



**ACReS**  
Academic Career and Readiness Skills

**Life Skills**

**Unit**

**5**



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## Communicating With Others

### Words to know:

- ✓ communicate
- ✓ persuade
- ✓ cover letter

**T**alk, talk, talk. Some people talk all day long. Do you know anyone who can't stop talking? Some people don't talk at all. They like to be quiet. They may like to watch people instead. In our world, **communicating** is very important, but not all communication is done through talking. Sometimes we write. Sometimes it is neither talking nor writing. Did you know that we can talk without saying a word? You do it every day. It is called body language.

In this lesson, we will talk about talking. When we speak, we speak to different people in different ways. We talk to friends differently than we talk to a judge or a police officer. There is a reason for that.

Writing is another form of communication. Like talking, when we write it should be different for different people. You should not write an email to a friend like you would write an email to your boss.

Then there is a type of talking called body language. We use body language all the time. We use body language even when we are talking. It is important to be

aware of our body language. Your mouth can be saying one thing and your body language can be saying another. If this happens, it causes confusion.

Sometimes people still write letters. It is important to know how to write a letter. You may have to write a letter to a friend. You may have to write a letter to an employer. There is a difference. It is good to know how to write a business letter.

Communication can be used in different ways. We need to be responsible about how we communicate.

## Talking

Some people talk a lot. Some people don't talk at all. We talk every day. Why do we talk? It sounds like a silly question, but it is important to know why. We talk for different reasons. We may talk to inform. We may talk to discuss. We may talk to soothe. We may talk to ***persuade***, or convince. We use different words and a different tone of voice for each reason we speak. Let's look at them.

We talk to inform. When you talk to inform, you use common words. Your tone of voice can be calm or excited. How would you tell your family that breakfast is ready? How would you tell your friends about an accident you saw? How would you talk to the man who came to fix your pipes? For each situation, you would sound different.



We talk to discuss. When we talk to discuss, we may use special words. We may use special words like “project” or “testing” or “solution.” We should use a calm tone of voice. We are usually talking about a problem. If we take turns listening and speaking, we can share ideas. We can solve the problem. It is important not to lose your temper and start shouting. Once we shout at each other, we are not discussing. Now we are arguing. You cannot fix the problem if you do not listen to the other person.

We talk to soothe. When we talk to soothe, we usually use very simple words or sounds like “shh.” We use a very calm tone of voice. Think about when you talk to a

baby. We talk low and soft. Sometimes we whisper. We use the same tone when we talk to a friend who is crying. We talk like this to frightened animals, too.

We talk to persuade. If you are trying to persuade someone, you want them to do something for you. You use pleasant words that may exaggerate the way you feel. For example, many people use the word “please.” They draw it out and say, “pleeeeeease.” Think of when you were a child. Did you ever do that when you wanted your mom to buy you a toy or candy? When you talk to persuade your tone of voice varies from sweet to whiny. It’s all about getting you the biggest, best thing ever. What tone of voice do you use when you want to persuade someone?

## The Words We Use

We use different words with different people. This is the right thing to do. You do not want to talk to the police or a judge like you talk to your friends. When you change the way you use your words, you change the way you interact with people. Some words show respect, like the words “sir,” or “ma’am.” Some words are rude and cause fights. Some people like to argue so they use mean words a lot. Mean words do not help when you are talking to a person of authority or if you are trying to persuade someone.

**Friends and family.** When you talk to friends, you use your common words— words you use every day with everyone. This language will include slang like “Holy cow,” or “Whatcha doin’?” It may also include swear words. You may use a language that you and your family or friends are comfortable with and know well.

**Public meetings.** When you talk in public like at a school or church, you use words that are in the middle of common language and formal language. You may still be relaxed so you use your common vocabulary. You may use slang, but probably not as much as you do with your friends. You probably say “please” and “thank you” more than you do with your family. You may be very polite. You should not

use swearwords in public. Swear words make you sound uneducated. Swear words will give people a bad idea of who you are.

**Formal meetings.** Sometimes you must talk with people of authority, like a doctor, a policeman, a waitress, or a teacher. You should use words that show respect, like “sir” or “ma’am.” You may use your common vocabulary, but you don’t usually use slang. You are polite. You don’t swear. If a policeman or judge asks you to stop swearing, and you don’t, they can put you in jail. You should talk in a normal tone of voice and not yell or scream at these people.

