

Communicate!

FIFTEENTH EDITION



Kathleen S. **Verderber** • Deanna D. **Sellnow** • Rudolph F. **Verderber**

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Fifteenth Edition

Kathleen S. Verderber

Northern Kentucky University

Deanna D. Sellnow

University of Central Florida

Rudolph F. Verderber

Distinguished Teaching Professor of Communication,
University of Cincinnati



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Communicate!, Fifteenth Edition**Kathleen S. Verderber, Deanna D. Sellnow,
Rudolph F. Verderber**

Product Director: Monica Eckman

Product Manager: Kelli Strieby

Content Developer: Kassi Radomski

Associate Content Developer: Karolina Kiwak

Product Assistant: Colin Solan

Media Developer: Jessica Badiner

Marketing Manager: Kristin Davis

Content Project Manager: Dan Saabye

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Manufacturing Planner: Doug Bertke

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IP Project Manager: Farah Fard

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Preface

I am so happy to be sharing this revised version of *Communicate!* with you and hope you find the changes refreshing and relevant. As you will see, I have paid special attention to providing examples of communication as it occurs not only in face-to-face settings but also through technology-driven ones. I have also included examples of communication in a variety of contexts including friends and family, as well as across cultures and co-cultures. I hope you find this approach compelling and useful.

This edition marks the first time neither Rudy nor Kathie Verderber—the book’s original authors—were actively involved in the writing and revision process. However, I have worked hard to remain true to the hallmarks of their work, while also incorporating examples that speak to the new realities of communicating today.

To Students

Congratulations! You are beginning to study communication, a subject that is important and useful to you in all parts of your life. When you want to establish or improve a relationship, when you need to work with others on a group project for class or work, or when you are asked to make a public presentation in person or online, your success will depend on how effectively you communicate in those settings.

The primary goal of this book is and always has been to equip you with the communication skills you need to be successful in your personal relationships and professional endeavors. Over the years, the Verderbers have worked to make sure that students, like you, have a book that is easy and enjoyable to read. Although both Rudy and Kathie are now enjoying retirement and are no longer playing a role in the revisions, the characteristics of their work remain. I have made sure that the information, theories, and skills discussed are relevant to the real relationships and communication situations you face. Today that means providing best practices for communicating effectively across multimodal channels and settings.

As always, *Communicate!* is written with five specific goals in mind:

1. **To explain important research-based communication concepts and theories** of human communication.
2. **To provide tools to practice and assess specific communication skills** in interpersonal, intercultural, group, and public speaking settings, as well as in both face-to-face and virtual environments.
3. **To describe and encourage you to adopt ethical communication strategies** when interacting with others.
4. **To teach you the nuances of communicating effectively in different cultures.**
5. **To stimulate critical and creative thinking** about the concepts and skills you learn as they apply to face-to-face interactions, as well as in technology-mediated ones.

To Instructors

Thank you for considering this new edition of *Communicate!* I believe the revisions will surprise and delight those of you who have used *Communicate!* in the past. I also believe

that those of you looking for a new textbook will find this edition of *Communicate!* to be refreshing and engaging. In the sections that follow, I detail what's new and highlight the pre-existing features that have made *Communicate!* a perennial favorite among students and faculty alike.

New to This Edition

- **Increased emphasis on the role of technology and social media.** Because technology and social media now play such a central role in our lives, I have integrated discussions of research findings and best practices into each chapter. These discussions focus on how specific communication concepts operate both similarly and differently in technological and face-to-face environments.
- **A revised chapter on listening** (Chapter 6) that integrates contemporary research on cognitive processes being published today, as well as how technology and social media are changing the way we listen and bring new challenges to listening effectively.
- **A revised chapter on presentational aids** (Chapter 13) to honor the range of visual, audio, and audiovisual aids used so often in speechmaking today.
- A new **sample informative speech outline and transcript on** Internet identity theft.

New features:

- **Student learning outcomes** introduce each chapter to guide students to focus on main points as they read.
- Chapter summaries have been replaced with a **Reflection and Assessment** section asking students to answer key questions about the chapter before moving on to the next chapter.
- **“Apply It” boxes** in the margins encourage readers to reflect on and apply a specific communication concept or skill to their lives.

Revised features:

- **“Pop Comm!”** features have been revised and renamed as **“Communicating in the World”** to better reflect the nature of this feature, which illustrates key communication concepts and theories played out in daily life.
- **Diverse Voices** essays have been streamlined in ways that target cross-cultural communication challenges as told by real people who have experienced them.
- The **Appendix on interviewing** has been updated and revised throughout.

