



"Importance Of Listening, Speaking, Reading And Writing For Prospective Career"

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Numerous employment experts emphasize the importance of job seekers enhancing their soft skills in addition to their hard skills, such as through continuing education and specialized training. Many employers are hesitant to hire technically proficient candidates who show little emotional investment in their careers or an inability to collaborate effectively with others in high-pressure situations. Achieving a proper balance between hard and soft skills is crucial for career success.

Key soft skills include communication abilities, specifically listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A person who is impatient or struggles with listening may create communication barriers, negatively impacting their relationships and performance in job interviews. Success in any field necessitates the development of soft skills. Similarly, a lack of speaking skills can result in the loss of one's audience, leading to missed opportunities to articulate ideas and persuade colleagues and superiors. Effective speaking is fundamental to all forms of communication. Furthermore, reading broadens one's knowledge, comprehension, and intelligence, contributing to overall personal development. It's important to engage with texts on multiple levels, seeking symbolic, concealed, and ironic meanings, rather than just the surface content. Lastly, writing sharpens one's clarity of thought, serving as a record of individual ideas and opinions. These communication skills are interconnected; those who listen effectively tend to speak well, while good readers typically excel in writing. Overall, effective communication skills are vital soft skills that enhance one's personality and significantly boost the likelihood of achieving career success.

Among the essential soft skills that require practice, communication—encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing—is paramount. Effective communication facilitates personal development, as one's personality can be likened to the fragrance of a flower.

1. Listening Skill

A key aspect of communication is the cultivation of listening skills, which is foundational. Without strong listening abilities, other communication skills may falter. Listening is an active process, unlike passive hearing. The proverb "speech is silver, but silence is golden" could be adapted to say "speech is silver, but attentive listening is golden." The listening process is challenging and involves leveling, sharpening, and assimilating information. To make listening effective and rewarding, one must focus on four key elements: a positive attitude, concentration, engagement with the speaker, and the clarification of ideas through questions and answers. Active participation in discussions allows listeners to better understand the speaker's viewpoint, thereby enhancing their engagement.

Listening not only requires the ear but also the mind. The often-overlooked skill of listening has several advantages, including breaking down barriers between individuals, fostering understanding and cooperation, and bridging communication gaps. People engage in listening to gain knowledge, gather information, follow instructions, solve problems, share experiences, express opinions, and learn new things. Thus, listening offers numerous benefits for individuals in various professions—students, engineers, managers, medical professionals, and others.

Despite these advantages, many people are poor listeners. Educational systems prioritize teaching speaking, reading, and writing skills while neglecting listening, which is often taken for granted. Individuals who struggle with listening may miss crucial information, highlighting the importance of improving this skill for personal progress. A proactive, analytical approach to listening can enhance knowledge and wisdom, but several factors can hinder this process. Nevertheless, through thoughtful strategies, dedicated listeners can overcome challenges. Hence, listening is a vital, dynamic, and constructive soft skill that serves as a foundation for effective communication.

English plays a significant role in education, research, administration, industry, and business. It is essential in interviews, group discussions, panel discussions, debates, and social interactions among educated individuals. Mastery of fluent and effective English communication is crucial for success in both personal and professional spheres. To speak effectively, one must hone skills in pronunciation and presentation, which require ongoing practice and guidance.

2. Speaking Skill

There are three primary methods for delivering a speech: reading from a manuscript, speaking extemporaneously, and impromptu speaking or recalling from memory. Powerful and eloquent speeches can be tailored for various occasions and purposes, and interviews, discussions, and dialogues all hinge on the art of effective speech-making. Consequently, the ability to communicate effectively and purposefully is recognized as a vital soft skill.

Importance of Pronunciation

Accent and pronunciation are integral aspects of a speaker's voice, which is unique to each individual and can reflect their personality and character. To impress listeners, it is essential to modulate one's voice and articulate sounds correctly. A well-modulated voice encompasses four key features: quality, pitch, volume, and rate of speech. Improving voice quality involves eliminating harshness, hoarseness, nasal sounds, throatiness, and a muffled tone. Pitch should be adjusted according to the context, and this can be refined through practice. Proper volume is achieved by effectively using one's breath, while the rate of speech is influenced by one's emotions. Since listening requires cognitive engagement, excessive speed can be counterproductive. Additionally, body language serves as an important tool in communication. Consistent practice can enhance both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

Pitch

Pitch refers to the highness or lowness of a voice, which changes based on the situation. With practice, pitch can be controlled and adjusted.

Volume

The volume of the voice is determined by how efficiently one uses their breath. Sometimes, pitch and volume can get mixed up, leading to croaky or squeaky sounds that are harsh and unpleasant. It's important to avoid such undesirable outcomes.

Rate

The rate of speech is influenced by emotions, and it can vary depending on the situation. However, in a speech, it's essential not to speak too quickly.

Pauses

Pauses are necessary to allow listeners to absorb the information and to give them time to settle. These breaks also help in pacing the speech. Since listening is a mental activity, speaking too fast can be ineffective, unhelpful, and counterproductive.

