“What a man really says when he says that someone else can be persuaded by force, is that he himself is incapable of more rational means of communication.”
—Norman Cousins

“Extremists think ‘communication’ means agreeing with them.”
—Leo Rosten

“Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.”
—Anne Morrow Lindbergh
THE NATURE AND PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

We live in a world of rapid technological advancements where information is instantaneous and accessible like never before. Technology has transformed how we receive information, how we entertain ourselves, how we shop, how we learn, and even how we communicate. Despite the far-reaching influence of technology in our society, there is still a great need for individuals to communicate in a face-to-face context—whether it involves interpersonal, public, or group communication. However, in considering these contexts, do we ever consider what it takes to become a skilled and competent communicator? The first step in learning how to be an effective communicator is to understand the process of communication.
The process of communication is very complex because it involves individuals and groups who possess very different values, beliefs, and attitudes. People come from a variety of different backgrounds, environments, and cultures, while holding different opinions and perspectives on such issues as global warming, immigration, health care, and the war on terror. It is not surprising when communication problems arise between men and women, labor and management, children and adults, or between people of different cultures and religions. It is imperative that we understand these many complexities inherent in the process of human communication if we are to engage in effective communication transactions in a variety of contexts and situations.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a better understanding and appreciation of the process of human communication in our everyday lives. Therefore, we provide a definition of communication and identify its characteristics. Also, we define the transactional model of communication, explain the different types of communication we engage in, and identify the goals of communication. In addition, we clarify the concept of public speaking by defining and explaining the myths and misconceptions of public speaking. From reading this chapter, you should have a better understanding of the communication process and the foundations of public speaking.

DEFINING COMMUNICATION AND IDENTIFYING ITS CHARACTERISTICS

We define communication as a transactional process in which people create, send, and receive symbolic messages to construct and interpret meaning in a variety of situations and contexts. What our definition illustrates is that communication is an ongoing and continuous process that is ever-evolving. Communication does not stop when we end a conversation. How we leave a conversation or situation will determine how we communicate with that same person the next time we meet. While our definition is broad and complex, there are a number of key terms that can be further explained to reveal the characteristics of the process we call communication.

Communication Is Symbolic

When we engage in communication, we use symbols to construct meaning. A symbol is an object that represents something abstract. In essence, we use symbols such as words, icons, images, tone of voice, and facial expressions to represent ideas or concepts. However, remember that when we use words, our words are not the actual idea. Instead, our words only represent our ideas. This is a very
important concept of communication that we spend more time explaining in
Chapter 11. For now, it is important to realize that miscommunication can occur
between people because we forget that words only represent our ideas; they are
not literally our ideas. A good example of how communication is symbolic is if you
have ever been “stood up” by a friend to study. Although your friend said he would
meet you at 8:00 p.m. in the library to study, he never did. In this case, his words
only represented the idea that you would meet to study. This example illustrates
that one person’s symbolic construction can have a different meaning for another
person.

Communication Is the Construction of Meaning

The idea of communication as a symbolic process leads into another characteristic
of communication, that communication is the construction of meaning. We use
symbols through verbal and nonverbal messages to construct meaning. This char-
acteristic emphasizes how meaning is constructed through the sending and receiv-
ing of messages, ideas, and values through verbal and nonverbal communication.

The exchange of ideas occurs in a context, whether it is a lawyer in a courtroom
attempting to sway a jury or a member of the clergy delivering a sermon in a place
of worship. These are both examples of how communication is constructed for
a specific context and audience. However, communication also takes place more
implicitly. For example, film directors are also engaged in sending messages to vast
and diverse audiences. A music video, television sitcom, television commercial, or
newspaper editorial are also examples of how symbols are used to generate and
construct meaning. These types of communication contain meaning that is gener-
ated by a source/speaker and sent to an audience in a particular context or situa-
tion. These examples illustrate that communication is much more than a speaker
standing behind a podium addressing an audience. An artist, film director, or ad-
vertiser are all examples of sources generating and sending messages containing
meaning for an intended (target) audience.

