I enjoyed this assignment, and I appreciate the information I received from conducting this interview. I think everyone should do this when choosing a career path, whether they are assigned to or not.

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## STUDENT SAMPLE LETTER OF THANKS FOR INTERVIEW

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PO Box 95  
Southlake ID 84095

May 20, 2018

Jake Warner  
*Globe News*  
30 Wright Way  
Southlake, ID 84098

Dear Jake:

Thank you again for allowing me to interview you for my communication assignment. You took the pain out of this assignment. You were fun and easy to talk to, and you provided me with so much information about your field.

It is easy to see why you are a success at what you do! You know how to tell a story! I came home and told my husband all the interesting things you shared with me. You have helped me realize the huge impact reporters have and the responsibility they hold in our society. It definitely had me thinking when you said that reporters can be compared to historians. I also appreciate the advice you gave me to read, read, read, and to learn how to tell a story. You made me recognize that reading can help me develop my individual writing style.

I know your schedule is crazy, especially with having a family at home. So, thank your wife also! It was a pleasure to meet you. I am sure we will run into each other in the future, and not because I am taking your job! ☺

Sincerely,

Jessica Smith

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## STUDENT SAMPLE COVER LETTER

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123 Sunnydale Lane  
Westerdale, WA 97777

March 18, 2018

Joseph Vandermin  
Human Resources  
Vandermin Industries  
543 Cloudy Ave  
Westerdale, WA 97772

Dear Mr. Vandermin:

I saw your employment ad on the Monster web site for a Facilities Coordinator. After reviewing the duties and qualifications listed, I feel that I would be an excellent fit for the position.

As my resume states, I am currently working as a Safety Specialist, Accounts Receivable clerk, and Customer Service Representative at Hoyle Manufacturing. Working there, I built a user-friendly website for help and specifications of our products for employee use. I created the site to act as a help source for employees as they handled customer calls. I have extensive computer skills as well as customer service skills. I have experienced ongoing training for all three of my job areas, which has enabled me to grow and learn as the company moves forward. I am responsible for complying with and reporting to OSHA and the EPA, as well as for developing, writing, and implementing safety and accounting procedures.

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. You can e-mail me at [dayju@aol.com](mailto:dayju@aol.com) or phone me at 905-000-0000. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

June Day



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## STUDENT SAMPLE RESUME

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### June Day

123 Sunnydale Lane Westerdale, WA 97777

Phone: 905-000-0000 E-mail: dayju@aol.com

### COMPETENCIES

- Extensive research and organizational skills
- Effective leadership and team capabilities
- Excellent customer service skills
- Strong accounting abilities
- Experienced at reporting to and complying with OSHA, EPA, and NFPA

### EXPERIENCE

#### **Safety Specialist/Accounts Receivable Clerk/Customer Service Representative**

May 2015-present, Hoyle Manufacturing, Westerdale, WA

Establish procedures and processes to assure regulatory compliance; Develop, implement, monitor and manage safety programs and procedures; Evaluate facilities for improvement; Report and investigate accidents; Manage collection procedures such as negotiating with past due accounts and referring accounts to collection agencies; Set up new customer accounts; Resolve customer issues and maintain customer relationships.

#### **Administrative Assistant**

September 2012-May 2015, The Training Place, Westerdale, WA

Worked in various office environments as a temporary employee; Handled consumer complaints about a product recall; Worked with the government on recall procedures; Developed training manuals; Helped redesign a filing system.

#### **New Patient Assistant**

September 2011-September 2012, Doctor Cee's, Westerdale, WA

Met with patients to establish medical histories; Aided during examinations; Performed physical therapy with patients, under supervision; Contributed to goals of the office; Assisted in patient billing.

### EDUCATION

Westerdale Community College (Emphasis in Finance), August 2011-present  
Student

SAMPLE: Group improvement proposal  
(submitted by each student individually)

Individual Proposal

Submitted by  
Ima Smart  
River City Community College  
Communication 101  
October 23, 20xx

**Contents**

Overview	2
Project Description	3
Group Assets	4
Group Limitations	6
Recommendations	6
Conclusion	7

**Overview**

Our group investigated how we as students with limited time and budgets could best help the food bank. Our group developed an effective solution to the food bank problem. We were successful because group members were committed and creative in generating new ideas, and because we structured our meetings with a step-by-step problem-solving method. This method gave structure to our meetings and made the whole process seamless.

