

Key Terms:

- Canons of Rhetoric
- Censorship
- Channel
- Clarion call
- Context
- Decoding
- Delivery
- Encoding
- Ethics
- Feedback
- Interpersonal Communication
- Intrapersonal Communication
- Invention
- Memory
- Noise
- Nonverbal Messages
- Oral Messages
- Organization
- Perception
- Public Communication
- Receiver
- Rhetoric
- Source
- Stimulus
- Style
- Verbal Messages

Objective:

This chapter highlights your role as public communicators in a complex, changing world. It indicates how knowing the history of oratory, and knowing how the process of communication and media works, helps you speak more effectively. Section One notes the importance of free speech and the ancient oral tradition on which oratory is based. Section Two details the communication process and the impact of media in the expression of public communication.

Chapter 1

Public Speaking Should Engage Us

Section One

Public Speaking and Discussion Serve Important Roles in Our Society

- ✦ Public Speaking and Discussion Assist in Our Critical Thinking and Give Shape to Our Experiences
- ✦ Public Speaking and Discussion Help Define Our Communities, Our Societies, and Our World
- ✦ Public Speaking and Discussion Allow Us to Participate and Be Heard
- ✦ Public Speaking and Discussion Allow Us to Share and Debate Differing Points of View

Communication Effectiveness Is Related to Oral Tradition

- ✦ The Canons of Rhetoric Greatly Influence Speech Making
- ✦ Ethos, Logos, and Pathos Are Hallmarks of Effective Rhetoric

Section Two

Understanding the Process of Communication Is Important in Public Speaking

- ✦ Definition of Communication
- ✦ Communication Models and the Communication Process
- ✦ Levels of Communication

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- ✦ Moving Through the Information Age

Chapter Summary

Print and Web Resources

“I’m Okay, You’re Okay.”

— Thomas A. Harris

— Section One —

Public Speaking and Discussion Serve Important Roles in Our Society

We are happy to have our own technology—smartphones, my documents, my space, my music files, my culture, and my right to do things my way. These alternatives should have their place in a free world—as long as we stay informed and speak up about issues in the larger, common world. Otherwise, everything we enjoy personally could come under threat. If you doubt this, recheck history. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, the Holocaust, two World Wars, the 9/11 attack on United States, and current sex-trafficking remind us that our world order can become quickly and gravely disordered if we don’t pay attention and use the power of the spoken word to make a difference. Before each of these occurrences, doubters and passive communicators said, “They can’t do that.” Yet, historical catastrophes happened.

Given the lightning speed of technology, our world could be in deep trouble even faster, but it does not have to be. In this book, we sound the clarion call for you to “*Remain aware and speak up!!*” A clarion call is a clear call to action. We live in an exciting new world. We share common technology platforms, common currency, and high-speed railways on some continents, and common councils and treaties. We always need informed, concerned, and critical thinkers to pay vigilant attention to what happens locally, nationally, and worldwide. Public speaking can be used to create monumental change for good or ill. On the positive side, the Civil Rights, Gay, Green, Peace, Women’s, and Student Movements in United States and elsewhere, as well as the recent movements toward democracy in North Africa, were launched with technology and words. Advocacy for senior citizens, those with disabilities, and religious holiday recognitions came through the power of words. Sometimes a stand needs to be taken by a courageous, informed, and ethical communicator to make a difference. That person could be you.

You may think, “I’m going to be an accountant or city manager, so I won’t be doing much speaking.” Think again. If you work in a city where the entire snow removal budget is exhausted during the first major blizzard of the season, you’ll need to advocate for more funds for equipment and weather-related products. You’ll probably need to calm frustrated travelers and cope with school and workplace closings. You and others in your workplace will need to use public speaking skills many times during the crisis. This is exactly what happened in New York City during the year 2011.

This chapter highlights your role as public communicator in a complex, changing world. It indicates how knowing the history of oratory, and knowing how the process of communication and media works,

in public speaking forums. These speaking opportunities can shape our experiences in understandable terms that create a sense of oneness with our audience. In best-case scenarios, the audience relates to our communication, responds to it, and through the interaction, we come to learn more about ourselves and others.