Communication Is Process Oriented

A third characteristic of communication is that it is process oriented in nature.
The process-oriented nature of communication means communication is an ongo-
ing and continuous process. One way to understand communication as process
oriented is to conceptualize communication as an evolutionary process that de-
velops and grows. For example, communication does not start and stop with each
correspondence. Instead, it evolves. How we end a previous conversation will influ-
ence how we begin the next conversation when we meet that same person.
When we talk about the process of communication, the element of feedback becomes a key ingredient in our understanding of how communication works. **Feedback** is any verbal or nonverbal response to a message. In other words, communication does not simply travel from “Source A” to “Destination B” and end there. It is the element of feedback that makes communication a process. Figure 1-1 illustrates the key elements in any communication transaction and demonstrates the element of feedback in the process of sending and receiving messages. This model of communication shows the dynamic nature of communication, indicating that communication is not a linear process, but a transactional process of continual action and reaction.

It is the verbal and nonverbal feedback we send and receive from interacting with others that makes human communication process oriented. For example, when professors lecture to a public speaking class and they observe half the class falling asleep, the audience is providing negative feedback. On the other hand, when professors are receiving positive feedback, the students are diligently taking notes and nodding affirmatively.

Another interesting trait of communication is that it is **irreversible** and **unrepeatable**. Inasmuch as communication is constantly changing and evolving, we can argue that it is irreversible; once it occurs, you can’t take it back or “undo” communication. If you are engaged in an argument with your significant other and say something harsh or cruel, the damage is done! It is impossible to take it back no matter how much you apologize or say, “I didn’t mean what I said.” Similarly, in a courtroom, when the prosecuting attorney makes a statement about the defendant on trial and the defense attorney objects, the judge might then tell the court to “strike that last remark from the record.” The problem, of course, is that everybody in the courtroom heard it, including the judge, the jury, and the media covering the trial, and the public observing the trial. This illustrates the irreversible nature of communication.

To say that communication is unrepeatable is a bit different than noting its irreversibility. There is an expression in the field of communication that states, “You can’t step in the same river twice.” This means you can never repeat the same message in the exact same way. If you see a movie, really enjoy it, and then see it for a second or third time, the movie (message) is different each additional time you see it. It is different for many reasons. Time has elapsed since you last saw the movie, or maybe you’re seeing it with different people than you did before. More importantly, you are seeing the message from various perspectives and maybe even seeing different aspects of the movie every time you see it. Perhaps you are reading this chapter for a second time; we would argue that although you are reading the same words during your second reading, it is a different message because you have read it once previously. Imagine a group of professional actors who perform
the same lines in the same play or musical over an extended period of time. Some of the original actors in *Cats* or *Phantom of the Opera* have delivered the same lines literally hundreds of times, yet each performance is different for these actors!

**Communication Is Complex**

Since communication involves human beings, it is necessarily complex. We all have different attitudes, beliefs, and values. People tend to communicate and perceive others based on those beliefs and values; this is where potential problems begin to emerge. When people discuss and debate major issues such as the death penalty, legalizing marijuana, or animal rights, their beliefs and values conflict with each other. Such variables as age, sex, race, and social status often affect our communication with others. That is why communication is so complex. For example, when it comes to issues such as how “enemy combatants” should be prosecuted or how illegal immigration should be addressed, public opinion often splits along cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It is also not uncommon for people of different generations to view issues and perceive reality differently from one another. Examples of communication being a complex process are evident every day in our democratic society.