Our group did have some limitations, however, which I would change in future group projects. I learned that our chat room meeting venue restricted our ability to analyze ideas thoughtfully. I also learned that nonverbals are essential for building positive group interaction. For these reasons, I would recommend arranging in-person meetings whenever possible. A second choice would be telephone conferences.

**Project Description**

Our task was to decide how we, as a group of five students with limited time and budgets, could best help the food bank. During this project I learned that having a step-by-step problem-solving method was invaluable. This method gave structure to our meetings and made the whole process seamless.

Using the reflective-thinking sequence, we first identified and expressed the problem as an open-ended question: "How can we best help the food bank?" We researched the nature of the food bank problem in River City so we would have a more thorough understanding of what needed to be done. Next, we outlined criteria that we wanted our solution to meet. These are specific assessments that we would use in Step V to evaluate our potential solutions.

We then started brainstorming to come up with as many ideas as possible. I was fortunate to have a group that was committed and creative in generating new ideas. While brainstorming, we not only tried to come up with solutions, but we also tried to find creative ways to execute those solutions. For example, we

thought we would want to print flyers to advertise the food drive. However, because we didn't have any money, we had to figure out how to get the flyers printed. We determined that we would be able to get printing, boxes and other advertising donated because it is for a good cause. To verify these assumptions, we each did additional research and reported the results in subsequent meetings.

At that point, we narrowed our solutions to our top ten. We then constructed a chart listing our solutions and criteria. We graded each solution to find out which ones best met the criteria. Several of our ideas ranked high, so we devised a combination of these ideas as our final solution. We then asked ourselves what could go wrong, and we created a backup plan in case of the worst. Based on this information, we set up a timeline and assigned specific tasks. In this way, our group ended up with a workable solution that could bring about good results.

Our group's process showed some strengths and some weaknesses, which I will analyze in the following pages.

### **Group Assets**

Our group demonstrated two outstanding assets that our text identifies as elements of effective small-group communication: commitment and brainstorming.

According to Chase and Jones: "Commitment is the desire of group members to work together to complete their task to the satisfaction of the entire group" (p. xx). Not everyone in the group exhibited commitment, but the five of us who really made the project happen attended and contributed in every meeting and worked each week to prepare his or her portion for the next meeting. Our facilitator contacted the noncontributing members several times. When we had not heard from them in two weeks, she asked the professor to drop them from the group. In this way, we maintained a positive momentum.

The second asset our group exhibited was exceptional brainstorming. The text describes brainstorming as a powerful generator of ideas (p. xx). Almost everyone in the group came up with creative ideas. Several times in our chat sessions the ideas were flowing by as fast as you could read them. When a silly idea came up nobody was ridiculed, but we all laughed, had a good time, and continued on. This made for a good creative and humorous environment that I think we all enjoyed and that made us feel comfortable in sharing our ideas. This lack of instant evaluation also prevented groupthink from occurring (text, p. xx). Groupthink is a tendency for everyone to seek concurrence instead of thinking for herself or himself. Through brainstorming, we came up with some ideas I never would have thought of alone. This is the best part of group work.

### **Group Limitations**

Unfortunately, our group also had two important limitations that detracted from our doing the best we could: meeting as a virtual group and lack of paralanguage. We were not able to meet face-to-face because one of our group members lives in Alaska. Besides, most of us had difficult schedules, so we all wanted to meet online, even though the professor had warned us that it's much easier and more satisfying to complete a group project face-to-face (COMM 101 Web page).

We chose to conduct all our meetings in the online chat rooms. This ended up being a bad choice. It got really confusing when ideas were flowing quickly. It was common for multiple questions to be asked or multiple conversations to be taking place at the same time. It was almost impossible to maintain a sense of chronological order. People were getting confused because they weren't sure who was responding to whom. We lost a lot of time because we had to keep backtracking and repeating to make sense of everyone's ideas.

The confusion was even worse because in an instant message environment we usually try to condense our entire thought process into a few short words (Ivancevich & Duening, p. xx). We lost the depth of thought

we could have had if we'd been able to pursue our ideas one at a time. This got frustrating. It also affected the quality of our solution.