Chapter-by-Chapter Revisions

- **Chapter 1, “Foundations of Communication,”** continues to focus on the fundamental processes of communication and is still organized so that students see the primacy of messages and the canned plans and scripts we use to encode and

decode them in different communication settings and through various channels. The chapter now also includes sections on media richness, social presence, and synchronicity as they impact communication and relationships online. The section on communication ethics has been expanded to address both the *bright side* and *dark side* of communication.

- **Chapter 2, “Perception of Self and Others,”** has been updated to reflect current research about self-concept, self-esteem, and how they influence and are influenced by communication. The chapter has also been expanded to explore more fully the role perception processes play in social media interactions.
- **Chapter 3, “Intercultural Communication,”** includes all of the foundational concepts we use to differentiate cultural perspectives from each other. In addition, the chapter focuses on how cultural identity affects communication and presents guidelines for demonstrating empathy and respect when communicating with people from cultures other than your own.
- **Chapter 4, “Verbal Messages,”** describes the nature of language and how language and speech communities influence message interpretation. The chapter then explains how message meanings are derived from the words themselves (semantics), the conversational context (pragmatics), and social and cultural contexts (sociolinguistics). Special attention is also paid toward how communicating through technology-mediated channels influences semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic meanings. Finally, specific guidelines for improving skills in constructing and interpreting verbal messages are proposed throughout the chapter.
- **Chapter 5, “Nonverbal Messages,”** has been updated with current research and examples of how nonverbal messages are communicated, interpreted, and misinterpreted in online environments. The chapter also describes the role proxemics (personal space, territorial space, and acoustic space) play when communicating in face-to-face and virtual settings.
- **Chapter 6, “Listening,”** has been updated to reflect what current research tells us about listening processes and challenges, particularly in light of the tendency to multitask at the expense of listening effectiveness. The chapter proposes active listening as a way to overcome these challenges.
- **Chapter 7, “Interpersonal Relationships,”** has been updated with current research and uses the friendship of Whitney and Paige to understand the stages of coming together and apart, as well as the nature of dialectical tensions in relationship.
- **Chapter 8, “Interpersonal Communication,”** has been updated with contemporary research and examples. It focuses on the role of communication in developing and maintaining a positive communication climate and a section on interpersonal conflict management styles.
- **Chapter 9, “Communicating in Groups,”** offers updated examples of types of groups and effective communication within them. It also provides an expanded discussion of virtual groups and effective virtual group communication based on current research.

Finally, the chapter offers an extended discussion about conflict in groups and how to manage it effectively when interacting in face-to-face or virtual environments.

- **Chapter 10, “Group Leadership and Problem Solving,”** focuses specifically on the nature of effective leadership and problem solving in meetings and on work group teams, which includes a comprehensive discussion about communicating group decisions in written, oral, and virtual formats.
- **Chapter 11, “Topic Selection and Development,”** continues to focus on topic selection, research, and speech development based on ongoing audience analysis and adaptation. The chapter also includes a discussion of the pros and cons of using an annotated bibliography or research cards to document information you might use in the speech.
- **Chapter 12, “Organizing Your Speech,”** includes a sample outline on the abuses of the prescription drug Adderall among college students today, as well as an expanded discussion of the rhetorical strategies one can use to gain attention in the introduction.
- **Chapter 13, “Presentational Aids,”** illustrates the role of visual, audio, and audiovisual aids in speechmaking today. In addition to choosing, preparing, and displaying presentational aids, this edition adds a section on using presentational aids during the actual speech.
- **Chapter 14, “Language and Oral Style,”** is devoted exclusively to effective formal oral language style used in public speaking as it differs from written style and casual conversational style. The chapter also highlights what is considered appropriate and inappropriate language, as well as strategies to improve clarity and vivid descriptions.
- **Chapter 15, “Delivery,”** focuses on how to practice conversational and animated delivery using your voice and body. The chapter also illustrates how to use technology to conduct effective rehearsals and to give speeches to multiple audiences when doing speeches online.
- **Chapter 16, “Informative Speaking,”** has been updated to include current examples and reflect current research. This edition also introduces a new informative speech on Internet Identity Theft.
- **Chapter 17, “Persuasive Speaking,”** has been updated with current examples and research. It continues to explain the nature of persuasion as a form of argument developed with strategies of logos, ethos, and pathos.
- The **Appendix on interviewing** has been revised to focus on the fact that many jobs are now posted and applied to online. It includes the types of questions to include in an effective interview protocol and some guidelines to follow when conducting an information-gathering interview, media interview, or employment interview as both interviewer and as interviewee. The chapter gives considerable attention to employment seekers and how to locate job openings through formal and informal networks, as well as how to prepare application materials, conduct the interview, and follow up afterward.