**Communication Is Situational and Contextual**

Our fifth characteristic of communication states that this complex process is both situational and contextual. It just makes sense that the environment, setting, or context will affect our communication behavior. For example, the typical classroom setting invites a formal type of communication. Everything from seating arrangement to “role” or “status” plays a part in shaping the kind of communication that takes place. The situation or “context” dictates a different type of communication behavior than if the professor were to interact with a group of students at a social event or a football game. In these cases, the situation or setting dictates a more informal type of communication where status and roles, or “professor” and “student,” are not as important as they would be in the classroom. Similarly, think about how people behave in elevators. The confined space and close physical proximity of people in a crowded elevator certainly does not invite much discussion or open communication behavior. It is even more awkward when only two people are alone on an elevator. Even eye contact is avoided to prevent communication from taking place. Unless the individuals know one another, the elevator ride will consist most likely of silence until an individual’s floor is reached.
Communication Is Transactional

Finally, our communication model indicates that communication is also *transactional*. If two people are engaged in a heated debate or conversation, both verbal and nonverbal feedback might be exchanged. You might respond to a person with an angry remark or even profanity. On the other hand, your gestures and facial expression could communicate your feelings even more strongly. Have you ever found yourself expressing your feelings when another driver cuts you off in traffic by extending your middle finger or “flipping the bird” in a moment of anger? There is probably no need to roll down the car window to explain the meaning of the gesture. In this case, the nonverbal behavior says it all! It is the element of feedback that completes the process of communication by sending the feelings and responses of the audience back to the speaker or the source of the message.

![Figure 1-1.](image)

DEFINING THE TRANSACTIONAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Our transactional model of communication stresses the symbolic, constructed meaning, process-oriented, complex, and situational nature of communication. When we examine the transactional nature of communication, it becomes clear that communication is a dynamic process in which people are simultaneously sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages at the same time.

The distinct elements of the model provide a greater insight into how the process of communication works. However, it should be noted that while communication is taking place, all of these elements are working together in a symbolic relationship. We only separate them here to focus on each element individually.
Source
The place where the message originates is called the source. The purpose of the source or speaker (message creator) in any communication event will shape not only the message, but also the audience response. It is imperative that we take into account as many critical factors as possible in analyzing any communication transaction. The source is responding to a particular situation or context that contains a number of constraints and limitations, including the values and beliefs held by the audience. It is also important for the source to know the audience’s purpose and create an appropriate message for them. We believe that taking this broader perspective of communication will give us a better understanding and appreciation for the pervasive nature of communication in our daily lives.

Message
The communication that is sent to the receiver is called the message. Our model also takes into account the three major types of communication messages created by a source. Generally, messages attempt to inform, persuade, or entertain an audience. Much of this book will explore the differences between communication designed to inform an audience (share knowledge and understanding with an audience) or to persuade (motivate, influence, and change) an audience member’s attitude, belief, value, or behavior. It should also be stressed that all messages, whether they are verbal or nonverbal, contain meaning for an audience. When we exchange meaning through messages we are able to identify with each other through both language and nonverbal (body language) messages. While verbal messages are often reinforced by nonverbal behavior, they can also contradict each other. A person might say “I’m not angry,” but their facial expression, tone of voice (paralanguage), and body language might say just the opposite!

Channel
The means of any communication or how the message is communicated is called the channel. The channel in the transactional model of communication allows the message to travel from the speaker/source to the audience/receiver. It provides the medium or “pathway” for the message and the meaning it contains to be disseminated. Radio, television, film, and the Internet all represent different channels in which an individual can receive a message. It should also be noted that the channel is instrumental in molding or shaping the message. For example, think about the difference of seeing the President of the United States give a speech in person, versus watching it on television. Marshall McLuhan once stated that the “medium is the message.” The point McLuhan was making is that the channel through which we experience the message will affect our perception.
Receiver
The intended target of the source’s message is the **receiver**. There is perhaps no element more important in the communication process than the audience or the receivers of communication. Whether the audience is an individual engaged in an intimate interpersonal relationship or a mass audience watching the Super Bowl, the audience has always been a central component in any communication transaction. An **audience-centered** focus on the communication process stresses the significance of shaping messages to affect the receivers of communication. This adds to the recognition that all communication is *purposeful* or *intentional* in nature. We communicate with others to inform, persuade, or entertain, and we must always be mindful of the composition, demographics, and characteristics of our intended audience. Most advertising and marketing research, as well as political polling, is based on this crucial principle of communication. The term “target audience” is used to refer to the primary or principal group of receivers the source is communicating with.

