

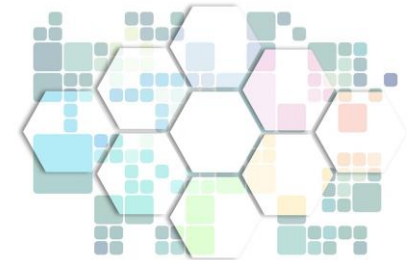
# FAST training course

## Module 3 – Communication

## Introduction

Soft skills are equally desirable in the workplace as hard skills. Almost every industry requires individuals who possess not only knowledge and expertise in certain fields, but interpersonal attributes that would allow them to work well with others. Effective communication, well-developed organisational and problem-solving skills and empathy are some of the most sought-after soft skills. This module will cover these four soft skills and equip future Accessibility Travel Facilitators (ATF) with relevant knowledge and experience. This module is divided into 2 units/topics:

- Unit 1: **Communication**
- Unit 2: **Empathy**



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## Learning goals

The main learning objective of the module is to support ATFs in honing their communication, problem-solving, organisational skills and empathy, and improving their overall interaction with tourists with disabilities. Upon completion of this module you should be able to:

- **Understand main communication elements and be able to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues**

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**01** Unit 1:  
Communication

**02** Unit 2:  
Empathy

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## 01 Unit 1:Communication

## Unit 1: Communication

### Icebreaker - Self-assessment (potentially via Mentimeter)

Please answer the following questions:

- What associations do you have with 'communication'?
- Have you ever dealt with the topic of 'communication' in detail and e.g. participated in a communication training/workshop?
- What was the importance of 'communication competence' in your professional practice so far and to what extent is good communication competence important for your work as an ATF?
- What do you expect from this training?
- Which content/topics do you want to work on in this training in order to be able to optimise your communication competence as an ATF accordingly?

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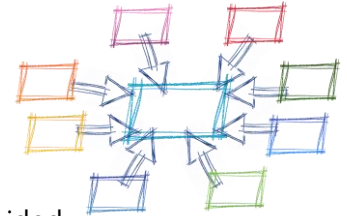
## Unit 1: Communication

This unit will cover most important elements for a good communication with people with mobility limitations and help them improve to communicate complex issues and present evidence to a range of audiences.

### Learning goals:

Upon completion of this unit participants should be able to:

- Understand how communication processes work, how misunderstandings arise and how they can be avoided.
- Understand main communication elements to apply verbally, in writing and through body language with the specific ATF communication peers
- Effectively express complex issues and present evidence in communication with the specific ATF clients and customers



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# Unit 1: Communication

## Learning methodology

At the beginning of this unit, learners are introduced to the concept of communication as a verbal and non-verbal activity. After they familiarise themselves with main components of communication with the specific target audience of ATFs the learners move forward to hands-on sessions.

We recommend to apply the flipped classroom approach by providing videos on three basic theory models which learners shall explore and reflect upon (e.g. by answering some questions bringing their reflection towards their work place and ATF communication situations). The theoretical introduction is then also supported with various learning activities that allow the learners then to try out the theory in practice. Due to the fact that communication is usually an interactive activity, it is recommended to apply lessons learnt directly in situations an ATF finds him/herself in. Discussions, debates, role plays are some means to learn more about effective communication and test out the skills that may lead to it.

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## Unit 1: Communication

### Definition: What is communication?



- **Communication:** *The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.*  
*...The successful conveying or sharing of ideas and feelings.* (Oxford English Dictionary)

As this definition makes clear, communication is more than simply the transmission of information. The term requires an element of success in transmitting or imparting a message, whether information, ideas, or emotions.

Communication therefore has three parts: the **sender**, the **message**, and the **recipient**.