Hallmark Features

- **“Communication Skill” boxes** provide a step-by-step guide for each of the communication skills presented in the text. Each of these boxes includes the definition of the skill, a brief description of its use, the steps for enacting the skill, and an example that illustrates the skill.
- **“Speech Plan Action Steps”** in Chapters 11–15 guide students through a sequential speech-planning process. The activities that accompany each of these action steps guide students through an orderly process that results in better speeches.
- **Sample student speeches** appear in the text, each accompanied by an audience adaptation plan, an outline, and an annotated transcript. A new sample speech is introduced in Chapter 16: “Internet Identify Theft: Self-Protection Steps.” For some of these speeches, students can use the MindTap® Speech for *Communicate!* to view videos, see the transcript and two different kinds of outlines and sample note cards, and prepare their own critiques.
- **“Communicate on Your Feet” speech assignments** in Units I and II encourage students to begin building their public-speaking skills immediately while also addressing the needs of instructors who assign prepared speeches throughout the course. In Unit IV, these assignments correspond to the speech types discussed in Chapters 16 and 17.
- **“What Would You Do? A Question of Ethics”** are short case studies that appear near the end of chapters. These cases present ethical challenges and require students to think critically, sorting through a variety of ethical dilemmas faced by communicators. Conceptual material presented in Chapter 1 lays the groundwork for the criteria on which students may base their assessments, but each case focuses on issues raised in a specific chapter.
- MindTap® Speech for *Communicate!* is a fully online, highly personalized learning experience that enhances learner engagement and improves outcomes while reducing instructor workload. By combining readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments into a singular Learning Path, MindTap guides students through their course with ease and engagement. Videos are available in the Speech Video Library so that students can better comprehend the key concepts of each chapter. Activities, powered by MindApps developed specifically for this discipline, guide students through the process of analyzing sample speeches, creating topics, building outlines, and practicing and presenting their speech. Instructors personalize the Learning Path by customizing Cengage Learning resources and adding their own content via apps that integrate into the MindTap framework seamlessly with any Learning Management System.

Teaching and Learning Resources

Communicate! is accompanied by a full suite of integrated materials that will make teaching and learning more efficient and effective. **Note to faculty:** If you want your students to have access to the online resources for this book, please be sure to order them

for your course. The content in these resources can be bundled with every new copy of the text or ordered separately. Contact your local Cengage Learning Consultant. *If you do not order them, your students will not have access to the online resources.*

Student Resources

- **The Speech Video Library available in MindTap** provides instructors an easy way to keyword search, review, evaluate, and assign exemplar student speeches into their classroom and online learning environment. There are more than 70 videos, including both famous historical speeches and realistic student classroom speeches. Student speech types include informative, persuasive, invitational, impromptu and group presentations. All speeches are accompanied by activities to help students refine and develop their speech preparation and critical thinking skills.
- The Speech Plan Action Steps can be completed with the **Outline Builder available in MindTap**. Outline Builder is a speech preparation resource that provides step-by-step support for students to select an appropriate topic, design balanced and organized main points and sub points, formulate citations that follow guidelines, and create succinct note cards. Students arrive well prepared and confident on speech day, with a complete and well-organized outline in hand. Outline Builder can also be customized based upon instructor preferences and expectations.
- **Practice and Present available in MindTap**, powered by YouSeeU, is a synchronous (live capture) and asynchronous speech video delivery, recording, and grading system. It compiles student video submissions in one, easy-to-access place that allows self-review, peer review, and instructor grades in one system. Instructors are able to provide feedback via rubrics and time-stamped comments so that students no longer have to wait until future class sessions to receive timely, meaningful feedback on their presentations. It can be also used to allow students to practice their speech outside of class ahead of time and get feedback, providing students with the tools to help reduce speech anxiety. It gives students the ability to synchronize visual aids to videos and also provides group presentation functionality.
- **CengageBrain.com Online Store** is a single destination for more than 15,000 new print textbooks, textbook rentals, eBooks, single eChapters, and print, digital, and audio study tools. CengageBrain.com provides the freedom to purchase Cengage Learning products à la carte—exactly what you need, when you need it. Visit cengagebrain.com for details.
- ***A Guide to the Basic Course for ESL Students*** can be bundled and is designed to assist the nonnative speaker. The *Guide* features FAQs, helpful URLs, and strategies for accent management and speech apprehension.
- ***Service Learning in Communication Studies: A Handbook*** is an invaluable resource for students in the basic course that integrates, or will soon integrate, a service-learning component. This handbook provides guidelines for connecting service-learning work with classroom concepts and advice for working effectively with agencies and organizations. It also provides model forms and reports and a directory of online resources.