Feedback
As we previously mentioned, **feedback** is any verbal or nonverbal response to a message. The element of feedback in the transactional model of communication is what makes communication process oriented. Feedback (both verbal and non-verbal) literally completes the communication cycle and serves to complete the process of any communication event. Feedback proves that communication is a dynamic process and not linear or mechanical in nature. A simple nod of the head or an angry verbal reply during a heated conversation will attest to the importance of feedback in our communication model.

Noise
Sometimes miscommunication occurs between people due to the element of noise. Noise is any interference in the transactional process that affects the communication. Noise can be either physical or psychological. A **physical noise** is any external sound that hinders your ability to concentrate and listen to a message. For example, if you were outside trying to listen to your friend when an ambulance’s siren suddenly blares, you probably would be the victim of physical noise. In this case, the ambulance siren prevented you from concentrating and listening to the message. On the other hand, **psychological noise** is any mental preoccupation that hinders your ability to concentrate and listen to a message. Consider the same example, but this time you are thinking about lunch instead of fully concentrating and listening to your friend’s message. You would be the victim of psychological noise because you are preoccupied with your own thoughts, which prevent you from receiving the complete message.
Context
Finally, since communication does not take place in a vacuum, our transactional model would be incomplete without a reference to the element of context or situation. The context is the setting or environment in which the communication occurs. As we discussed earlier in this chapter, the setting or the environment in which communication events occur dictate the communication that takes place and the effect communication has on the audience. The context or situation of any communication transaction literally affects all of the elements found in the communication model and in our communication behavior.

THE TYPES OF COMMUNICATION
There are several distinct types of communication we engage in on a daily basis. These different levels of communication, while distinct from each other in some ways, also tend to overlap each other in some cases. They might also be distinguished by the role that the key element of feedback plays in each type of communication.

Intrapersonal Communication
Any communication that transpires within an individual is defined as intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication is communication that occurs in our own minds. Intrapersonal communication is characterized by a lack of feedback from another individual and exists when a person interacts and responds to his or her environment only, with no communication or feedback from another individual. Examples of intrapersonal communication would include thinking, daydreaming, meditating, or even “talking to oneself” when engaging in an “internal conversation” with no other persons present.

Interpersonal Communication
Communication that occurs during a “face-to-face” conversation or interaction is called interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is characterized by immediate or direct feedback from another individual or group of people. While interpersonal communication is often a one-on-one interaction between two people, elements of interpersonal communication are also present during group interaction. When we are engaged in a conversation with another person,
we are making continuous and constant eye contact. It is also common for us to provide feedback with facial expressions and even tone of voice, or paralanguage. The key to interpersonal communication is that the feedback is instantaneous and direct; when we ask somebody a question, that person might respond with either a verbal response (language) or even a nod of the head (nonverbal).

**Group Communication**

Communication that takes place between three or more persons in a group setting or context is called **group communication**. Often this type of communication is also referred to as small-group communication because each member in the group is able to communicate with one another face-to-face during each group meeting. Scholars often disagree as to the number of people required to constitute a group, but a group might be defined as at least three people engaged in some decision-making, problem-solving, or policy-recommendation situation.

Group communication also includes elements of interpersonal communication because of the close physical proximity of the members of the group. The rule of thumb for group communication is that the more individuals in any group, the less personal the feedback or communication. Think about a large introductory lecture course at a typical college or university. It is common for those classes to have between 100–300 students. The professor is at the bottom of a large lecture hall with a microphone, and students are stacked up in stadium-style seating. This is surely not very conducive for effective communication or feedback between the students and the professor. Compare this with a class of 20 students in a public speaking seminar. The communication is far more personal, and the feedback is direct and immediate. There is far greater opportunity in a smaller class for the professor to give individual attention to each student in the class.
Nonverbal Communication

Any communication that does not involve the written or spoken word is defined as nonverbal communication. We typically think about a person’s body language when discussing this form of communication. Much of our communication is nonverbal in nature, which includes the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body type, dress/clothing, touch, paralanguage (tone of voice), territoriality (physical and social space), artifacts (objects that communicate, such as jewelry), and seating arrangement. We will discuss later in Chapter 10 how nonverbal communication and body language play a crucial role in the delivery and presentation of our speeches. Everything from tone of voice, gestures, eye contact, and body language affects our delivery in the presentation of speeches and panel discussions or public debates.