The sender 'encodes' the message, usually in a mixture of words and non-verbal communication. It is transmitted in some way (for example, in speech or writing), and the recipient 'decodes' it.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## How communication works – the components of communication

The communication process is impacted by several variables, both internal and external. They include the:

- Context
- Sender
- Ideas
- Encoding
- Medium
- Receiver/decoder
- Feedback



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## Unit 1: Communication

### How communication works – the components of communication

- **Context** refers to the circumstances which form the setting for a statement or idea. The context can include the individual's culture, the organization or the country in which the communication takes place. Context also includes external stimuli, such as your opinions, attitude, emotions, likes/dislikes, experience, education and even your level of confidence.
- **Sender/the encoder:** is the person who is sharing the message. They use words, pictures, graphs and symbols to convey the message in a way that will be best received by the person they are communicating with.
- **Idea/the message:** is the information that is shared during the exchange between the sender and receiver. The central point of the message or idea must be clear and the sender must keep in mind how the other person will receive the message.
- **Encoding** refers to the use of words, pictures or actions while sharing a message. The encoding could be the text you use when writing an email or any symbols used, such as exclamation points, question marks or emoji symbols, to emphasize your point.

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## Unit 1: Communication



### How communication works – the components of communication

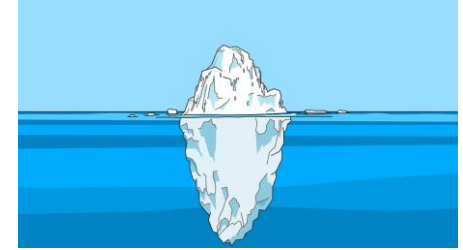
- **Medium** is how the message is transmitted. You could use print, electronic or sound. The choice of medium is often influenced by the relationship between the sender and receiver and typically impacts how well the message is received and understood.
- **Receiver/Decoder:** This refers to the person who is receiving the message. They are also influenced by the context, the internal/external stimuli of their environment or background. This person must interpret the message, which means it will be funneled through their own personality, perceptions, opinions and attitudes.
- **Feedback:** This refers to the response the receiver gives the sender. It is generally a written or verbal message although silence is also feedback. This is one of the most important components of communication, as it clarifies whether the message was accurately received and completes the loop of communication.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Communication Model – The iceberg model



Please watch the video about the iceberg model: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgjxwVNUtfM>

and answer the following questions:

- What does the iceberg model say?
- What two levels does the iceberg model refer to and what contents/factors are conveyed at each level?
- What is the significance of these levels for shaping communication in everyday life and work?

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## Unit 1: Communication

### Communication Model –The four-ear model (Schulz von Thun, 2000)

The concept assumes that communication always takes place on four levels – both on the sender and receiver side. The four transmitter channels are:

- **Factual content:** refers to the pure subject matter, i.e. the information itself.
- **Self-revelation:** means the combination of self-representation and self-revelation, i.e. the question of what the spoken word expresses about the speaker
- **Relationship statements:** are always part of the message and provide information about the relationship between sender & recipient
- **Appeal (or want):** contains what the sender wants the receiver to do or think

**Exercise:** *A man and a woman are sitting in a car at a traffic light. The woman says to the man: 'It's green!' What messages can be meant by the woman and understood by the man with the four ears?*

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## Unit 1: Communication

### Common communication barriers

- **Using industry jargon:** ... or highly technical language can abstract your messages and make it more challenging for people to understand important information
- **Providing too much information at once:** ... can complicate your message and make it harder for your audience to understand
- **Different communication styles:** ... sometimes, these differences can become communication barriers. Here are a few things you can do to help get your point across to people who have different communication styles:
  - Use a confident tone
  - Ask if anyone needs clarification
  - Include examples
  - Mirror other communication styles



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## Unit 1: Communication

### Common communication barriers

- **Language and hearing barriers:** ... if someone has a hearing impairment or is not fluent in your language, they may have a challenging time understanding what you're saying. In these cases, it's important to make all the necessary arrangements to ensure you're able to effectively communicate with each other, e.g. request the services of a translator/sign language interpreter.
- **Physical barriers:** ... while face-to-face communication is generally the most effective, it's not always possible—especially for businesses with multiple locations or remote workers. When dealing with physical barriers, it's important to adapt your communication techniques:
  - If you're speaking with someone on the phone/or a visually impaired person you can't rely on non-verbal communication. So you'll need to ensure all expressions are verbal.
  - If you're communicating primarily through email/chat, it's crucial you use the same etiquette you would use in spoken conversations , such as beginning a message exchange with a greeting, so you don't come across as terse or impolite.