A related problem resulting from our choice of chat room as a venue was the lack of nonverbal communication, which created some tension. When we are chatting online there is no paralanguage. Paralanguage is the study of all cues, which include sound or silence, other than the content of words themselves (text, p. xx). Without paralanguage, it is very difficult to communicate tone, inflection, and attitude in a message. For example, during one of our meetings I kept bringing up a topic that I thought was being overlooked. I didn't think this oversight was intentional; rather, I assumed it just happened, because when several questions are posed at once, sometimes one is missed or overlooked. However, two of the members interpreted my repetitive questions as being rude or dominating. I'm quite sure that if they could have heard my tone of voice we would not have had this problem! Chat rooms are not very suitable for substantive interaction (COMM 101 Web page).

### **Recommendations**

I have learned a lot from this project about the strengths and limits of virtual communication. If I could do this project over again, I would use a variety of modes of communication, not just chat rooms.

Virtual communication does have some advantages in group decision making. For example, due to our busy schedules and distant locations, our group members couldn't have completed our task without technology. I have also learned that people who are timid are more willing to participate in virtual groups than in face-to-face groups, because they are less self-conscious (Ivancevich & Duening, p. xx). This might have been one reason why our group members participated so evenly.

The chat rooms worked fine for simple items, such as choosing a problem, brainstorming, and assigning tasks. Asynchronous (i.e., not every member is online at the same time) virtual meetings would have been better for steps that required more thought, such as reporting research results. We would have had more time to think about these ideas. However, asynchronous discussion areas aren't a fruitful forum for debate or negotiation, which require the immediate give-and-take of an interaction process. For this type of interaction, we should have used telephone conference calls. Conference calls also would have given us at least some ability to notice one another's paralanguage.

In future projects like this I will try to choose a group that can get together in person for at least a few of the meetings. If that's not possible, then I will assign different technologies, depending on the nature of the task.

### **Conclusion**

Our group came up with an effective solution to the food bank problem. We showed high commitment and creativity. We needed to improve our use of technology and nonverbal communication. This experience has illustrated for me the need and importance of matching the technology to the task. It has also shown me the value of nonverbal communication. I will apply these lessons in future group assignments.

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## STUDENT SAMPLE INFORMATIVE SPEECH OUTLINE (TO SERVE AS SPEAKING NOTES)

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[Student Name]  
Submitted to [Instructor Name]  
COMM 101-00  
Informative Speech Draft Outline  
[Date]

### **Background Information**

**Specific Goal:** My audience will learn how to throw a softball.

**Intended Audience:** high school girl athletes

**Pattern of Organization:** I will be using a chronological pattern of arrangement.

**My experience with this topic (ethos):** Played softball in high school; volunteered to help coach young athletes

**Number of references** I'll cite out loud in my speech: 3

### **Title: Practice Makes Perfect**

#### **Introduction:**

**Hook:** Have you ever been told you throw like a girl? Today you'll learn to throw like a girl and be proud of it.

**Ethos:** I played on my high school softball team. It was such a valuable experience to me that now I volunteer to help coach young athletes.

**Thesis:** I learned that when we play softball, we tend to make our worst errors when we're throwing the ball. But we can decrease our errors significantly if we learn and practice proper technique.

**Preview:**

1. hand grip and release
2. arm and body position
3. practice drills

**Transition:** In softball it's important to get the correct grip.

**Body:**

I. How you hold the ball determines how far, how accurate, and how fast you can throw it.

- A. 4-seam grip (Brent Mayne)
  - i. Ball forms C
  - ii. Use fingertips
  - iii. Thumb beneath
  - iv. Don't palm
- B. Release
  - i. Ball always away (bad breath)
  - ii. Palm facing away

- iii. Backspin
- iv. More torque when snapping

**Transition:** The way you position your throwing arm is extremely important; and so is learning to throw properly to avoid developing bad habits.

- II. Throwing arm position
  - A. Elbow up
    - i. Elbow forms an L
    - ii. No dropping elbow
    - iii. Shoulder height
    - iv. Non glove side pointing at target (scope)
    - v. Newbies (bow and arrow technique)
  - B. Body and feet (Di Maggio)
    - i. Batting stance
    - ii. Form a T
    - iii. Instep facing target
    - iv. Pull elbow back into body as you release

**Transition:** Now Let's put it all together.

- III. You can use this practice drill to fine-tune your skills. (Softball Drill Book)
  - A. Grab ball and find grip
  - B. Reach back for L position
  - C. Point non-throwing arm at target
  - D. Lead with elbow and pull glove into body
  - E. Snap wrist to throw

### **Conclusion:**

Throwing a softball isn't that difficult. If you practice you'll be able to throw a softball with accuracy and velocity. And this will help you reduce the errors in your games and have more fun when you play.