Mass Communication

In our contemporary, democratic society, mass communication plays a crucial role. Mass communication involves a person or organization that disseminates a message through mass media (such as television, radio, the Internet, or social media) to reach other individuals in the population at the same time. The development of the Internet and social media has changed the nature of mass communication from a one-way process (from a source to a public) to a dynamic process where everyone has the ability to create, distribute, and respond to information. The use of social media has made the dissemination of mediated messages more immediate and personalized. Individuals no longer have to wait for someone else to lead a cause, coordinate an effort, or raise public awareness. Social media has made these efforts easier and further demonstrates the democratic society we live in.

Intercultural Communication

Communication that examines human communication or behavior between people of different races, ethnic backgrounds, and cultures is called intercultural communication or cross-cultural communication. We cannot assume that all people share the same values, beliefs, and perspectives on issues, and this must be taken into account when persons with different ethnic backgrounds and cultures communicate. Effective speakers are able to understand and adapt messages to a multicultural audience (see Chapter 4). This is especially true when we take nonverbal communication into account. For example, certain gestures have different meanings in different cultures. While the smile (facial expression) might be one of the very few universal gestures, the “V” for victory sign does not necessarily translate across cultures or nations. In addition, certain aspects of communication, like touch, eye contact, or even acceptable physical space between two people during a conversation, can vary greatly between persons of different cultures.
THE GOALS OF COMMUNICATION
(REASONS WHY PEOPLE COMMUNICATE)

Now that we’ve discussed the process, types, and characteristics of communication, it is imperative to look at the practical aspects of how communication serves as an important part of our daily interactions. Since communication is purposeful and always has an objective or motive, it is worthwhile examining just exactly why we communicate with others. There are three distinct reasons for engaging in communication behavior.

To Increase Our Personal Awareness
First, we communicate with others to increase our personal awareness. Communication is essential in our efforts to gain knowledge and understanding. Most people attend college to receive a general education, as well as specific, intensive knowledge about a specific discipline or field of study. Also, when we interact with others, especially those persons from other cultures, races, and backgrounds, we learn valuable information and lessons from these encounters.

To Improve Our Social and Professional Relationships
Another reason we communicate is to improve our social and professional relationships. That is, we communicate to make friends and acquaintances, and establish relationships that hopefully will last a lifetime. Communication is essential to our personal, social, and professional relationships with others. Whether we consider the interaction between a group of close friends, in our family, in a successful marriage, or between business associates, it becomes obvious that communication is the element required to make those relationships successful and fulfilling.

To Change Other People’s Beliefs, Values, and Attitudes
Finally, we communicate to change other people’s beliefs, values, and attitudes. Once again, we must stress the persuasive nature of communication as an attempt to influence others in a variety of personal, social, and professional contexts or situations. We might attempt to “empower” others by giving them knowledge, skills, or a particular area of expertise. Similarly, we might try to change someone’s belief on an issue such as the death penalty or genetic engineering, or convince our boss to give us a pay raise. Whatever our goals and objectives might be, communication is the tool we use to influence others and move others to action.
DEFINING PUBLIC SPEAKING

The idea of communicating as a powerful tool to influence others to action is at the heart of public speaking. Unlike the other forms of communication that we have already discussed, public speaking can be defined as a transactional process where a speaker creates and sends symbolic messages in the attempt to inform, persuade, and/or entertain an audience in a variety of situations and contexts. Like any form of communication, public speaking is an exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between speaker(s) and audience. However, what makes public speaking unique is how speaker and audience are constantly and continuously exchanging messages that contain meaning, and are acting on and responding to the verbal and nonverbal feedback present in any speaking context. The accomplished speaker, in fact, is able to “read” the feedback of the audience while the speech is in progress and respond to that feedback during the speech. There is little doubt that this exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages makes public speaking a transactional process in which messages are delivered and received in a dynamic, symbolic relationship between the speaker and those receiving the messages.