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## Unit 1: Communication



### What is effective communication in the workplace?

Effective communication in the workplace, especially with clients/customers is when the exchange of information and ideas is done in an efficient and effective manner. While information and ideas are frequently exchanged in a workplace setting, they are not always sent and received in an accurate way. Good communication involves not just relaying information but being able to explain it in a way that ensures the recipient understands you. Communication at work includes several different methods of transmitting and receiving information. The most common forms of communication in the workplace include:

- **Written communication**, such as memos and emails
- **Verbal/oral communication**, such as speaking to another person
- **Nonverbal communication**, such as nodding to show understanding
- **Listening skills**, including active listening

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# Unit 1: Communication



## Writing strategies for effective communication

Written communication skills are important in almost every job. Whether you need to submit reports, correspond with clients via email/chat, create presentation slides or compose articles for your website. If you want to improve your written communication skills, consider these strategies in order to help you write clear and engaging material:

- **Read:** Become a good reader and you'll become a good writer. Frequent reading increases your vocabulary, exposes you to examples of good writing and can teach you spelling, grammar, punctuation and common writing techniques.
- **Target your audience:** Consider who you are writing to before you begin. Choose a writing style that will resonate with your audience
- **Use an outline:** Good writing has a clear purpose that is achieved through its beginning, middle and end. Make an outline of what you want to communicate and the order you will discuss your points in so that your writing will have a clear and easy-to-follow structure.
- **Open strong:** An effective opening is one that persuades the reader to keep reading. Some interesting openings include a surprising fact, an engaging anecdote, establishing a personal connection or just a very well-written sentence.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Writing strategies for effective communication

- **Answer the 5 Ws and H:** Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. Checking that you answered all of these questions about your topic throughout your writing helps to ensure that you have communicated your subject fully and clearly.
- **Be simple and direct:** It's usually best to use a polite and conversational tone, avoiding any jargon, cliches, idioms or slang.
- **Choose strong verbs:** Use clear, strong verbs. As you write, consider what verbs you can use that present a vivid image to the reader.
- **Limit your adjectives and adverbs:** Watch out for frequent adjectives/adverbs and consider if your point might be clearer without them.
- **Understand the three appeals:** Ethos (appeal to character), Logos (appeal to logic/reason) and Pathos (appeal to emotion)
- **Consider using literacy devices:** Similes, metaphors, imagery, rhyming, repetition, alliteration, assonance and the inversion of words or phrases are all literary devices that can enhance your writing style.
- **Revise, edit and proofread:** Look at the macro view of your draft (Revise), after revising edit your writing, proofreading is the final step

**Exercise – Brainstorming:** What factors do you have to consider when preparing a homepage, flyers, offers, e-mails, etc. for your future clients/customers who may have different impairments?

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## Unit 1: Communication

### Verbal communication skills

Verbal communication skills refer to the way you relay a message through words. The primary goal of verbal communication is to use language to convey information clearly and concisely.

Verbal communication skills are most often employed during three situations:

- **Interpersonal communication** refers to one person directly communicating with another person, e.g. conversation with new or potential clients/customers to promote products or services
- **Group conversations** refer to conversations amongst a relatively small number of people, e.g. friendly chats, status updates or coordinating calendars with clients/customers
- **Public speaking** involves one person presenting information to a large group of people, e.g. presentations, speeches



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## Unit 1: Communication

### How to improve your verbal communication skills

- **Consider your message:** Decide what you want to convey during your next conversation, presentation or written communication. By reviewing the information you want to share, you can be sure your communication stays focused and concise.
- **Recognize your audience:** Your intended audience will dictate the tone of your communication, as well as the mannerisms and other aspects of verbal communication you can use to enhance your communication.
- **Be mindful of your nonverbal communication:** This includes actions like eye contact, posture, laughing, coughing, yawning and facial expressions. Being aware of your nonverbal communication ensures that the message you convey through your actions or body language matches the message you convey through your words.
- **Speak clearly:** One of the most important aspects of speaking clearly is adapting to your audience, setting and message so that your tone matches the information you want to share.
- **Practice active listening:** Active listening will ensure that the sender and receiver are equally exchanging messages and feedback. As you become a receiver practice active listening, so that you can answer questions or respond to feedback calmly and effectively.