Public Speaking and Discussion Help Define Our Communities, Our Societies, and Our World

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of public speaking interactions is the ability of such situations to facilitate a better understanding of our communities, our societies, and our world. Political and social movements rely on public speaking to define not only a sense of unity among its participants, but the establishment of clearly defined goals and identification with its members. Through speech making, for example, major tenets or issues of a social movement are defined, explained, and channeled to the audience. These tenets become the major themes on which the movement progresses. Individuals are often motivated to action to promote the “cause” of the movement as a result of public messages. This type of response is evidenced by the behavior of social activists in the Civil Rights Movement, the Women’s Movement, and the recent Green Movement, to name a few. More recently, we saw the impact of public messaging and debate unfold with citizens dethroning leaders in several North African countries, as well as with pro-union advocates taking strong positions in the United States. While major players in these movements may have used a variety of methods to get their messages to their audiences, public speaking represented an important and primary strategy for advancing their causes. Speeches such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 *I Have a Dream* www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s 1848 *Declaration of Sentiments* www.america.gov/st/pubs-english/2005/May/20050531160341liameruoy0.2459375.html are examples of speeches that changed the course of history. The role that public speaking plays in informing, honoring, and entertaining others also defines our society.



Public Speaking and Discussion Allow Us to Participate and Be Heard

Members of democratic societies are afforded the right to participate in public dialogue, to share viewpoints, to support or reject the status quo, and to protest. Public speeches offer forums of participation as individuals engage one another and motivate

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one another to action. Public speaking opportunities aren't limited to formal occasions with invited speakers and audiences. Indeed, you'll find speaking opportunities at school, at local town hall meetings, gatherings of Parent-Teacher Organizations, union meetings, and workplace training seminars. Your approach may be informative or persuasive, or represent a special occasion message. Whatever your speech purpose, the more prepared you are to present, the more you will embrace these speaking opportunities and let your thoughts be heard. Citizens have a responsibility to engage in dialogue and expression.

Public Speaking and Discussion Allow Us to Share and Debate Differing Points of View

Debate of controversial topics is inevitable. Using effective public speaking skills and communicating with confidence make your messages more persuasive and meaningful to your audience. In the Information Age, we often find ourselves communicating and interacting across cultures. Communicating effectively promotes social cohesion and problem solving, and can lead to more positive interactions. In our multicultural world, we find vast differences in personal philosophies, basic belief systems, and worldviews. Per author Thomas Harris (1969), we suggest behaving as if *I'm Okay, You're Okay*. If our public communication assumes positive goodwill toward ourselves and others, we all benefit from working together for common, worthy purposes in a demanding world. Freedom of speech belongs to all, and respecting differences is key to a better understanding and a more functional *worldview*. Our worldview will be different, but differences do not equal deficits. Expression of diverse views offers opportunities for greater understanding of and appreciation for individual differences and alternative points of view. Multicultural communication allows us to empathize, that is, to see the world from another person's perspective. This is a critical step in ensuring peaceful interactions with others. Communicating from a multicultural perspective is a necessary goal for effective speaking in the 21st century.

Communication Effectiveness Is Related to Oral Tradition

Did you know that much of what we do today to prepare our messages and to stimulate our audiences is based on practices established thousands of years ago? While most texts begin with practices in Ancient Greece and Rome, Asante (2007) asserts that rhetorical foundations began with Egyptian and African civilizations. The Sophists, who lived during the 5th century BCE (before common era) Greece, were among the early practitioners of rhetoric as we know it today. Protagoras, a major Sophist, taught rhetors (speakers) to explore arguments on both sides of a case. Plato, who lived in the 4th century BCE, was suspicious about unscrupulous uses of rhetoric, those based in common sense beliefs of "ignorant audiences" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 28). The Greek philosopher Plato defined rhetoric as "the art of influencing the soul through words" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 59). Aristotle, who was a student of Plato, claimed that rhetoric is "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 153).

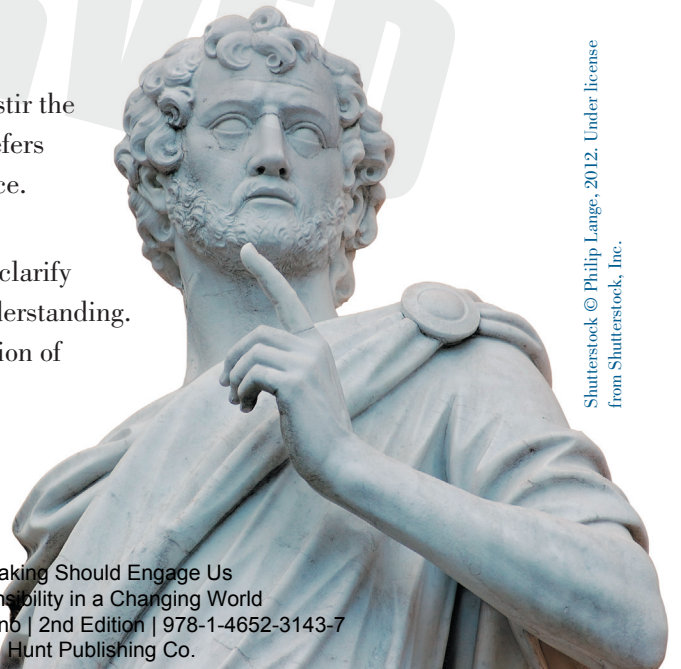
The practical contexts he considered included political deliberation, law, and courts, and the language of ceremonial occasions.