Below is a list of phrases. On the line beside it write if you would use the phrase with family and friends (FF), in a public place (PP), or with a person with authority (PA).

1. Whatcha doin’? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Thank you ma’am. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What’s up, doc? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Yes, sir. I understand. \_\_\_\_\_
5. You are such a pest. \_\_\_\_\_
6. May I help you? \_\_\_\_\_
7. I didn’t see the accident, sir. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Hey, stop that you brat. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Cool, man. \_\_\_\_\_
10. May I have more cola, please? \_\_\_\_\_

## Body Language

“Never underestimate the importance of body language” is a sentence you hear a lot. It was even used in the Disney film, The Little Mermaid. Google it on the Internet

and you get pages of articles with that sentence in it. It is popular because it is true. We use body language to convey feelings and information every day. Don't believe me?

Look at the pictures below. Can you tell how these people are feeling?

11.



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12.



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13.



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14.



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15.



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A woman enters a room and slams the door. She stands there with her arms folded across her chest. How do you think she feels? \_\_\_\_\_

You ask if everything is okay. She says, "Yes, I'm fine." Do you believe her? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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This is an example of how body language can disagree with verbal language. If you want to give a clear message, your body language must match your verbal language or people can get confused. People will read body language before they listen to what you are saying. Here are some more examples.

Your child gets into the flour container. You are mad because there is flour all over the kitchen. You are yelling at him. You have a smile on your face because he is covered in flour and you think he is very cute. What does your child do? Does he cry because you are yelling at him? Does he laugh because he sees the smile on your face? \_\_\_\_\_

You go to the store to buy a washer. You like the big, fancy washer that you know you cannot afford. The salesperson sees you and comes over. He asks if you are interested in the big, fancy washer. You say, "no." You hesitate when you say that. You look at the big, fancy washer before you turn to look at the washers you know you can afford. What does the salesman do? \_\_\_\_\_

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See how body language is important? It is more important than words. Why do you think that is true? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Communicating with Writing

For most people, writing is like talking. You either like to write a lot or you don't like to write at all. What you write will be different for who you are writing it for. There is informal writing which is what you do when you send a text message. There is also formal writing which is what you do if you are sending an email to your boss. Let's look at the different types of writing.

### Texting

When you text a message to someone, it is usually very informal. You will use special texting language. Do you use the abbreviations below? Do you know what they mean? Can you figure them out?

- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 16. B4 _____      | 19. bcz _____ |
| 17. cu soon _____ | 20. lol _____ |
| 18. u2? _____     | 21. luv _____ |

Although it is fun to text each other, this is not the type of writing we do in an email or a letter. In emails and letters, you want to use proper English and spell it correctly.

### Emails

Emails can be formal or informal. You must keep in mind who you are writing to. With friends you can add emotion icons and bright colored fonts and crazy font shapes and symbols. When you are emailing your boss or a teacher or a company, you cannot do those things. You should email those people in black font color. You should not add emotion icons. You should use a standard font. Times New Roman is the most popular font. This is good to use when you write a business email.

## Letters and notes

Because of the technology we have in the world, people do not send a lot of letters through the mail like we used to. We still write them though. One of the most common letters we write is a **cover letter**. This is a letter we send with our résumé when we are applying for a job. We can send it through the mail. We can send it through our email. Below is a sample of a cover letter. See how formal it looks. There is a specific way to write a formal letter.

Your address goes here  
January 20, 2015

Mr. Jack Jones  
Car World  
124 Any Street  
Any Town, Any State

Dear Mr. Jones:

Please accept this letter and the enclosed résumé as an application for the job of secretary which was listed in this week's Daily News. I am a good candidate for several reasons.

I have worked as a secretary for nine years. I have many skills which are listed below.

- Type 70 words a minute
- File quickly and accurately
- Strong telephone etiquette skills
- Excellent people skills

I am a good secretary and have three references. I can use these skills to help keep customers and employees happy at Car World. I would like to work for your company.

I am interested in interviewing for this position. I will call in three days to follow-up on this letter. If you would like to contact me, please call 555-345-9876.