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## **Sample Plan for an Informational Interview**

The following plan shows the kind of work that should occur before an interviewer and an interviewee sit down together. Every important interview requires the type of planning exhibited

here to achieve its goals. As you read this account, notice that it follows the advice outlined in [Chapter 6](#).

**Analysis and research** I know I'll never build the kind of financial security I am seeking by relying only on the income I earn from my job. Investing successfully will be the path to financial success. I also know I'm very unsophisticated when it comes to investing, so I want to get a financial advisor who can teach me about the world of finance and help me set up and follow a plan.

Picking a financial advisor is like choosing a doctor. Skill is important, but it's not the only thing that matters. I need to find someone who has a personal style I'm comfortable with and whose philosophy matches mine. I also need to find someone who is willing to devote time to me even though I don't have a great deal of money to invest ... yet!

**Goal** I've compiled a list of possible advisors from friends, newspaper articles, and listings in the phone directory. I will call several of the people on this list to set up appointments for interviews.

**Interview strategy** To identify a financial planner with expertise in the field, whose investment philosophy matches mine, and who has a personal style I am comfortable with  
I will conduct interviews in the offices of each financial planner. Seeing where and how they do business will give me a good idea of my comfort level before asking any questions. On the one hand, seeing a shabby or disorganized office would cause me to doubt an advisor's competence. On the other hand, a very plush office might make me wonder if I would be charged too much just to support a lavish lifestyle.

I'm also interested in seeing how much time each person gives me for the interview. If the person is rushed when trying to get a new client, this could mean I won't get the time or attention I need once my money is in the planner's hands.

**Topics and questions** I want to see how much each person lets me explain my concerns and how much each controls the conversation. I'm no financial expert, but I don't like the attitude, "I'm the expert, so don't waste time asking too many questions." Because I would like someone who is willing to explain investing to me in a way I can understand, I'll be looking for a good teacher.  
The following list shows the questions I'm planning to ask in each topic area as well as follow-up questions I can anticipate asking. I'm sure there will be a need for other secondary questions, but I can't predict all of them. I'll have to think of them on the spot.

## ***Topic A: Expertise in Investments and Financial Planning***

*[This series of open questions explores the interviewee's qualifications and provides an opportunity for her to talk about herself.]*

1. Which credentials do you have that qualify you as a financial planner? How important are credentials? If they aren't important, what is the best measure of a financial planner's qualifications?

*[These questions move from a narrow to a broader focus.]*

2. Do you have any areas of specialization? How and why did you specialize in this area?

*[These indirect questions are a way of finding out whether the advisor's performance has been satisfactory.]*

3. How many clients have you served in the last five years? What is the length of the relationship with your clients? How many have you retained, and how many are no longer with you?

*[The average portfolio size is one measure of the advisor's expertise.]*

4. What's the average amount of money you have managed for your clients?

*[A closed question, designed to give interviewer references.]*

5. May I see a list of your past and current clients and call some of them for references?

*[The first question is a broad, open one. The second, closed question will produce a specific answer that can be compared with those of other potential advisors.]*

6. How would you describe your track record in terms of investment advice? Specifically, what has been the ratio of successful to unsuccessful advice?

## ***Topic B: Investment Philosophy***

*[This broad, open question gives the advisor a chance to describe his or her approach.]*

1. How would you describe your investment philosophy?

*[This hypothetical question will provide specific information about how a client–advisor relationship might operate.]*

2. If I became your client, what steps would you recommend to start and maintain a financial program?

*[This sequence of questions moves from specific to broad topics in a logical order.]*

3. Which kinds of products do you like to deal in? Which specific ones might you recommend for me? Why?

*[This two-question sequence moves from a narrow to a broader*

4. I've read that some financial advisors make their income from commissions earned when their clients



*focus. The most important information for the client is contained in the second question.]*

buy and sell investments. Other advisors charge a fee for their time. Which approach do you take? Can you explain how this approach is in my best interest as well as yours?