Later, in first-century Rome, we find another evolution of theories regarding speaking effectiveness. Horace introduced ideas of rhetoric as a practice of using language for teaching, pleasing, and moving an audience. Cicero, during that same time, wrote and delivered many persuasive legal arguments, political speeches, and letters. He believed that thoughts and language are inseparable. He also contended that being a good citizen required having a broad general knowledge for using rhetoric (public speaking) to deliberate issues for the good of the republic. Quintilian, who was strongly influenced by Cicero, argued that a speaker must be ethical to be persuasive. Debates over what constituted good rhetoric, deceitful rhetoric, and the strategies of the presentation of discourse have taken place for centuries and continue today. Much of our theory of effective speech making is grounded in the observations and writings of early speakers.

The Canons of Rhetoric Greatly Influence Speech Making

The canons of rhetoric (the five components of the rhetorical speech-making process), emerged from the discussions of “good rhetorical practices” described above. A public speaker could create effective and meaningful speeches by using the five canons in the preparation and delivery of speeches:

1. *Invention* involves finding creative ways to develop material and give focus to the topic of your speech. It becomes the study of all possibilities by which arguments or proofs are discovered and developed. Simply, it’s at this stage that you have researched your topic and you “invent” how the speech will develop, what your purpose will be, and what material you will cover.
2. *Organization or Arrangement* involves the organization of thoughts, principles, and evidence in order to make a speech persuasive. Cicero identified seven components of organization. These include:
 - The entrance, or introduction of the subject
 - The narration, which aids the audience in understanding the topic
 - The proposition, or the speaker’s central idea or thesis
 - The division, or a brief list of the points the speaker will discuss
 - The confirmation, or the body of proof for the points
 - The confutation or rebuttal
 - The conclusion
3. *Style* involves selection of attention-getters that stir the audience’s interest. The primary focus of style refers to the type of language used to reach the audience. Examples of language include the:
 - *Plain style*, which uses concrete language to clarify concepts. Plain style language facilitates understanding. This style is most often used in the presentation of informative speeches.



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- *Middle style*, which uses standard language style, is between grand and plain styles. This is particularly important in persuasive speeches.
 - *Grand style*, which uses elevated language such as metaphors and similes to celebrate or commemorate topics with audiences.
4. *Memory* is the speaker's ability to speak without memorizing the speech, but with a mastery of the material only. This also enhances the listener's ability to remember what was said. It is thought that if you use the other four canons successfully, this ability will be achieved.
 5. *Delivery* is making effective use of both verbal and nonverbal skills. This includes the speaker's use of voice, gestures, body movement, posture, and eye contact. Delivery is important to presenting the speech, as it links the other canons together in your presentation.

Ethos, Logos, and Pathos Are Hallmarks of Effective Rhetoric

The delineation of ethos, logos, and pathos represents some of Aristotle's most important work. These persuasive appeals can be briefly described in the following way:

- ★ *Ethos* (ethical appeal) refers to appeals to audiences based on the character of the speaker. It is the speaker's reputation for ethical behavior that gives the speaker credibility so that listeners believe the message sender. To achieve ethos, a speaker must display practical intelligence and goodwill for the audience. More importantly, he or she should be a decent person with good motives. The speaker should be a hearer and doer of his or her own words.
- ★ *Logos* (logical appeal) refers to appeals based on logic or sound reasoning. It's the speaker's use of logical proof through providing facts or numerical data, or appeals through presenting rational arguments. Scholarly documents are supposed to be logos-driven. If someone is purposely careless with numbers, for example, you could use your rhetoric to hold him or her accountable.
- ★ *Pathos* (emotional appeal) is an appeal based on the emotions of the audience. Arousing the emotions of audience members often propels the audience to action. Emotional appeals to fear, happiness, and love, for instance, have the power to modify our judgments and can sometimes overwhelm rational thought. It is fine to support your ideas with ethical, emotional appeals. Today, advertisements are often pathos-driven. Are you willing to challenge those who create unjustified fear or other emotions to support unethical agendas?

To create your own rhetorical appeals and monitor those of others, you must be an informed, critical thinker. These appeals are discussed in detail in chapter 12. They are classical and very important to speech making.

