

Introduction

Unit 1: Communication in the Workplace

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Teacher Guide

Communication skills are ranked FIRST among a job candidate's "must have" skills and qualities, according to a 2010 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Workforce Skill: Life skills, Soft skills, Professional skills

Students: English speaking adults who read at the 1st – 3rd grade levels. (TABE Level Literacy (0 - 1.9) and Easy (2.0-3.9.)

Strand: PIVA Pathways Communication

Length: 6 weeks

This unit, its lessons and its activities are based on *Skills to Pay the Bills: Communication* <http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/Communication.pdf> .

The content was modified to teach the adult learner at the beginning literacy levels.

By the end of Unit 1, the student will be able to

- communicate effectively within groups,
- demonstrate knowledge of how body language affects communication,
- practice active listening skills,
- and understand the different categories of communication at work

as evidenced by successfully completed activities and pre- and post-assessments.

About College Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)

The College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for Adult Education report presents a set of college and career readiness standards that reflect the content most relevant to preparing adult

students for success in colleges, technical training programs, work and citizenship—in the areas of English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The standards were identified in response to a need expressed by adult educators to pinpoint a manageable set of the Common Core State Standards most indispensable for college and career readiness and important to adult students.

Recognizing that beginning literacy adult education students enter the career pathway ladder at the first rung, the CCR standards define the foundational and beginning literacy standards for that on-ramp level. They help guide teachers of as their adult students embark on a path of lifelong learning, including workforce skills and post-secondary education.

Level	Objectives for this unit
Beginning Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn the components of successful communication. • Increase personal effectiveness on the job and avoid misunderstandings by practicing professional and respectful communication skills. • Examine the fundamentals of good communication, including strengthening listening skills and improving online communication. • Gain awareness of the importance of body language and tone and how to use them effectively. • Learn to effectively communicate in a team and contribute ideas, come to a consensus, and take direction.
Level	College Career Readiness Standards
A	<p>Reading Anchor 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (R1.1) <p>Reading Anchor 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas (e.g., maps, charts, photographs, political cartoons, etc.). (R 1.7) <p>Writing Anchor 6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With guidance and support, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers. (W1.6)

Speaking and Listening Anchor 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners in small and larger groups. (SL.1.1 a, b, & c.)

Speaking and Listening Anchor 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

- Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood. (SL 2)

Speaking and Listening Anchor 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

- Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood. (SL 3)

Speaking and Listening Anchor 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. (SL 1.4)

Speaking and Listening Anchor 5: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated appropriate.

- Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly. (SL 6)

Language Standards Anchor 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L 1 a-1)

Language Standard Anchor 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. (L 2 a – i)

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills, RF K.1 and 1.1 merge through RF K.4 and 1.4 merge (p 41-43)

Why Communication?

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

- George Bernard Shaw

The Purpose of This Unit

Communication skills are high on the list of soft skills that employers expect their employees to have, regardless of whether they are entering the workplace for the first time or working in a highly skilled environment. This holds equally true for the low level adult learner.

Good communication skills are also necessary for the development of self-advocacy and self-determination, important skills for lifelong learning and success that so many of our literacy learners have not learned.

The lessons in this unit are divided into the following topics:

1. What is Communication?
2. Body Language
3. Active Listening
4. Styles of Communication
5. Good Communication Skills in the Workplace
6. Review and quiz

Activities: Activities in this unit offer many opportunities for students to practice communicating their strengths and assets while learning how to minimize any perceived barriers to employment or working with others. Adult learners will improve their literacy skills in the context of learning soft skills at work. For this reason, reading, writing, listening, discussion, and digital literacy activities are included with each lesson.

Pacing: As you go through this unit, please feel free to add to or tweak the lessons and activities to better focus on the needs of your student or group of students. It is best that students work at their own pace and comfort level. In some instances, your student/s might go through the

material quickly. In other instances, you might have to bring in other, real world materials to help improve your students' understanding of the topic.



Discussions: It is important for students to develop a variety of skills for both communicating TO others and learning how to interpret the information received FROM others through regular and ongoing speaking, listening, reading, writing, and digital literacy practice.