*[Although this sounds like a closed question, it is likely to generate a long answer.]*

5. How much should I expect to pay for your advice?

## **Topic C: Personal Style**

*[This indirect question really asks, "Would we work well together?"]*

1. Which kinds of clients do you work well with? Which kinds don't you work well with?

*[The first question here is really an indirect way of discovering how much attention the advisor has paid to the potential client.]*

2. Have you looked over the papers I sent you about my financial condition? What did you think of them?

*[This clever hypothetical question has a better chance of generating a useful answer than the more direct "What can you tell me about the kind of service I can expect?"]*

3. If I were to call one of your clients at random, what would he or she tell me about the type of service and frequency of communication I can expect with you?

*[This is a straightforward, open question.]*

4. If we were to develop a relationship, what would you expect of me?

*[This hypothetical question anticipates an important issue.]*

5. Suppose I disagree with your advice. What would you say and do?

### **• Sample Employment Interview**

The following transcript is based on a real interview. As you read it, pay attention to both the interviewer's questions and the applicant's responses. In both cases, notice the strengths and the areas needing improvement. Which parts of this interview would you like to incorporate into your interviewing style? Which parts would you handle differently?

*[The interview begins with an exchange of pleasantries ...]*

**Interviewer:** Monica Hansen? I'm Chris Van Dyke. Welcome.

*[... and small talk.]*

**Applicant:** It's good to meet you.

**Interviewer:** Did you have any trouble finding us?

**Applicant:** The directions were perfect. And thanks for the parking pass.

*[The interviewer briefly]*

**Interviewer:** Oh, yes. That's a necessity. The garage costs \$12

*previews the approach of the interview and the anticipated amount of time.]*

per day if you don't have one.

We'll have about a half-hour this morning to talk about the personnel administrator's position you've applied for. I'd like to learn about you. And, of course, I want to answer any questions you have about us.

**Applicant:** Great. I'm looking forward to it.

*[Body of interview begins with an open question about employment history.]*

**Interviewer:** Good. Let's begin by having you tell me about your most recent position. Your resume says you were at ITC in Springfield. Is that right?

*[Interviewee uses answer to showcase the skills acquired in past job that could help in the one being offered here.]*

**Applicant:** That's right. My official job title was personnel assistant, but that really doesn't describe very well the work I did. I recruited nonexempt employees, processed the payroll, oriented new employees, and maintained the files.

*[Follow-up questions explore areas of interest in the new job.]*

**Interviewer:** Were you involved with insurance?

*[The applicant uses this answer to point out another skill that she brings to the job.]*

**Applicant:** Yes. I processed workers' compensation claims and maintained the insurance reports for our health care plans. I learned a lot about dealing with government regulations.

**Interviewer:** And you said you were involved in hiring?

**Applicant:** Yes. I was responsible for recruiting and interviewing all clerical and administrative support people.

*[Another open question, this time exploring the applicant's ability to analyze her own performance.]*

**Interviewer:** How did that go?

*[The applicant fails to use this answer to showcase her abilities ...]*

**Applicant:** It was tough in Springfield. There's a shortage of talented support people there. It's an expensive town to live in, and there aren't a lot of people who can afford to live there on an administrative assistant's salary. It's not like Atlanta, where there's plenty of good help.

*[... so, the interviewer follows up with another question.]*

**Interviewer:** What did you learn about hiring from your experiences at ITC?

*[This answer is better because it describes insights and skills the applicant brings to this job.]*

**Applicant:** I learned to look further than the resume. Some people seem great on paper, but you find there's something wrong when you hire them. Other people don't have much experience on paper, but they have a lot of potential.

**Interviewer:** How did you get beyond paper screening?

**Applicant:** Well, if someone looked at all promising, I would phone the former employers and talk to the people the applicant actually worked for. Of course, a lot of former employers are pretty noncommittal, but they usually would give clues about what they really thought about the person I was investigating—giving an indirect opinion without saying it outright.

**Interviewer:** What would you do if this was the person's first job?

*[The applicant demonstrates resourcefulness here, spelling out her skill in the last sentence of her answer.]*

**Applicant:** I found that almost everyone had done some kind of work—part-time or volunteer. And I could check up on that. Or I would even ask for the names of a few teachers and phone them, if the person was just graduating. I learned there's almost always a way to find what you're looking for, if you get creative.

**Interviewer:** Didn't that take a lot of time?

*[This is a subtle way of saying, "I have good judgment."]*

**Applicant:** Yes, it did, but it was worth it in the long run because we got much better employees that way. We almost never had to dismiss someone whom we'd done a phone check on.

