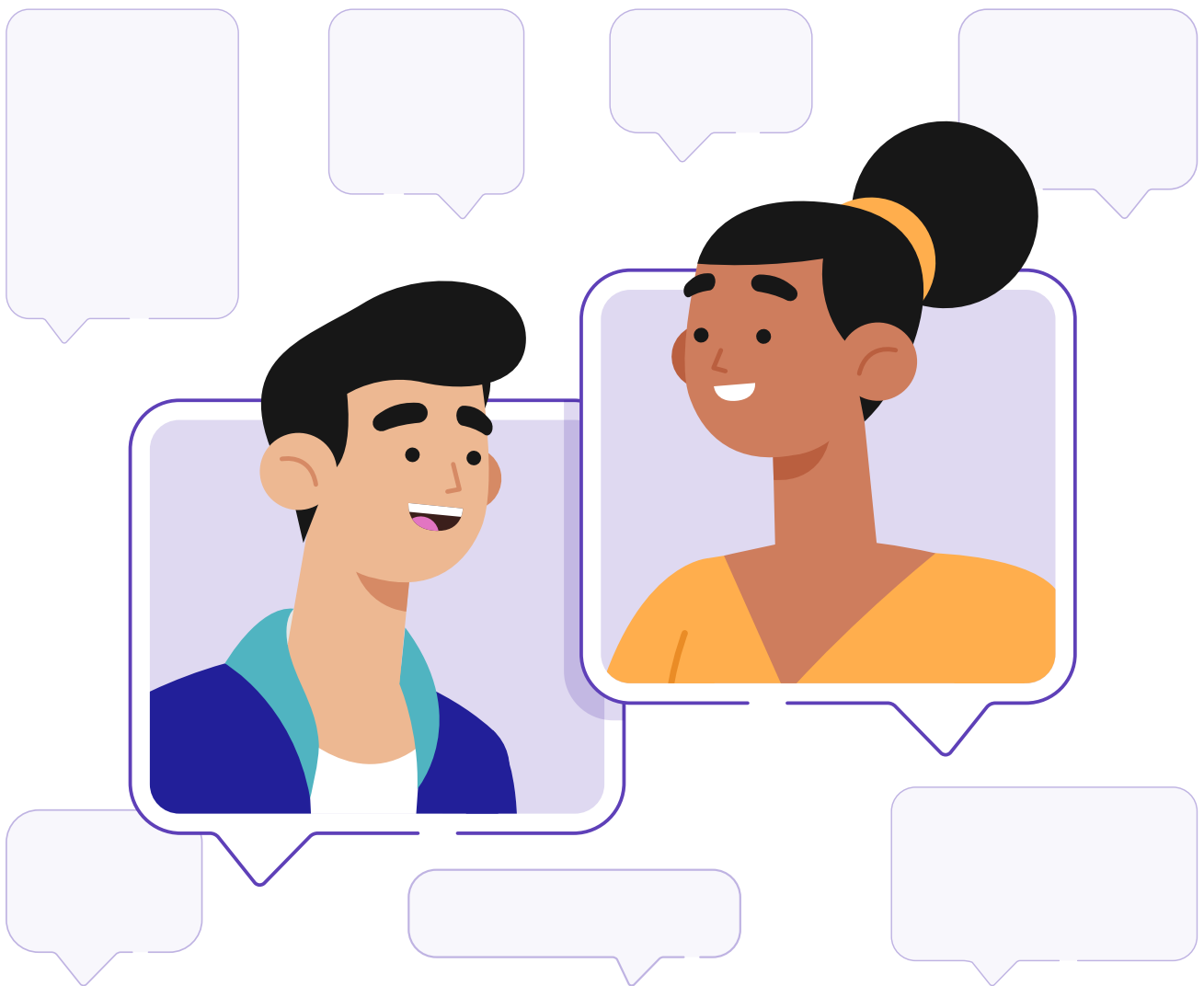


# AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION SKILLS



**The Skills You Need Guide  
to Interpersonal Skills**

**PART 1**

# **AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

Skills You Need

This is one of a series of eBooks  
by Skills You Need available for sale at:

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# INTRODUCTION

This book is part of a series of guides on improving your interpersonal skills. These skills are about how you relate to and interact with other people, especially in person.