- Knowing our audience and understanding how they need to receive information is equally as important as knowing ourselves.
- In **Unit 1: Communication in the Workplace**, students will learn about

- Different forms of communication
- Body language
- Active listening skills
- Context for communication
- Good communication skills in the Workplace
- Review and quiz

Why communication skills are essential at work

Employers consistently rank good communication skills at the top of the list of soft skills for potential employees.

- **During an interview**, employers are impressed by a job candidate who answers questions with more than one-word answers (such as yes...yeah...no...nah...dunno).
 - A candidate's replies demonstrate that he or she is listening.

- The prospective employee's ability to ask questions for clarification and/or follow-up tells employers of how the candidate or employee will interact with supervisors, co-workers, and customers and resolve conflicts when they arise.
- **Non-verbal communication** is also critical in an interview or during interactions at work. Employers expect their employees to maintain a neutral stance, as well as good eye contact and good posture, and demonstrate “active” listening skills.
- **Good communicators** are aware of different perceptions and biases that individuals bring to the table, and take account of these differences as they communicate with others. They understand the context for communication – that there is a time and place to communicate formally or informally, and that communication via email is different than communication in a face-to-face situation.

Knowing your students

The activities in this lesson will not only help learners practice and recognize how they provide information to others, but also help them consider how others may prefer to receive information. Because you will be working with the lowest level literacy native speaking learners (0-5th grade) most of the lesson will ask your students to listen, speak, discuss, and critically think about communication in the workplace. To help student strengthen the gaps in their literacy skills, we ask you to set aside from 15-20% of your class time for vocabulary, phonics, and word identification instruction. Students will also be asked to read leveled reading passages, practice rudimentary writing and numeracy activities such as filling out time slips, and complete simple digital literacy activities.

Teaching your multi-level class

Scaffolding the stories and worksheets to reach all your student levels

- Modeling how to underline or highlight a new or difficult vocabulary word in the story by thinking-aloud.
- Reading the story to the students before asking them to read independently or in small groups or pairs.
- Pre-teaching vocabulary.
- Activating prior knowledge.
- Providing time for discussion.
- Using a variety of teaching aids, including graphic organizers, videos, podcasts, manipulatives.
- Placing students in leveled groups. While low level students practice their reading and decoding skills, the higher level students can concentrate on activities designed for them.
- Pausing to check for understanding, clarify questions, reflect, and review.
- Providing additional practice through extension activities that link classroom knowledge to the world outside.
- Integrating conceptual knowledge with practical activities.

Differentiated instruction

Differentiated instruction is an approach that enables instructors to plan strategically to meet the needs of every learner. The approach encompasses planning and delivery of instruction, classroom management techniques, and expectations of learners' performance that take into consideration the diversity and varied levels of readiness, interests, and learning profiles of learners. (Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy)

Teachers adapt curriculum and instruction on six dimensions, including how the instructor approaches the

- content (the what of the lesson),
 - process (the how of the lesson), and
 - expected product (the learner-produced result), and
- takes into consideration the learners'
- interest,
 - profile (learning strengths and weaknesses, and gaps), and
 - readiness.

From the differentiated instruction fact sheet online at the TEAL Just Write! Guide. <https://teal.ed.gov/tealguide/diffinstruct>. Click on the link to read more about this instruction.

Companion tutoring resources

- ***Litstart, Tutoring Guide***. This resource can be purchased at <http://www.litstart.org/>.

The book provides activities for strengthening your students' literacy skills in reading, writing, and comprehension. Lists of word sorts and common sight words are also provided. This guide is simple to use and easy to follow.



- ***Teaching Adults: Literacy Works*** website: http://www.litworks.org/teaching_adults.html

This website will provide you with a variety of additional resources to use with your students as they develop their literacy skills, as well as in their knowledge of soft skills in the workplace.