Effective use of rhetoric, that is, public speaking skills, is a goal of many in our society. More recently, we have come to define the term of *rhetoric* as the art of persuasion or the effective use of persuasive oral or written messages. Rhetoric is alive and well in the 21st century and continues to make significant inroads in the development of human thinking and communication. In our recent history, we find that rhetoric is used as a teaching method in schools, in oral storytelling, and by citizens presenting their cases in court. A significant amount of rhetoric is employed during political debates and during elections. These uses are at the very heart of the art of public speaking and democracy. We often attribute much power and influence to those individuals in our culture who possess effective delivery skills and the ability to use language to compel audiences to listen, learn, and act on their content.

Understanding the Process of Communication Is Important in Public Speaking

Definition of Communication

Understanding how communication operates in our daily lives and specifically, when we give public speeches, helps us focus on those things that make our speeches most memorable, powerful, and persuasive. What is communication? *Communication* is a dynamic process in which sources and receivers affect each other interchangeably through oral, verbal, and nonverbal stimuli and in which some interference is often present. This means that communication is an interactive process. It assumes both a sender and a receiver who exchange ideas and negotiate meaning through an ongoing process that changes while they are in the act of doing or examining it. Communication is ephemeral, which means that it cannot be retrieved by the interactants. Once we have said or done something, it's "out there." We cannot simply take it back or strike it from the record. In this way, communication messages are irreversible. Communication is dynamic because it is ongoing and ever changing. There is nothing static about our communication. As a public speaker, it's wise to communicate in ways that acknowledge these characteristics. When you deliver a speech, you need to understand that what you say matters. It's a reflection on you and your level of commitment. It's your opportunity to demonstrate, explain, persuade, or inspire in a planned and practiced manner. This can highlight your communication strengths and the power you hold in moving your audiences and a positive agenda.

Communication Models and the Communication Process

There are many variables that act as integral components in the process of communication. As the model in Figure 1.1 shows, these components exist simultaneously; they interact and affect each other in multiple ways. We have included a static diagram of the communication process to serve as an important point of reference. There are other interactive communication models. For example, faculty at Seton Hall (2011) <http://pirate.shu.edu/~yatesdan/Tutorial.htm> produced a dynamic online Communication Model. Numerous models, as well as media and technology history sites that stress communication, are also available online.

Sender/Receiver

The *sender* or *source* in the process is someone who generates and transmits messages due to a need to communicate. We are always communicating. We can send and receive messages verbally or nonverbally. The role of sender can be interchangeable with the role of receiver as we interact and share messages back and forth. Thus, most senders are sender/receivers, and vice versa. Our gestures, posture, facial expressions, and other nonverbal behaviors make it impossible not to communicate with others. Senders are continuously involved in sending messages within themselves or with others. Think about a time, for example, when