We also emphasize that the dynamic, ongoing, and symbolic relationship between speaker and audience does not mean that speakers are “winging it” when making a presentation. To the contrary, effective speakers must plan and prepare their ideas that are adapted to a specific audience. Therefore, as we discuss the “how to” of public speaking, we are also mindful of the rhetorical strategy that is involved in planning, preparing, and adapting a message to an audience. Underlying our discussion of public speaking are the tenets of rhetorical theory. Scholars such as Lloyd Bitzer (the rhetorical situation), Kenneth Burke (identification), and classical rhetorical scholars such as Aristotle (the artistic proofs) along with Cicero and Quintilian (the canons of rhetoric) provide a theoretical basis to guide a speaker’s approach to making an effective speech. It is the use of rhetorical theory that dispels many of the myths and misconceptions of public speaking that we discuss next.

THE MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

There exist several myths or misconceptions surrounding the art or craft of public speaking. We will address those myths here in order to provide a better understanding and appreciation for this transactional process of communication.
Myth One: Only Lawyers, Preachers, Teachers, and Politicians Engage in Public Speaking

Public speaking is not necessarily restricted to a speaker standing behind a podium delivering a formal speech to an audience in a court of law, a church service, a classroom, or on the floor of the United States Senate. Public speaking is something we all engage in, not just lawyers, preachers, teachers, and politicians. In fact, any time we hold and maintain the attention of an audience for an extended period of time, we are engaging in public speaking. Whether we are trying to convince a judge in traffic court that the light was yellow and not red, or running for election to some local political office, or speaking at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, public speaking skills play a major role in our daily lives.

Myth Two: Good Public Speakers Are Born That Way

Nobody is born with an innate ability to speak in public. Public speaking is a skill that requires years of experience, trial and error, and many mistakes. While people often speak about a “natural born athlete” during an athletic contest, the same cannot be said about a public speaker.

Some of the greatest orators in history started their careers as average public speakers. President John F. Kennedy, for example, never demonstrated his prowess and ability as a speaker when he first entered the political arena. It took years of training, voice lessons, and experience facing real audiences to polish his skills, eventually making him one of our greatest orators ever. The same can be true for you. Experience is the key. As you begin to make presentations you will learn what your strengths and weaknesses are as a speaker. The goal is to improve your weaknesses one at a time.

Myth Three: Knowledge Alone Makes a Successful Speaker

There are many elements that go into effective public speaking. In order to become a “complete” speaker, several factors must be taken into consideration to be an effective public speaker. For example, knowledge alone does not guarantee speaking success. A speaker might possess a great deal of knowledge or expertise about any given topic. However, if the speaker has a weak delivery or an unorganized speech, all the knowledge and expertise in the world won’t turn the speaker’s knowledge into an effective speech.
Myth Four: Style Alone Makes a Good Speaker

Style in public speaking includes two very important components. First, style entails what we would call **speaker-topic involvement**, or enthusiasm on the speaker’s behalf. While it is important to be relaxed and composed, a speaker who is too “laid back” or nonchalant is not very likely to motivate or keep an audience’s attention. There is a myth, however, that if a speaker shows enthusiasm or concern toward the topic and audience, that this will make for a successful speaker. This is false, of course, because it takes much more than enthusiasm or effective style to have an effective speech.