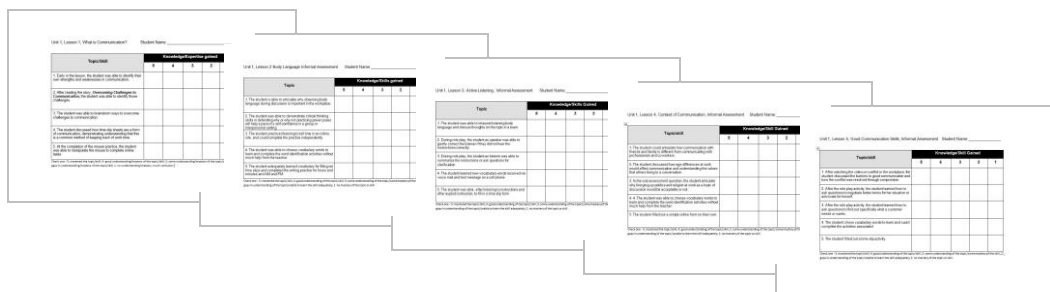
About Extension Activities

Extension activities are designed to provide your students with time and practice to master their new skills, whether through reinforcing knowledge about communicating in the workplace, practice filling out time sheets or using a calendar, or playing an online game that improves digital literacy skills. It is important to reinforce new communication skills, so that they are strengthened over time.

- **Additional Practice.** Encourage your students to practice, practice, practice outside of the classroom, and then add some more practice. Ask your students to practice their new communication skills in the context of the real world, whether through reading, listening, or simply observing others in businesses they visit, such as a convenience store, bank, or grocery store, or in their workplace.
- **Making Connections.** The more your students are able to connect their classroom knowledge to the lives they lead at work and with friends and family, the more quickly they will be able to learn and understand these new concepts. With extension activities, the unfamiliar will begin to seem familiar and less daunting over time. Through this additional practice, you and your students will be amazed at how fast they can learn!

Observational Assessments

At the end of each lesson, you will be asked to fill out an assessment for each student to check on how well they learned the objectives. These end-of-lesson checklists will provide you with an opportunity to review areas in which the learners' understanding of the topic still needs to be strengthened.

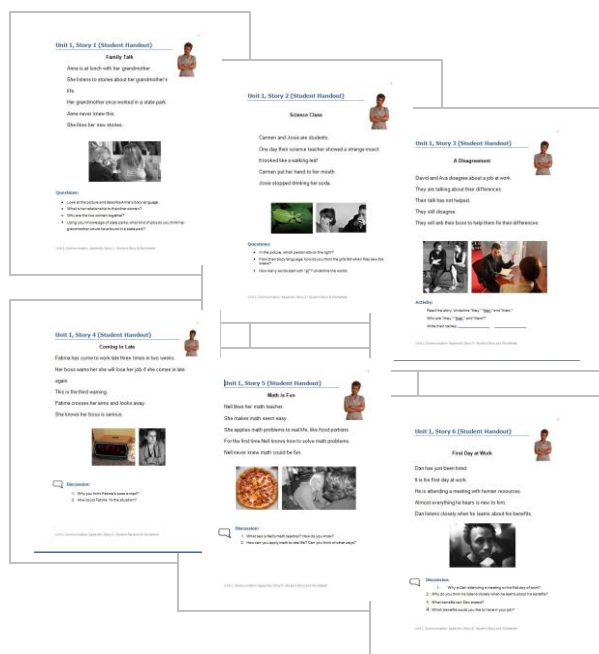


About the Appendix Stories

The six stories in this unit are designed to activate discussion in class or between students and their teacher about communication in the workplace. The stories come with pre-reading activities, questions designed to refer your students to the text for answers, word identification skills practice, and increasing sight word vocabulary. It is up to the teacher or tutor, to choose which stories to use in the five lessons and when.

The stories are

- Story 1: Family Talk
- Story 2: Science Class
- Story 3: A Disagreement
- Story 4: Coming in Late
- Story 5: Math is Fun
- Story 6: First Day at Work





A word about the importance of teaching digital literacy skills to beginning literacy level adults

Digital literacy is necessary for today's jobs. Ninety-six percent of working Americans use new communications technologies as part of their daily life.

- U.S. Department of Commerce

Employers from all regions in the U.S. expect employees, regardless of the level of their literacy levels, to have some mastery of digital literacy and computer skills in the workplace. Food Lion, Walmart, and other entry level employers expect applicants to fill out online application forms, send simple emails and text messages, and communicate via cell phones. Restaurants are increasingly using Point of Sales Systems (POS), which are computerized programs that keep track of customer orders. Chefs receive these orders via computer terminals in the kitchen, and waiters and waitresses are expected to use the system to keep track of food orders and the customers at their tables. Some POS systems are simple; others are extremely complicated.