Instructor Resources

- **Instructor’s Resource Web site.** This Web site is an all-in one resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing for instructors. Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, you will find an Instructor’s Manual, Chapter-by-Chapter PowerPoint presentations, and Cengage Learning Testing files powered by Cognero.
- The **Instructor’s Resource Manual** includes a sample syllabi, chapter-by-chapter outlines, summaries, vocabulary lists, suggested lecture and discussion topics, classroom exercises, assignments, and a comprehensive test bank with answer key and rejoinders. In addition, this manual includes the “**Spotlight on Scholars**” boxes that were in previous editions of the main text. These boxes feature the work of eight eminent communications scholars, putting a face on scholarship by telling each scholar’s “story.” These boxes can be used as discussion starters, as enrichment for students who are interested in communication scholarship, or in any other way instructors would like to integrate them into the course.
- **Special-topic instructor’s manuals.** Written by Deanna Sellnow, University of Central Florida, these three brief manuals provide instructor resources for teaching public speaking online, with a service-learning approach, and with a problem-based learning approach that focuses on critical thinking and teamwork skills. Each manual includes course syllabi; icebreakers; information about learning cycles and learning styles; and public speaking basics such as coping with anxiety, outlining, and speaking ethically.
- **Cengage Learning Testing, powered by Cognero.** Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, this test bank contains multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions for each chapter. Cognero is a flexible, online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content. Create multiple test versions instantly and deliver through your LMS platform from wherever you may be. Cognero is compatible with Blackboard, Angel, Moodle, and Canvas LMS platforms.
- ***The Teaching Assistant’s Guide to the Basic Course***, based on leading communication teacher training programs, covers general teaching and course management topics as well as specific strategies for communication instruction—for example, providing effective feedback on performance, managing sensitive class discussions, and conducting mock interviews.
- The ***Media Guide for Interpersonal Communication*** provides faculty with media resource listings focused on general interpersonal communication topics. Each listing provides compelling examples of how interpersonal communication concepts are illustrated in particular films, books, plays, Web sites, or journal articles. Discussion questions are provided.
- **CourseCare training and support.** Get trained, get connected, and get the support you need for the seamless integration of digital resources into your course. This unparalleled technology service and training program provides robust online resources, peer-to-peer instruction, personalized training, and a customizable program you can count on. Visit cengage.com to sign up for online seminars, first

days of class services, technical support, or personalized, face-to-face training. Our online and onsite trainings are frequently led by one of our Lead Teachers, faculty members who are experts in using Wadsworth Cengage Learning technology and can provide best practices and teaching tips.

- **Flex-text customization program.** With this program you can create a text as unique as your course: quickly, simply, and affordably. As part of our flex-text program, you can add your personal touch to *Communicate!* with a course-specific cover and up to 32 pages of your own content—at no additional cost. The Media and Media Literacy bonus chapter can also be added.
- **A single chapter on public speaking** is available through Cengage Custom Publishing for survey courses in which developing public speaking skills is not an emphasis. This chapter, written by the *Communicate!* authors, presents a concise overview of public speaking and the speech-making process. It is designed to substitute for Chapters 11–17 of *Communicate!* and to provide an overview, rather than a comprehensive guide to the speech-making process.

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Deanna D. Sellnow

Communicate!

UNIT ONE

Foundations of Communication



In the words of educational philosopher, Robert M. Hutchins, former dean of the Yale Law School and former president and chancellor of the University of Chicago,

A world community can only exist with world communication, which means something more than extensive software facilities scattered about the globe. It means common understanding, a common tradition, common ideas and common ideals.

The title of the book you are about to read is *Communicate!* and from it you will gain skills designed to help you achieve what Hutchins describes. Before we embark on our journey, however, we ought to begin with a common understanding of what *communication* means. We know that communication has to do with things like reading, writing, talking, and listening. What people sometimes fail to realize, however, is that communication is something we can learn to do more effectively through study and practice.

At its core, communication stems from the desire to share our thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others. We do this through the messages we send and receive every day. Messages are made up of a combination of verbal symbols (words), nonverbal cues (behaviors), and perhaps visual images. Through reflection and analysis, we interpret the messages of others—sometimes accurately and sometimes not.