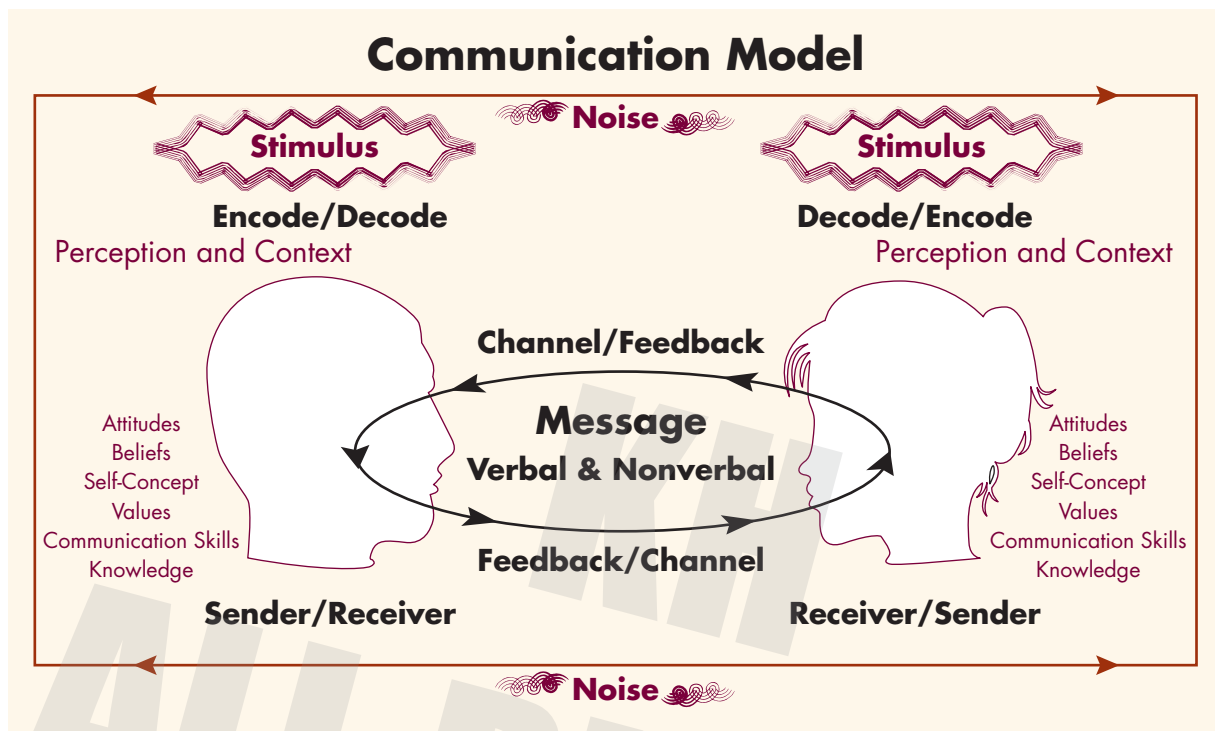


Figure 1.1

you've been silent, and a friend asked you, "What's wrong?" Your friend may have picked up on messages that you were unaware you were sending. The role of sender in public speaking is usually more obvious.

Receiver/Sender

A *receiver* is a message recipient. This role is interchangeable with that of the sender, as we both send and receive messages almost simultaneously. Just as messages we send can be intentional or unintentional, we can have both intended and unintended receivers of our messages. In a public speaking situation, great care is taken to create a speech that's meaningful to receivers. Our speeches should target a primary audience by introducing organization, arguments and proofs, and claims that specifically generate identification between the speaker and the audience (receivers). Ideally, identification emerges as the speaker and listener develop a certain rapport and relationship during their shared communication experience. Delivering a public speech engages the recipients in the speech act. This speech act requires active and ongoing participation in the communication by senders and receivers, speakers and audiences.

Stimulus

The *stimulus* is what causes us to want or need to communicate. It's often a motivator. Perhaps a new school rule or tax proposal bothers you, and you want to speak publicly to challenge it. As the message sender, the new school rule or tax proposal stirs you to act. You mentally encode the message you want to send about the issue. You use appropriate verbal and nonverbal cues to send it through the channel of technology or a

live public address system to listeners. In turn, receivers of your message are motivated to communicate. Thus, your message serves as a stimulus for them to decode. After interpreting it, the receivers may become the message senders who encode and send further messages. The communication process regarding the new school rule or tax proposal may continue in an interactive, organic way.

Message

A *message* is a set of verbal and/or nonverbal symbols that are the result of an idea. We select certain messages to send. We do this by planning our speech organization or through choosing the words or gestures we wish to convey. Messages have differing characteristics. They can be verbal or nonverbal, and intentional or unintentional. They can also be conscious or subconscious.

Verbal messages deal with actual *words*, whether written or spoken. Any time we use words, we are using verbal communication. Thus, your spoken words as well as your word outlines represent verbal messages because they use word cues.

Oral messages are messages that use the *voice*. Thus oral messages can be verbal or nonverbal. For example, you use your voice to say words. However, you also use it to say nonwords. We grunt, make screeching sounds, and yell to show emotions of happiness, disgust, and emphasis. Remember the original Oprah Winfrey Show where the world watched vocal sounds from the audience as they were surprisingly given cars and trips to Australia? The initial reactions of many audience members were through oral communication cues, and many of those gleeful, oral cues were through the use of nonword sounds.

Nonverbal messages are any of those messages we communicate in ways other than through our use of words. Facial expression, eye behavior, gesture, posture, and use of objects and space while speaking represent important nonverbal cues in public speaking. The sound of one's voice, including vocal characteristics, pitch, rate, volume, our body movements and gestures all produce messages and are considered nonverbal cues. Specific details are provided on the many nonverbal cues in chapter 8.

Consistency in verbal and nonverbal messages is important for speech effectiveness. Imagine a situation in which a speaker describes a serious problem while laughing inappropriately at different points in the speech. In U.S. culture, this speaker would lack credibility, and would not be viewed as competent or trustworthy by his or her audience. On the other hand, when a speaker is consistent in his or her nonverbal and verbal messages, the audience views the contents as more credible. Listeners are more likely to trust that the information the speaker is giving is truthful and useful to them.

We send planned and unplanned messages. They may be intentional or unintentional. Our intended messages are those we choose to send to our receivers or audience. We select the main ideas we want to discuss and the manner of delivery, and we carefully plan and practice the most effective delivery we can display to send the message. By contrast, unintentional messages include any communication we purposely try to conceal or do not purposely send to others with whom we are communicating.