In addition, style refers to the type of language a speaker utilizes in a speech or group presentation. Is the language appropriate for the type of speech and the audience’s needs? The language for an informative message, for example, tends to be descriptive and denotative in nature. Conversely, the language found in a persuasive presentation is often more connotative, rhetorical, and argumentative than language suitable for the informative speech. The resulting myth, however, is that if the speaker incorporates effective and appropriate language, that this alone will make the speech successful. Once again, no one element could possibly achieve this.

Myth Five: Good Delivery Alone Makes a Speaker Effective

While delivery is an integral component in public speaking, as we discuss in Chapter 10, the presentation of the speech itself is of little value if the speech is not well structured and lacks evidence or support material. Delivery includes everything from eye contact to gestures to tone of voice, all major elements in making an effective speaker. However, superb delivery won’t compensate for lack of knowledge, style, and organization in a speech.

Myth Six: A Speaker Is an Actor or an Entertainer

Many novice speakers believe all that is necessary to be an effective speaker is to make the audience laugh or to entertain them. While there is nothing wrong with using humor in a speech or panel presentation, it is imperative to understand that a speaker is not an entertainer. When late-night talk hosts or stand-up comedians deliver their monologues, they are not actually engaged in public speaking. However, most speakers have a far more serious and important purpose when delivering a speech, and it surely is not presenting a series of “one-liners” or jokes.

The myths and misconceptions discussed above illustrate that for a speaker to be effective, many factors must be taken into consideration. No single factor such as
the speaker's knowledge or expertise, enthusiasm, style, or delivery can make a successful speaker. All of these elements must be included in any speech or group presentation to make a presentation effective, and to produce a “complete” speaker. As you continue to read the chapters in this book, we will tell you how to incorporate all these elements into your presentation to make an effective public speech.

This chapter has provided an overview of the communication process. The nature of communication has been defined and the characteristics of communication have been examined through the transactional model of communication. In addition, the distinct types of communication have been discussed in relationship to feedback. Then, we explained the goals of communication or reasons why people communicate. This was followed by defining the art of public speaking. From reading this chapter, you should have a better understanding of the communication process and the foundations of public speaking.

**VOCABULARY**

**Channel** — the means of any communication or how the message is communicated.

**Communication** — a transactional process in which people create, send, and receive messages to construct and interpret meaning in a variety of situations and contexts.

**Context** — the setting or environment in which the communication occurs; the situational aspects of communication.

**Feedback** — any verbal or nonverbal response to a message.

**Group communication** — any communication that takes place between two or more persons in a group setting or context.

**Intercultural communication** — human communication or behavior between people of different races, ethnic backgrounds, and cultures.

**Interpersonal communication** — communication that occurs during “face-to-face” conversations and interactions.

**Intrapersonal communication** — any communication that transpires within an individual. Examples include thinking, daydreaming, meditating, and “talking to yourself.”

**Mass communication** (mass media) — involves a person or organization that disseminates a message through mass media (such as television, radio, the Internet, or social media) to reach other individuals in the population at the same time.
Message — the communication that is sent to the receiver.

Model (communication model) — a representation of the communication process and the elements comprising that process.

Myths of public speaking — popular misconceptions about the act and process of public speaking.

Noise — any interference in the transactional process that affects the communication. Noise can be either physical or psychological.

Nonverbal communication — any communication that does not involve the written or spoken word. Examples would include facial expression, gestures, physical appearance, spatial communication or territoriality, clothing, artifacts, paralanguage, and body language.

Physical noise — any external sound that hinders one’s ability to concentrate and listen to a message.

Process oriented — the circular nature of communication and public speaking as a result of verbal and nonverbal feedback in any communication event or transaction.

Psychological noise — any mental preoccupation that hinders one’s ability to concentrate and listen to a message.

Public speaking — a transactional process where a speaker creates and sends symbolic messages in an attempt to inform, persuade, and/or entertain an audience in a variety of situations and contexts.

Receiver — the intended target of the source’s message; the audience.

Source — the place where the message originates.

Symbol — an object that represents something abstract.

The transactional model of communication — a model that represents the dynamic process of communication in which people are simultaneously sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages at the same time.