New technologies provide new channels for communicating and new challenges. For example, e-mailing, texting, tweeting, blogging, Facebook messaging, Skyping, and Snapchatting are expanding our ability to stay in touch with distant others. With these opportunities, however, comes an intensified need to improve our communication competence as we tailor our messages to be appropriate for these different communication channels. So this book focuses on effective communication (1) in various settings such as interpersonal encounters, small groups, and public forums, as well as (2) using a variety of channels ranging from flat print to face-to-face to mediated and technology-driven ones.

This first unit consists of six chapters devoted to the fundamental elements of effective communication. In Chapter 1, we discuss the nature of communication and the communication process. Chapter 2 focuses on perceptions of self and perceptions of others. Chapter 3 examines how cultural norms affect communication. Chapter 4 is devoted to verbal messages and Chapter 5 to nonverbal messages. Finally, Chapter 6 examines the listening process and offers specific suggestions for improving listening skills when communicating in both face-to-face and virtual settings. By the time you finish this introductory unit, you will be ready—and we hope excited—to study how to apply these basic concepts in interpersonal, group, and public communication contexts.

Foundations of Communication

● When you've finished this chapter, you will be able to:

- Describe the nature of communication.
- Define key components in the communication process.
- Explain the characteristics of communication.
- Assess messages using the principles of ethical communication.
- Develop a personal communication improvement plan.

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Start with a quick warm-up activity.

Jennifer was running late. She stood at the kitchen counter eating a piece of toast while preparing a grocery list she would use on her way home from work. She noticed that the Weather Channel was forecasting heavy rain and wondered where she left her umbrella. She added “get umbrella” to her shopping list. Jennifer quickly texted Greta, a coworker she was driving with to work today, to ask if Greta had an extra one she could borrow.

As she was texting Greta, Jennifer's 16-year-old daughter, Hailey, bounded into the kitchen and asked, “Mom, can I get a tattoo? Kayla and Whitney are both getting them and we want to match.”

“Not now, Hailey. I'm late for work. We can talk about it tonight.”

“But mom. . . .”

“Yes, Hailey, yes, alright. We'll talk more tonight. . . .” Jennifer exclaimed as she headed to the door. Just then she heard her computer signal an incoming e-mail message. Jennifer thought, “I'd better just get going. I can check it on my phone on the way to pick up Greta.”

As Hailey waited for the school bus, she quickly texted her friends, “Awesome! My mom said YES!”



Terry Vine/Betty Images

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Read, highlight, and take notes online.

APPLY IT

Consider a time when someone started reading or sending texts on their smart phone while you were talking to them. How did that influence your opinion of them? Of their interest in you? Of the value they place on your relationship?

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Can you relate to Jennifer? We live in an era when multitasking has become a norm. Part of that multitasking includes communicating both with ourselves and with others. Like Jennifer, we get ready for work or school while checking voice messages and Facebook pages, answering texts and e-mails, as well as eating breakfast, monitoring the forecast, and getting dressed.

Some argue that the same technology that was supposed to simplify life has actually made it more complex. In fact, communication today extends across interpersonal, group, and public communication settings through flat print, face-to-face, and mediated technology-enhanced channels. Jennifer, for example, composed her grocery list on *a piece of paper* while learning about the weather forecast on *television* and texting Greta on her *smart phone*. Then, when Hailey tried to talk to her *face to face*, Jennifer was so distracted that her communication signals implied to Hailey that she had granted Hailey permission to get a tattoo.

Unfortunately, one of the negative consequences of having so many modes through which we can communicate is the false sense of competence it gives us about our ability to have several conversations at once. This chapter and the ones that follow focus on *why* it's important to improve our communication skills and *how* to do so. As a result, we can avoid the negative consequences of ineffective communication that can hurt our personal and professional relationships.

At its core, communication is the attempt to satisfy the innate human desire to share our thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others. We do this through the messages we send and receive every day. Messages are made up of a combination of verbal symbols (words), nonverbal cues (behaviors), and visual images.

New technologies provide new channels and new challenges for communicating. For example, e-mailing, texting, tweeting, blogging, Skyping, and Facebooking are expanding our ability to communicate with distant others around the world. With these opportunities, however, comes an intensified need to tailor our messages for the different channels we use and the different audiences those channels might address.

What this book intends to help you learn, then, is how to communicate effectively (1) in various settings such as interpersonal encounters, small groups, and public forums, as well as (2) using a variety of channels ranging from flat print to face-to-face to technology-driven ones.

Our ability to make and keep friends, to be good members of our families, to have satisfying intimate relationships, to participate in or lead groups, and to prepare and present formal speeches and presentations depends on our communication skills. Time



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and time again, surveys and studies conclude that employers of college graduates seek oral communication, teamwork, and interpersonal skills (College Learning for the New Global Century, 2008; Darling & Dannels, 2003; Hansen & Hansen, 2007; Hart, 2006; Young, 2003). Unfortunately, these same employers also say communication skills are the ones many new graduates lack (Hart, 2010). Thus, what you learn from this book can not only improve your personal relationships, but also increase your ability to get a job and be successful in your chosen career (Photo 1.1).