Practicing our speeches is perhaps the best way to minimize unintended messages. As you practice, you can identify and eliminate distracting messages that may get in the way of speaking effectively. Similarly, recognize that you send messages that are *conscious messages*, but also send messages of which you are not conscious. Messages we may not be conscious of sending can include distracting behaviors—such as prancing at the podium, repeated actions such as face rubbing, or other behaviors that we can work to

eliminate from our public communication. This is a primary value of a public speaking course. It's a class where you can gain experience in public speaking and receive feedback about your presentation that will help you intensify your intentional, conscious communication and decrease your unintentional communication. Because we are always sending and receiving messages, "we cannot, not communicate" (Anderson, 1991). Thus, this text and course focus on consciously communicating well.

Channel

Channels are the physical means by which messages move through the communication process. Channels include sound waves and light waves. Sensory channels include smell and touch. We hear or smell, as well as give and receive touch messages through communication channels. Traditional and new media also channel messages in major ways. The Information Age has allowed humans to communicate effectively across great distances; to communicate with individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, to audiences in great auditoriums, small venues, and worldwide online forums through contemporary and emerging channels of communication that have literally changed our globe. When the leader of a nation delivers an official address, the microphone channels the sound of his or her voice to the immediate audience, and satellites serve as a channel to reach a larger world audience. Social media may text or blog about the leader's speech. Selecting the best media to use to reach your audience is a thoughtful decision for a public speaker in the information age. To be effective, you must select those technologies and ways of sharing information that will reach your audience in a positive, professional, and ethically responsible manner.

Encoding and Decoding

Encoding is a sender-related internal process by which we select verbal and nonverbal symbols to create and convey our thoughts. In most of our daily communication, we encode information as we prepare messages almost subconsciously. It seems automatic as we converse with a friend or engage in short communication interactions. We probably should pay more attention to the complexity of changing thoughts into the messages we send. However, there are times when we encode with great care, taking time to ensure that every phrase carries with it some semblance of the meaning we want to share with others. Examples might be constructing answers to questions for a college entrance examination or a job interview, or selecting the right words to ask for a major change in work or public policy. Public speaking situations represent those times when one should give significant thought to effective encoding practices. Choosing the best words to describe a concept, the right phrases to arouse the emotions of your audience, coupled with decisions on the organization of main ideas in your speech or the placement of supporting materials, represent the preparatory work that can make a good speech a great speech. *Decoding* is the process of assigning meaning to the senders' behaviors and words. Similar to encoding, decoding is often a fast-paced process that we spend little time thinking about. Perhaps we should give this complex process more attention. To be a good speaker, one must be a good *consumer of public discourse*. This requires that an individual listens critically and analyzes the speeches of others. Through observation and analysis of others' speech material and delivery, one can enhance the decoding of the message and, consequently, learn to become a better speaker. Observing the strategies successful speakers use to create meaningful messages is a sound method of finding ways to identify with your audience. This helps you identify what things tend to work well in speech making and

what things you should try to avoid. When we communicate, the messages we encode aren't always decoded in the same way. Effective public speakers work to minimize this disparity by using concrete words and mental images that lead audiences to particular ways to decode their discourse.

Feedback

Feedback is information available to senders about the listeners' responses to and understanding of their messages. Feedback is expressed verbally and nonverbally. Audiences send feedback throughout the public communication event. Good speakers learn to gauge the audience's level of interest in the speech, their understanding of the material, their acceptance or rejection of the arguments presented, and other factors related to engagement while the speaker is delivering the speech. For example, you may notice that when you give a speech, your audience may have increased eye contact. They may lean forward and nod their heads affirmatively when a point is made. These nonverbal cues represent feedback that demonstrates audience interest and involvement.

At other times, an audience may seem distracted, bored, or confused, evidenced by inappropriate or unexpected reactions to the speech content. This is negative feedback. This signals the speaker to reengage the audience by rephrasing ideas, changing the pacing of the delivery, moving to a more interesting part of the speech, or other options to recapture the receivers' interest and keep it for the remainder of the speaking event. Learning to "read" the feedback of the listeners is an important skill that improves as an individual gains speaking experience. Offering a prepared and practiced speech that allows for flexibility and adaptation during delivery can make you a more successful speaker.

Context

There are several types of *contexts* present in a communication interaction. These types of contexts include physical setting, psychological disposition, social and cultural contexts, and temporal contexts. All of these contexts influence public speaking. Physical setting involves where the speech is taking place. It is the locale and speaking environment. The physical setting can influence how the speech unfolds. For example, the size or location of the room may provide a more intimate or more formal speaking event. Other factors that influence the context of physical setting include the use of space for movement, placement of visuals and audio aids, as well as factors such as lighting and room temperature that can enhance or detract from the event.