The new workplace reality is that entry level jobs and the computer age have merged. It is no longer possible to teach workplace skills without digital literacy instruction. Adult education and literacy programs that continue to teach adult learners without reference to technology are doing their students a disservice by ignoring this important element of adult learner instruction and the challenges that our adult students face in their everyday lives.

“Digital literacy is on par with basic reading and writing skills, especially for job seekers...”

- Learning Advisor/Student Advisor

Teachers and tutors who are uncomfortable providing technology in instruction should be taught by program staff and trainers how to incorporate digital literacy skills in instruction, so that they are able to help their students learn important workforce skills.

The lessons in this unit will occasionally provide simple and elementary practice in developing digital literacy skills. Because they are so basic, these skills are as easy for the teacher and tutor to master as for the student.

We recommend that teachers and tutors become well acquainted with the digital literacy activities in this unit before handing them over to their students. Once you have mastered a site, you should consider how to transfer the skill step by step to your student/s by

- 1) entering the site,
- 2) demonstrating the use of a mouse and keyboard,
- 3) interpreting the elements of the opening web page with students,
- 4) providing detailed (explicit) instructions,
- 5) helping students to start the digital activity, and
- 6) helping them to enter and navigate the site on their own.

Once you are assured that your student/s can continue the digital activity on their own, you can be assured that your student is able to complete the activity independently.

The instructions for digital literacy activities in the teacher notes will be explicit. Technical advice is available at your local program or at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at 800-237-0178.

If connectivity is an issue at the class/tutoring site, you are urged to find other means to deliver digital literacy instruction – via cell phones and tablets, at a public library or even at a McDonald's or Applebees, where free Wi-Fi service is readily available.

Before You Begin — Pre Self-Assessment

Unit One: Communication (Pre-class Assessment)

Before taking Unit One, please place a check in the appropriate box.

Topics	What I Know				
	Nothing	Very Little	Some	A lot	Enough
Know about the different forms of communication at work including spoken, written, video, visual, and image communication.					
Can read body language when I talk to someone.					
Know how body language and facial expressions affect my interactions with my boss and co-workers, and with customers.					
Know how body language and facial expressions affect my interactions with my friends, family, and the general public.					
Know the difference between a high power pose and a low power pose.					
Know the body language signs of someone who is actively listening.					

Give your student the *Pre Self-Assessment Form* to fill out. This form will provide you with a good idea about what your students already know about the topic and what they still need to know. The form will also tell you if your students think they know more about the topic than they actually do.

With low level students, explain the form carefully. Read each topic, explain what the question is asking, and give them time to think about their answer and ask questions. You might have to define words, but *be careful not to lead them to an answer*.

After students have completed the forms, ask them to place them face down. Collect the forms and examine them after class. Your organization will already have tested students on their literacy levels. Both the students' pre self-assessments and their TABE or Best Plus scores will provide you with a good idea of their literacy levels, as well as their current knowledge of communication skills in the workplace and outside of it. Both assessments will help you gauge how to teach Unit One to this particular student or group of students.

After you complete Unit One, provide your student with the post self-assessment form. Along with your observations, this self-assessment will give you a good idea of how well student/s feel they have mastered the topic.

Unit One: Communication (Pre Self-Assessment)

Before taking Unit One, please place a ✓ in the appropriate box.

Topic	What I Know				
	Nothing	Very little	Some	A lot	Unsure
I have a good understanding about the different forms of communication at work, including spoken, unspoken, written, visual, and mass communication, and when to use them.					
When I talk to someone, I can tell from their body language whether they like what they are hearing or not.					
I know how my body language and facial expressions affect my communication with my boss and co-workers, and with customers.					
I know the difference between a high power pose and a low power pose.					
I know the body language signs of someone who is actively listening.					

Topic	What I Know				
	Nothing	Very little	Some	A lot	Unsure
When I am receiving instructions, I know how to listen and ask questions to make sure that I understand the speaker.					
I am confident that I know the difference between communicating with people at work and with friends and family.					
I know how to fill out a time slip.					
I know how to speak to each generation, young or old, at work to show respect and consideration for their values.					
I know how to communicate effectively in many settings, with many groups of people from many backgrounds.					
At work or in a formal setting, and know when to be friendly, firm, helpful, and professional.					
I know how to contact an employer in a timely manner if I cannot make it to work on time or if I need to call in sick.					