Photo 1.1 What are your career goals? How might effective communication help you achieve them?

We begin this chapter by describing the nature of communication and the communication process followed by several characteristics of communication and ethical considerations. Finally, we explain how to become a more competent communicator by developing and following your own personal communication improvement plan.

The Nature of Communication

Communication is a complex process through which we express, interpret, and coordinate messages with others. We do so to create shared meaning, to meet social goals, to manage personal identity, and to carry out our relationships. At its core, then, communication is about messages.

Messages are the verbal utterances, visual images, and nonverbal behaviors used to convey thoughts and feelings. We refer to the process of creating messages as **encoding** and the process of interpreting them as **decoding**. So when a toddler points to her bottle and cries out “Ba-ba,” her message (comprised of a nonverbal gesture—pointing—and a verbal utterance—“Ba-ba”) expresses her desire for her caregiver to give her the bottle of milk. How the caregiver responds, however, depends on how he or she decodes the message. The caregiver might respond by handing her the bottle or by saying, “Sorry, cutie, the bottle is empty.” Either response is also a message. **Feedback** is a response message that indicates how the initial message was interpreted.

Canned Plans and Scripts

But how do we actually go about encoding (or forming) and decoding (or interpreting) messages? We begin based on our canned plans and scripts. A **canned plan** is a “mental library” of scripts each of us draws from to create messages based on what worked for us or others in the past (Berger, 1997). A **script** is an actual text of what to say and do in a specific situation. We have canned plans and scripts for a wide variety of interactions like greeting people, making small talk, giving advice, complimenting or criticizing someone, and persuading others. Each canned plan may contain many scripts tailored to different people and occasions. For example, we may have a “canned greeting plan” that contains a different script for greeting a friend, family member, co-worker, or supervisor. It may also include tailored scripts for doing so in person, over e-mail, or on social media. Patricia, for example, typically begins e-mail messages to her friends by greeting them with their first name. However, when she writes to her professors, she always begins with “Dear Professor.” Doing so helps convey respect for their authority.

Suppose you spot a good friend sitting at a table across the room from you at a restaurant. How might you say hello? How might you tailor your greeting if that person is a romantic partner, work supervisor, co-worker, or classmate?

We develop canned plans and scripts from our own previous experiences and by observing what appears to work or not work for other people, even fictitious people we see on TV or in movies (Frank, Prestin, Chen, & Nabi, 2009) (Photo 1.2). When our canned plan doesn't appear to include a good script for a specific situation, we search for scripts that are *similar* to the current situation and customize an appropriate message. For example, if you have never met a celebrity, you probably don't have a greeting script for doing so in your canned plan mental library. Suppose you are waiting to board a plane and spot a famous athlete, singer, or actor also waiting to board. What would you say?

communication

the process through which we express, interpret, and coordinate messages with others

messages

the verbal utterances, visual images, and nonverbal behaviors used to convey thoughts and feelings

encoding

the process of putting our thoughts and feelings into words and nonverbal behaviors

decoding

the process of interpreting another's message

feedback

responses to messages

canned plan

a “mental library” of scripts each of us draws from to create messages based on what worked in the past

script

an actual text of what to say and do in a specific situation

APPLY IT

What do you say when you greet (a) a stranger you pass on the sidewalk, (b) a casual friend or classmate, (c) a romantic partner, or (d) a family member? In what ways are your scripts similar and different? Why?

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As you figure that out, you are likely to draw from similar scripts and customize them for the person and occasion.

The point here is that we don't usually start from scratch to form messages. Instead we recognize what type of message we want to form, search our mental canned plan library for an appropriate script, and then customize it to fit the unique parts of the current situation. All of this mental choosing typically happens in nanoseconds. We also use our canned plans and scripts to interpret messages from others. Obviously, the larger your canned plan library is, the more likely you will be to form appropriate and effective messages, as well as understand and respond appropriately to the messages of others.

Photo 1.2 Sometimes we develop canned plans and scripts by observing fictional characters or people on TV. What television programs might have influenced your canned plans and scripts? Why and how?

communication context
the physical, social, historical, psychological, and cultural situations that surround a communication event

physical situation
location, environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, noise level), distance between communicators, seating arrangements, and time of day

social presence
a sense of "being there" with another person virtually

social situation
the nature of the relationship that exists between participants

historical situation
the background provided by previous communication between the participants

Communication Context

According to noted German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the ideal communication situation is impossible to achieve, but considering context as we communicate can move us closer to that goal (Littlejohn & Foss, 2010). The **communication context** is made up of the physical, social, historical, psychological, and cultural situations that surround a communication event.