Psychological disposition is another form of context that impacts the success of a speech. Psychological disposition refers to those thoughts and feelings communicators carry into a communication interaction. For a public speaker, this could include your thoughts or feelings about the topic, the speaking event, the audience, or your own abilities as a speaker. Audience members bring their own thoughts and feelings to the interaction in much the same way. They have thoughts and feelings about the situation, the topic, and the perceived credibility of the speaker. Being prepared to speak allows us to form more positive thoughts about the speaking situation. Selecting topics we care about adds to the success of our delivery. Audience members accept ideas from speakers they trust and perceive as being knowledgeable on a given topic. Bringing the right attitude, that is, an attitude of success to your speaking event, can enhance the success of your speech.

Social and cultural contexts play a major role in your speech and its delivery. Social norms often indicate the rules and expectations of social interactions. How closely our speech making conforms to or detracts from these norms impacts the way the speech is received and perceived by the audience. Similarly, cultural norms that dictate behavior, as well as the ways we approach diverse topics, bring to bear factors that a speaker needs to address. For example, when speaking to a multicultural audience, a speaker must account for variations in ways of thinking and approaches to topics based on the cultural background of audience members. Understanding the culturally established traditions and acceptable modes of communication and using them to enhance your speech creates a stimulating and meaningful interaction between you and your audience. Paying attention to the cultural customs and mores of your audience allows you to establish meaningful ways to connect with your audience by addressing their specific wants and needs, rather than imposing a message that's ineffective or perhaps even offensive to some cultural groups. Good speakers need to know their audiences.

Temporal context plays a role in a speaking interaction. Both speaker and audience come to the communication arena with time-oriented expectations. It's important that a speaker stay close to the allotted time. If, for example, a speaker is hired to speak for 30 minutes, he or she should *not* come to an event, speak for 5 minutes and expect the audience to be pleased. The audience would feel that the event was a waste of time, and it might be perceived that the speaker didn't care enough to prepare a meaningful message for the audience. On the other hand, if that same speaker spoke for an hour and a half, the audience might be equally irritated. Listeners would feel like a captive audience of which the speaker has taken advantage. Pacing yourself is important. Your message should not appear too rushed or too drawn out. Another example of temporal context occurs in the timing and sequence of our communication. Public messages often result from an "invitation" to participate in a public debate, a controversial conversation, or as a reaction to an ongoing issue. Ineffective timing can be either premature or proverbially "a day late and a dollar short." We can move too quickly or too slowly in our rhetorical responses. The timing of our communication can result in greater acceptance or rejection of our ideas. Consequently, timing plays a major role in the success of our spoken messages.

Perception

Throughout this text, you will receive information on perception because of its importance to the communication process. Perception is your viewpoint and it comes from your different experiences. Our self-concept, values, knowledge, and skills affect our viewpoints. Even identical twins raised in the same environment will have differing experiences. Perhaps one stayed awake and viewed a speech that impacted his or her way of thinking about an issue while the other twin slept." The twins' perceptions will differ because of their varying experiences. The same is true for communicators overall.



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Noise

There are several types of noise that can impede the success of our speech. *Noise* is any distraction or interference that gets in the way of the primary message. This noise may alter the primary message or even stop it. Examples of noise include external noise or distractions, such as loud sounds coming from an adjacent room. It includes distractions caused by poor lighting, uncomfortable room temperatures, or other external variables that reduce our ability to interact successfully throughout the communication process. Internal noise also plays a significant role in our ability to focus on the primary message. Internal noise includes distracting thoughts, feelings, or emotions that move our focus away from the speaker–listener interaction. Semantic noise, also labeled *emotional deafness*, occurs at times when a sender has made a comment that the receiver finds disagreeable or offensive. The resulting mental noise reduces our ability to listen as we are angered or frustrated by the remark. Examples of remarks that cause semantic noise include racial or ethnic slurs, sexist or homophobic comments, or denigrating remarks that impede respectful communication interactions. Obviously, responsible public speakers avoid making such remarks and focus on positive and respectful communication interactions.

Levels of Communication

Communication occurs on a continuum or on certain levels that we experience every day. Understanding how these levels of communication work helps us become more effective public speakers.

- ★ *Intrapersonal communication* is the first level on the continuum. It's the most complex and often-used level of communication. Our thought processes are the foundation for all other communication. The intrapersonal level is communication that we have within ourselves as we think, make decisions, plan, and give meaning to our experiences. Of course, we use our thought processes in constructing public speeches.
- ★ *Interpersonal communication* is the second level. It is our communication in relationships, for example, a dyad (two people communicating), or small groups of approximately 3–8 individuals. Interpersonal relationships exist with families, friends, coworkers, associates, and others. Public speakers sometimes discuss relational topics.
- ★ *Public communication* is the third level. It is two-pronged. Public communication involves public speaking. This is sometimes called one-to-many communication. It involves delivering a speech to a significant number of people. Public communication also involves communication produced by the media in print, video, and new media formats.