**Interviewer:** You were promoted after a year. Why?

*[Again, the applicant's answer introduces a trait that would be valuable in the new job: the desire for self-improvement.]*

**Applicant:** I was lucky to be in the right place. The company was growing, and we were very busy. I tried to take advantage of the situation by offering to do more and by taking classes at night.

**Interviewer:** Which classes did you take?

*[Presumably the skills acquired in these courses would be useful if the applicant is hired. In any case, she demonstrates the desire to learn skills useful in the business world.]*

**Applicant:** I took an applied human relations class last spring. And before that, I took a couple of computer classes: one in database management and one in desktop publishing. Our department was thinking about starting an employee newsletter, and I wanted to see if we could produce it in-house.

**Interviewer:** It sounds like you've done very well at ITC. Why do you want to leave?

*[The response begins with a provocative statement and then goes on to supply a solid reason for seeking a new job.]*

**Applicant:** In some ways, I *don't* want to leave. The people are great—most of them—and I've enjoyed the work. But I'm looking for more challenges, and there isn't much chance for me to take on more responsibility there.

**Interviewer:** Why not?

**Applicant:** Well, my boss, the personnel director, is very

happy in her job and has no plans to leave. She's young, and there's very little chance I'll be able to advance.

*[The interviewer seeks specifics to elaborate on the broad statement "I'm looking for more challenges" ...]*

**Interviewer:** I see. Well, that is a problem. And what kind of responsibilities are you looking for?

*[... and the candidate supplies answers.]*

**Applicant:** I'd say the biggest one is the chance to help make policy. In my past jobs, I've been carrying out policies that other people—management—have made. That's been fine, but I'd like to be involved in setting some policies myself.

*[Again, the interviewer follows up by seeking more specifics ...]*

**Interviewer:** Which kinds of policies?

*[... and the candidate is prepared with detailed responses.]*

**Applicant:** Oh, there are several. Designing benefits packages. Coming up with a performance review system that people will take seriously. Teaching our supervisors how to interview and hire more systematically.

*[The interviewer makes a smooth transition to a new topic.]*

**Interviewer:** I see. Well, the position you've applied for certainly does have those sorts of responsibilities. Let me ask you another question.: What do you enjoy most about personnel work?

*[The stock answer "I like to work with people" is so broad that it has little meaning ...]*

**Applicant:** Well, I really enjoy the chance to work so much with people. Of course, there's a lot of paperwork, too, but I especially like the chance to work with people.

*[... so, the interviewer seeks clarification.]*

**Interviewer:** When you say "people," which kinds of work are you thinking of?

**Applicant:** I guess the common denominator is making people happy. Lots of employees get involved with the personnel department—once they've been hired, that is—because they have problems. Maybe it's an insurance claim or a problem with their performance review. It makes me feel good to see them leave feeling satisfied, or at least feeling better after they've come in so upset.

**Interviewer:** Are you always able to help them?

**Applicant:** No, of course not. Sometimes a person will want the impossible, and sometimes there just won't be any answer.

*[Again, the interviewer uses a situational approach, seeking specifics.]*

**Interviewer:** Can you give examples of these times?

*[The applicant does a good job of describing a situation that illustrates her previous answer.]*

**Applicant:** Well, one example of an impossible request comes up a lot with health insurance. At ITC, we could choose from two plans. With one plan, you could use any doctor you wanted. You had to make a co-payment with that one. With the other plan, you had to choose a doctor from a list of preferred providers, but there was no co-payment. If an employee chose the preferred-provider plan and later decided he or she wanted to use a doctor who wasn't on the list, we couldn't do anything about it.

**Interviewer:** We've had that problem here, too. How did you handle it?

**Applicant:** Being sympathetic helped a little. Even if I couldn't give them what they wanted, at least saying I was sorry might have made it seem less like a total rejection. I also pointed out that they *could* switch plans during the open-enrollment period, which comes every year. I've also suggested to my boss that we do a better job of informing people about the restrictions of the preferred-provider plan before they sign up and maybe even get them to sign a statement that says they understand them. I think that would reduce the surprises that come up later.