The **physical situation** includes the location, the environmental conditions (temperature, lighting, noise level), and the physical proximity of participants to each other. The physical situation may also be virtual as we interact with others via social media on our computers, tablets, and smart phones. The physical situation can influence how we interpret the messages we send and receive. We are likely to be most successful when we are present with those with whom we are interacting, either literally, as in face-to-face situations, or virtually. The term we use for creating a sense of "being there" with another person virtually is **social presence**. One technology-enhanced communication channel that does not lend itself to conveying social presence is e-mail. As a result, e-mail messages can often be misinterpreted, cause hurt feelings, or damage relationships. Jonas, for instance, gasped when he read the e-mail from his professor that seemed to be accusing him of cheating. He began to fire off a reply but stopped and made an appointment to speak in person so as to avoid the misinterpretation that can come from the lack of social presence provided via e-mail.

The **social situation** is the nature of the relationship that already exists between the participants. The better you know someone and the better relationship you have with them, the more likely you are to accurately interpret their messages and to give them the benefit of the doubt when a message seems negative.

The **historical situation** is the background provided by previous communication between the participants. For instance, suppose Chas texts Anna to tell her he will pick up the draft of the report they had left for their manager. When Anna sees Chas at lunch later that day, she says, "Did you get it?" Another person listening to the conversation would have no idea what the "it" is to which Anna is referring. Yet Chas may well

reply, “It’s on my desk.” Anna and Chas understand one another because of their earlier exchange.

The **psychological situation** includes the moods and feelings each person brings to the encounter. For instance, suppose Corinne is under a great deal of stress. While studying for an exam, a friend stops by and asks her to take a break to go to the gym. Corinne, who is normally good-natured, may respond with an irritated tone of voice, which her friend may misinterpret as Corinne being mad at him.

The **cultural situation** includes the beliefs, values, orientations, underlying assumptions, and rituals that belong to a specific culture (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2009). Everyone is part of one or more cultural group (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability). When two people from different cultures interact, misunderstandings may occur because of their different cultural values, beliefs, orientations, and rituals. The *Communicating in the World* section in this chapter describes how the cultural ritual of mourning is changing in the United States today.

psychological situation
the moods and feelings each person brings to a conversation

cultural situation
the beliefs, values, orientations, underlying assumptions, and rituals that belong to a specific culture

COMMUNICATING IN THE WORLD

Mourning in the United States, 21st-Century Style



Mourning is a universal human communication process of celebrating the life of someone while grieving his or her death. Mourning rituals and traditions vary by culture and religion and change over time. So it is not surprising that mourning in the United States in the 21st century is adapting past practices to modern life.

Today in the United States, for instance, many of the rituals traditionally associated with funerals and memorial services often take place online. Increasingly, one or more family member may prepare

a commemorative Web page that memorializes the life of the departed. For example, an article in the *Boston Globe* recounted the story of Shawn Kelley, who created a “moving tribute” to his brother Michael, a National Guardsman killed in Afghanistan. The 60-second video features a slide show of images of Michael growing up while quiet classical music plays softly and a voice-over recounts Michael’s attributes and interests. Shawn reported that it made him feel good to be able to “talk” about his brother, and over a year later he was still visiting the site to watch the video and to view the messages that continue to be left by family members and friends (Plumb, 2006). The popularity of such Web sites can be summarized in the fact that Legacy.com, the most popular site for posting online memorials, boasts of more than 24 million unique visitors each month (<http://www.legacy.com/ns/about/>).

How did you/do you mourn when someone you care about dies? How do you share messages with others in the process?

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Communication Settings

communication setting
the different communication environments within which people interact

intrapersonal communication
the interactions that occur in a person's mind when he or she is talking with himself or herself

interpersonal communication
informal interaction between two people who have an identifiable relationship with each other

small-group communication
three to 20 people who come together for the specific purpose of solving a problem or arriving at a decision

public communication
one participant, the speaker, delivers a message to a group of more than 20 people

The communication setting also affects how we form and interpret messages. **Communication settings** differ based on the number of participants and the level of formality in the interactions (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008, pp. 52–53). These settings are intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, public, and mass.