Body Language

Body language also plays a significant role in communication. With regular practice, individuals can enhance both verbal and non-verbal expression. Planning, preparation, and effective presentation are crucial for impactful speeches. To resonate with the audience, speakers should personalize their topics and base the body of their presentation on a few key points or themes, supported by a clear topic sentence or thesis statement. The conclusion should skillfully reiterate this thesis, creating a well-rounded presentation composed of a compelling introduction, a cohesive body, and a powerful conclusion.

Non-Verbal Cues

- Facial expressions encompass movements of the eyes, brows, and mouth that serve as nonverbal signals. For instance, frowning, raising one's eyebrows, and rolling one's eyes are all facial expressions that convey specific meanings.
- Eye contact refers to the act of looking into someone's eyes to communicate.
- Kinesics, or body movement, includes nonverbal signals such as posture and gestures. For example, having slouched shoulders can indicate fatigue.
- Haptics pertain to touch-based nonverbal cues, such as hugging, shaking hands, or lightly touching someone's shoulder or arm.
- Proxemics revolves around the use and perception of physical space to convey meaning and indicate relational dynamics. For instance, standing close to another person during a conversation can signal intimacy.
- Appearance relates to how grooming, clothing, and other belongings can communicate messages about an individual.

With these factors in mind, planning, preparing, and delivering a speech are critical. To ensure that the topic resonates with the audience, speakers should personalize their content. The body of the speech should focus on a few main points that serve as the central themes, accompanied by a clear topic sentence or thesis statement. Strong supporting points are necessary for the presentation, and the conclusion should be crafted with artistic skill, reiterating the thesis statement for emphasis. Thus, the entire presentation unfolds like a dramatic event, comprising three acts: a purposeful introduction, a logical development of ideas, and a compelling conclusion.

3. Reading Skill

The approach to reading can vary based on the reader's purpose or intent, as reading is expected to enhance competency and provide knowledge and insight. Reading can be categorized at three levels: as a useful activity, an enjoyable experience, and a focused task that requires selective and sustained attention. Ultimately, reading serves as a means of learning, and the goal should be flexibility rather than speed. Active reading is crucial, which means understanding one's purpose and intent. Fluency in reading is important, and there are four key steps: concentration, avoiding regression, minimizing sub-vocalization, and maximizing eye-span. A proficient reader adjusts their reading speed according to their goals. Since reading is a process of thinking influenced by the printed page, it can be seen as a psycholinguistic guessing game.

Reading occurs at four levels: reading the lines, reading between the lines, reading behind the lines, and reading beyond the lines. A reader develops an understanding of a text by actively engaging their mental faculties. Through this interaction, the reader decodes the text and constructs meanings based on both the content written by the author and their own interpretations. This intellectual soft skill presents readers with a challenging yet rewarding experience in today's world.

4. Writing Skill

Writing is often regarded as the most complex and demanding. Clear thinking and clear writing are interconnected. Writing involves the careful use of words, sentences, and paragraphs, with words being the fundamental building blocks of communication. Writers develop an appealing writing style not by memorizing dictionaries, but through extensive reading, attention to language, and a deep appreciation for words. Selecting the right word in writing is more crucial than in speech, as it involves using the appropriate term within the right context, which can be grammatical, geographical, temporal, or stylistic. Stylistic appropriateness refers to how well the writing matches the subject matter and the audience.

Writers must choose their words carefully for the occasion, ensuring they are accurate and precise rather than vague. This includes selecting words for both their denotative and connotative meanings. Overusing abstract and general terms can lead to vagueness but can occasionally serve to introduce or summarize topics. Therefore, effective writing incorporates a variety of word types—abstract, concrete, general, and specific—to convey different meanings. To ensure clarity, writers must be concise, avoiding repetition and unnecessary verbosity while opting for simple language.

Similarly, writers should steer clear of clichés, trendy terms, jargon, and overly complex expressions. Replacing ambiguous and convoluted language with straightforward, clear terms facilitates genuine communication between the speaker and listener, as well as between the writer and reader.

Good writing should exhibit unity, completeness, and coherence. It's essential to craft a comprehensive topic sentence that summarizes the work, ensuring every sentence relates back to it. Elements such as grammar, punctuation, word choice, and sentence structure all contribute to the overall effectiveness of the writing. It's important to note that the first draft serves the writer, while the revised draft is intended for the reader. After completing a piece, a writer should adopt the role of an editor, methodically assessing every aspect of the document—content, organization, sentence structure, diction, grammar, punctuation, and overall coherence. Such writing not only constitutes an effective communication skill but is also a valuable soft skill.

Institutions often do not place significant emphasis on soft skills, and the reasons for this are evident. Soft skills are typically absent from the curriculum, which is overloaded with numerous subjects. Consequently, there is little opportunity for students to develop these skills. As the saying goes, "Art is long, but time is short," leading to a disregard for soft skills in technical education. Each year, countless students graduate without securing suitable employment that matches their qualifications, largely because they struggle with group discussions and interviews due to inadequate communication skills.

In conclusion, mastering communication skills significantly enhances an individual's interactions, job performance, and career opportunities. Communication skills and soft skills are intertwined, forming the foundation of a successful personality. Together, they impart leadership qualities, encapsulated in the pursuit of human excellence.