The continuum has fluidity and intersects continuously. For instance, if we are speaking publicly, we should also be fully engaged on an intrapersonal level. After all, we are supposed to think before we speak—right? During the speech, we may have an interpersonal exchange by asking or answering a question interpersonally from a listener in the first row. Our one-to-many communication interactions can transform into one-to-millions through satellite and social network technologies. As we examine the process of communication, you'll learn how all these areas of communication intersect and influence the delivery of a particular public message, hence our day-to-day realities. Through your speech making, you can be an integral part of re-creating our world.

Traditional and Convergence Media Have Changed the Public Speaking Arenas

How we create and consume public speeches in our society is influenced by our media consumption. Today, individuals have access to more traditional and social media outlets than ever before. Whether we like to admit it or not, we learn a significant amount about our culture through our mass and convergent media (merged technology that performs common functions). Mediated messages shape our understanding of events and influence how we share information with others. Consequently, we cannot afford to ignore the role of media in public message making.

Moving Through the Information Age

Effective speakers must be able to address important and current topics, adding to the dialogue promoted by the new age media culture. Media literacy is a skill that requires users to engage and interpret the barrage of media messages quickly and in meaningful ways. This requires a consumer to discern the relative importance of topics from a cultural and economic standpoint, and understand the diverse perspectives that these topics introduce into our world. An effective speaker is a good consumer of mediated messages. He or she is able to inform or persuade audiences in conversations relevant to these messages. Effective speakers use these skills in creative and innovative ways to offer insights to their listeners and impact society for the common good. We include more on traditional and convergence media in chapter 10. Mass media offers an open forum for testing topics and points of view. Audiences expect to have visually interesting messages, and speakers must be technologically literate. Consequently, possessing media savvy is a plus for speakers in the 21st century.

As a symbol-making specie, humans can promote the wellbeing of each other through communication channels such as public speaking. In doing so, the benefits often surpass anything given. One need but think of Oprah Winfrey's public messages. She is a network television personality and a popular commencement speaker on college campuses. Great talk show hosts preceded Winfrey such as Johnny Carson, Dick Cavett, and Jack Paar, to name a few. None have called a nation and even the world to service in a synergistic way as has Winfrey. Winfrey gave and called on others to give technology to schools, connections to lost family members, and food to those who were hungry worldwide. Winfrey has a vision and uses culture, technology, and public speaking skills well. Her paying good deeds forward resulted in attracting a voluminous, contagious following of fans and netted Winfrey an economic media empire beyond the imagination of most (Cloud, 1996). While attempting to match Winfrey's past success may be daunting, if you learn how to continuously improve your speaking skills, you can have an impact at school, work, or in the larger society. When you understand the wisdom of ancient rhetoric and use the process of communication discussed in this chapter, your responsible efforts could net you a return in terms of your speaking abilities, your career, and personal satisfaction in engaging internal and external communities, and a better social and physical environment. Enjoy the endeavor.

Chapter Summary

- * Public speaking is an important part of how we communicate in our society.
- * Public speaking assists in our personal process of discovery and it helps shape our experiences so we can share them more effectively.
- * Public speaking helps define our communities, societies, and our world through messages that unite groups and social movements.
- * Public speaking allows us to participate in our democracy through free speech. It allows our voices to be heard.
- * Public speaking allows us to share and debate differing points of view.
- * Public speaking has a firm grounding in ancient oral traditions. Traditions and practices passed down from ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman cultures still resonate in our practices today. From these traditions, we have gained the Canons of Rhetoric, including invention, organization, style, memory, and delivery. We have learned about the importance of ethos (ethical appeal), logos (logical appeal), and pathos (emotional appeal).
- * Today's understanding of the process of communication includes understanding the interaction of the sender encoding messages that are transmitted through channels to receivers who decode or assign meaning to the messages and give feedback to the sender. This process exists in a variety of contexts, including physical setting, psychological disposition, social and cultural norms, and temporal contexts. Psychological or physical noise or interference is often present.
- * Our messages can be verbal or nonverbal. They can also be intentional or unintentional and conscious or subconscious.
- * Communication exists on three levels: intrapersonal or self-communication level; interpersonal—dyadic or small-group level; and the public communication—public speaking and traditional mass media/convergence media communication level.
- * Today's effective public speakers must have critical thinking skills, media literacy, ethics, and a multicultural perspective to identify important topics and use technology in meaningful ways to enhance their public speaking to make a difference in their careers, lives, and others' lives. In turn, responsible communication often benefits the speaker.

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Answers to Exercise 1.4: 1-B, 2-A, 3-I, 4-C, 5-G, 6-H, 7-E, 8-F, 9-D

KH
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