*[With this new topic, the interviewer shifts from fact to opinion questions.]*

**Interviewer:** That's a good idea. Monica. Which qualities do you think are important for a personnel officer?

**Applicant:** Knowing the job is important, but I'd say getting along with people might be even more important.

**Interviewer:** And how would you describe your ability to get along?

**Applicant:** Sometimes I think I deserve an Academy Award for acting the opposite of the way I feel.

**Interviewer:** Really? Tell me about it.

*[The applicant offers a specific example to illustrate her provocative statement about acting the opposite of the way she feels.]*

**Applicant:** Every so often people will come in with an attitude problem, and I try to calm them down by acting more pleasant than I feel. For example, we've had people who think they're entitled to take six months off for a workers' compensation claim even though the doctor has said they're ready to come back after a few weeks. They come in and yell at us, and it's tough to be pleasant at times like those. But I don't think there's any point in being blunt or rude. It just

makes them angrier.

*[This indirect question really asks, "What kind of manager might you be?"]*

**Interviewer:** I see what you mean. Let's shift gears, Monica. If you were to pick a boss, what are the important traits that he or she should have?

**Applicant:** Let me see ... certainly lots of follow-up—letting people know where they stand. The ability to give criticism constructively and to compliment good work. Giving people a task and then leaving them alone, without nagging.

**Interviewer:** But still being there to help if it's needed, right?

**Applicant:** Sure. But also giving me the space to finish a job without staying *too* close.

**Interviewer:** Anything else?

**Applicant:** Being available for help, as you said. Being consistent. And being willing to train employees in new jobs, letting them grow. And considering employees' personal goals.

*[The interviewer turns to a new topic area.]*

**Interviewer:** In personnel work, there's a need for confidentiality. What does that mean to you?

**Applicant:** That's an important area. You see lots of personal information, and it's easy to make offhand remarks that could upset someone.

**Interviewer:** Which kinds of things do you have to be careful about?

**Applicant:** Oh, even something as simple as a person's birthday. Most people wouldn't care, but some people might be offended if their birthdays were known. I've learned to be constantly on guard, to watch what I say. I'm a private person anyway, so that helps.

*[This question explores the candidate's personal attitudes.]*

**Interviewer:** Monica, I've been asking you a lot of questions. Let me ask just one more; then it can be your turn. What are the factors that motivate you?

**Applicant:** Well, I like to be busy. If things aren't busy, I still work, but I like to be stimulated. I seem to get more work done when I'm busy than when there's plenty of time. It's crazy, but true. I'm also motivated by the chance to grow and take on as much responsibility as I can handle.

*[Almost every employment interview includes a chance for the interviewee to ask questions.]*

**Interviewer:** Monica, which questions do you have for me? What can I tell you about the job or the company?

*[The applicant wisely begins by*

**Applicant:** Which kind of growth do you see for the

*asking about the company, not focusing on personal questions such as compensation.]*

company?

**Interviewer:** Well, we have 155 employees now. As I think you know, we're five years old, and we started with five employees. Our sales were up 14 percent last year, and it looks like we'll be expanding more.

**Applicant:** How many employees do you think will be added?

**Interviewer:** Well, we hired 20 new people last year, and we expect to hire almost the same number this year.

**Applicant:** And what's the turnover like?

**Interviewer:** That's a good question for a personnel person to ask! We've been growing so much, and people have been able to move into more responsible jobs, so they've been satisfied for the most part. Our turnover has been pretty low—about 15 percent annually.

*[This question focuses on responsibilities of the job.]*

**Applicant:** Will the person you hire be involved in making policy?

**Interviewer:** Yes, definitely. We're still trying to catch up with ourselves after growing so fast. A big project for this year is to put together an employee handbook. Too many of our policies are verbal now, and that's not good. Developing that handbook would mean working directly with the president of the company, and that definitely involves developing policy.

*[Finally, the applicant asks about compensation and benefits.]*

**Applicant:** Of course, I'm interested in learning about the benefits and salary.

*[The interviewer appropriately defers a complete answer until the company has a clearer idea of the candidate's desirability.]*

**Interviewer:** Of course. Here's a copy of our benefits summary for you to study. We can talk about salary later. Right now, I'd like you to meet a couple of our managers. After you've spoken with them, we can get back together to discuss salary and other matters.

*[The interviewer wraps up the conversation by describing when the hiring decision will be made.]*

We will definitely be making our decision within the next 10 days, so I promise you you'll have an answer before the first of next month. It's been a real pleasure talking to you, Monica. You certainly express yourself well. I'll talk with you again soon.

**Applicant:** Thanks. I've enjoyed the talk, too. I'll look

forward to hearing from you.