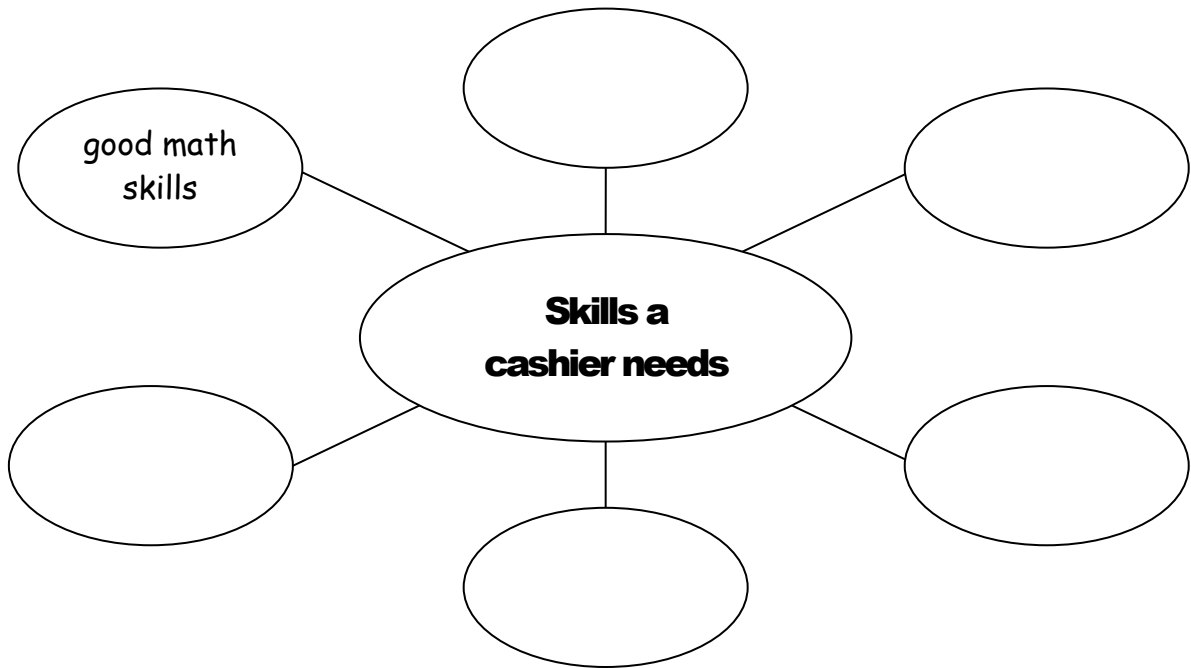
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally Smith

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Now you try it. Pretend you are applying for a job as a cashier for Yummy's Supermarkets. You will send your letter to Mr. Mark Manning. You can use any address. Use the sample letter to help you complete your letter. What skills do you think a cashier would need? List them below. It will make it easier to write your letter.



## Advertising

Cover letters and résumés are a form of advertising. They are trying to persuade someone to hire you. When you write cover letters and résumés, you want to use language that is positive. You want to sound skilled. You want to point out what you can do for the company. Look at advertisements you see on TV. They all want you to buy their products. They always use positive words to describe their products. They tell you what they can do for you. Have you ever seen the commercials for ZUMBA? They make it sound like fun. They use great music. They use bright colors. They show people who are smiling. They tell you it is easy. They tell you that exercise is good for you. This excites you and you want to start Zumba dancing so you buy the video. Don't you want an employer to get excited and hire you?

## Social Media

Social media like blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and dating sites are very popular now. They are fun to read. Many people read them. You should be careful what you write on those sites. Be careful how you write it. Everyone can read what you write. If you write something cruel, you could hurt someone's feelings. If you write something false, someone could take you to court. Many times an employer will look for you on Facebook before he hires you. Your profile on Facebook, and what you write, lets an employer know what your personality may be like. Don't let them see an unkind person. Don't let me see a bad person. Always be careful what you write on these sites.

## Responsibility

The one thing that we have not talked about is responsibility. You need to be responsible for what you say and write. If you say something nasty out of anger, you can hurt someone's feelings. If you say something that is not true, you can hurt their feelings. Sometimes they can take you to court. If you say or write something about other people, then you are gossiping. Gossip can ruin relationships.

Think before you speak or write.

☞ End of Unit 5 ☞