Effective communication skills are fundamental to good interactions between two or more people. This book, *An Introduction to Communication Skills*, is the first in the series. It starts by explaining more about the theory and nature of communication, then moves on to discuss effective spoken communication, the importance of body language and other aspects of non-verbal communication, and the essential skill of listening to others, before discussing barriers to communication, and how to improve communication.

The book focuses on interpersonal spoken or non-verbal communication, including body language, face and voice, as well as effective speaking and listening. It does not cover written communication.

We hope that it will be useful to anyone wishing to improve their communication skills.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

It is perfectly possible to use this book simply as a guide: read it, inwardly digest and (hopefully) put it into action.

We think, however, that you will get the most out of it if you also do the exercises suggested throughout the book. Some of them can be done alone and at any time. Others will need the right opportunity at work, or perhaps while volunteering, and some will only work with the cooperation of a friend or trusted colleague.

You may find it helpful to use a notebook to consciously write down the outcomes of the exercises to act as an ongoing reminder, and help you to process your learning more effectively.

## **NOT SURE IT'S FOR YOU?**

Try our Interpersonal Skills Self-Assessment to find out where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and whether you could benefit from improving your communication skills.

The assessment covers listening skills, verbal communication, emotional intelligence and working in groups.

It is available free online at [www.skillsyouneed.com/ipstest](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ipstest), or as a hard copy from the Skills You Need website shop [www.skillsyouneed.com/shop](http://www.skillsyouneed.com/shop).

## **MORE ABOUT COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

We hope that you find this book useful, and that it enables you to understand and improve your communication skills.

If so, you may also want to read our second book on communication skills, *Advanced Communication Skills*.

# 1

## WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Being able to communicate effectively is the most important of all life skills. Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place to another. This may be vocally (using voice), written (using printed or digital media such as books, magazines, websites or emails), visually (using logos, maps, charts or graphs) or non-verbally (using body language, gestures and the tone and pitch of voice).

How well this information is transmitted and received is a measure of whether your communication skills are good.

# YOU ALREADY HAVE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

We have all been developing our interpersonal skills since childhood, usually subconsciously.

Interpersonal skills become so natural that we often take them for granted, never thinking about how we communicate with other people. The foundations for many other skills, however, are built on strong interpersonal skills, since these are relevant to our personal relationships, social affairs and professional lives.

# WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

**Communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another.**

Although this is a simple definition, when we think about how we may communicate, the subject becomes a lot more complex. There are various categories of communication and more than one may occur at any time.

The different categories of communication are:

- Spoken or Verbal Communication: face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media.
- Non-Verbal Communication: body language, gestures, how we dress or act.
- Written Communication: letters, e-mails, books, magazines, the Internet or via other media.
- Visualizations: graphs and charts, maps, logos and other visualizations can communicate messages.

The desired outcome or goal of any communication process is understanding.

The process of interpersonal communication cannot be regarded as a phenomena which simply ‘happens’. Instead, it should be seen as a process where participants negotiate their role, whether consciously or unconsciously.

Senders and recipients, or receivers, are of course both vital in communication. In face-to-face communication, the roles of the sender and receiver are not distinct, because both parties communicate in both directions, including in very subtle ways such as through eye-contact (or lack of) and general body language. There are many other subtle ways that we communicate (perhaps even unintentionally) with others. For example, the tone of our voice can give clues to our mood or emotional state, whilst hand signals or gestures can add to a spoken message.

In written communication the sender and receiver are more distinct. Until recent times, a relatively small number of writers and publishers were very powerful when it came to communicating the written word. Today, we can all write and publish our ideas on the Internet, which has led to an explosion of information and communication possibilities.



**The full eBook  
is available at**

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