Intrapersonal communication refers to the interactions that occur in our minds when we are talking to ourselves (Photo 1.3). We usually don't verbalize our intrapersonal communication. When you sit in class and think about what you'll do later that day or when you send yourself a reminder note as an e-mail or text message, you are communicating intrapersonally. A lot of our intrapersonal communication occurs subconsciously (Kellerman, 1992). When we drive into the driveway "without thinking," we are communicating intrapersonally on a subconscious level. The study of intrapersonal communication often focuses on its role in shaping self-perceptions and in managing communication apprehension, that is, the fear associated with communicating with others (Richmond & McCroskey, 1997). Our study of intrapersonal communication focuses on self-talk as a means to improve self-concept and self-esteem and, ultimately, communication competence in a variety of situations.

Interpersonal communication is characterized by informal interaction between two people who have an identifiable relationship with each other (Knapp & Daly, 2002). Talking to a friend between classes, visiting on the phone with your mother, and texting or chatting online with your brother are all examples of interpersonal communication. In Part II of this book, our study of interpersonal communication includes the exploration of how we develop, maintain, improve, and end interpersonal relationships.

Small-group communication typically involves three to 20 people who come together to communicate with one another (Beebe & Masterson, 2006; Hirokawa, Cathcart, Samovar, & Henman, 2003). Examples of small groups include a family, a group of friends, a group of classmates working on a project, and a workplace management team. Small-group communication can occur in face-to-face settings, as well as online through electronic mailing lists, discussion boards, virtual meetings, and blogs. In Part III, our study of small groups focuses on the characteristics of effective groups, ethical and effective communication in groups, leadership, problem-solving, conflict, and group presentations.

Public communication is delivered to audiences of more than 20 people. Examples include public speeches, presentations, and forums we may experience in person or via mediated or technology-driven channels. For example, when a president delivers the State of the Union address, some people may be in attendance on location, others watch on TV or the Internet, and still others view it later in the form of televised broadcast snippets, digital recordings, or Internet videos. The Internet is also becoming the medium of choice for posting job ads and résumés, for advertising and buying products, and for political activism. In Part IV, our study of public communication focuses on preparing, practicing, and delivering effective oral presentations in both face-to-face and virtual environments.

Photo 1.3 We communicate intrapersonally when we talk to ourselves, reflect about people and events, and write in a journal. What are some examples of your own intrapersonal communication activities today?



Amplify/istockphoto.com

Mass communication is delivered by individuals and entities through mass media to large segments of the population at the same time. Some examples include newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements, as well as radio and television programs and advertisements. The bonus chapter on mass communication and media literacy focuses specifically on effective mass communication in both flat print and digital modalities.

mass communication
communication delivered through mass media to large segments of the population at the same time

The Communication Process

The **communication process** is a complex set of three different and interrelated activities intended to result in shared meaning (Burlinson, 2009). These activities are message production, message interpretation, and interaction coordination. They are affected by the channels used and by interference/noise.

APPLY IT

How much of your communication each day is intrapersonal versus interpersonal, versus public versus mass communication? What are some examples of each you've engaged in so far today?

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Message Production

Message production is what we do when we *encode* a message. We begin by forming goals based on our understanding of the situation and our values, ethics, and needs. Based on these goals, we recall an effective canned plan script and adapt it to the current situation.

communication process
a complex set of three different and interrelated activities intended to result in shared meaning

Message Interpretation

Message interpretation is what we do when we *decode* a message. We read or listen to someone's words, observe their nonverbal behavior, and take note of other visuals. Then we interpret the message based on the canned plan scripts we remember that seem similar. Based on this interpretation, we prepare a feedback message.

message production
what we do when we encode a message

message interpretation
what we do when we decode a message

Interaction Coordination

Interaction coordination consists of the behavioral adjustments each participant makes in an attempt to create shared meaning (Burgoon, 1998) (Photo 1.4). Shared meaning occurs when the receiver's interpretation is similar to what the speaker intended. We can usually gauge the extent to which shared meaning is achieved by the sender's response to the feedback message. For example, Sarah says to Nick, "I dropped my phone and it broke." Nick replies, "Cool, now you can get a Droid™." To which Sarah responds, "No, you don't understand, I can't afford to buy a new phone." Sarah's response to Nick's feedback message lets Nick know he misunderstood her. The extent to which we achieve shared meaning can be affected by the channels we use and by the interference/noise that compete with our messages.

interaction coordination
the actions each participant takes to adjust their behavior to that of their partner

channel
the route traveled by the message and the means of transportation

Photo 1.4 In what ways have you engaged in interaction coordination with an advisor, instructor, or supervisor?



Hero Images/Getty Images

Channels

Channels are both the route traveled by the message and the means of transportation. Face-to-face communication has three basic channels: verbal symbols,