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## Unit 1: Communication



### How to improve your communication skills



Please watch the video 'How to improve communication skills? 12 Effective Tips To Improve Communication Skills':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3DiMAPolls> and answer the following questions:

- What 12 strategies/tips are mentioned in the video to improve communication skills?
- Reflect on your own communication behaviour: which of the success factors mentioned have you already internalised and which do you want to apply in the future in order to communicate effectively as an ATF with clients and customers?

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is the transfer of information through the use of body language (e.g. eye contact, facial expressions, gestures etc.). Everyone uses nonverbal communication all the time whether they know it or not. Nonverbal communication helps people to:

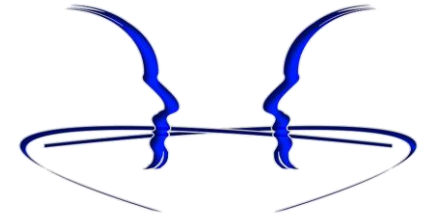
- **Reinforce or modify what is said in words:** A shrug of the shoulders and a sad expression when saying “I’m fine, thanks” may actually imply that things are not really fine at all!
- **Convey information about their emotional state:** Your facial expression, tone of voice and your body language can often tell people exactly how you feel, even if you have hardly said a word.
- **Define or reinforce the relationship between people:** If you have ever watched a couple sitting talking, you may have noticed that they tend to ‘mirror’ each other’s body language.
- **Provide feedback to the other person:** Smiles/nods tell someone that you are listening and that you agree with what they are saying.
- **Regulate the flow of communication:** There are a number of signals that we use to tell people that we have finished speaking, e.g. a firm closing of the lips indicates that we have nothing more to say or an emphatic nod might be an indication that we wish to speak.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Types of nonverbal communication



There are several types of nonverbal communications you should be aware of, including:

- **Body language** is the way someone situates their body depending on the situation, the environment and how they are feeling. Example: Someone might cross their arms if they are feeling angry or nervous.
- **Movement:** The way you move your arms and legs such as walking quickly or slowly, standing, sitting or fidgeting, can all convey different messages to onlookers. Example: Sitting still and paying attention in a meeting conveys respect and attention.
- **Posture:** The way you sit/stand can also communicate your comfort level, professionalism and general disposition towards a person or conversation. Example: Someone might slouch their shoulders if they feel tired, frustrated or disappointed.
- **Gestures:** Gestures vary widely across communities. They are generally used both intentionally/unintentionally to convey information to others. Example: Someone might display a “thumbs up” to communicate confirmation or that they feel positive about something.
- **Space:** Creating or closing distance between yourself and the people around you can also convey messages about your comfort level, the importance of the conversation, your desire to support or connect with others and more. Example: You might stand two to three feet away from a new contact to respect their boundaries.

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## Unit 1: Communication

### Types of nonverbal communication

- **Paralanguage** includes the non-language elements of speech, such as your talking speed, pitch, intonation, volume and more. Example: You might speak quickly if you are excited about something.
- **Facial expressions:** Using the eye-brows, mouth, eyes and facial muscles to convey emotion or information can be very effective. Example: Someone might raise their eyebrows and open their eyes widely if they feel surprised.
- **Eye contact:** Strategically using eye content (or lack of eye contact) is an extremely effective way to communicate your attention and interest. Example: Looking away from someone and at the ground or your phone may convey disinterest or disrespect.
- **Touch:** Some people also use touch as a form of communication. This form of communication should be used sporadically and only when you know the receiving party is okay with it. It should never be used to convey anger, frustration or any other negative emotions. Example: Placing your hand on a friend's shoulder may convey support or empathy.

**Exercise** Think or research: Do (physical/mental) impairments affect body language? Which impairments might make it more difficult to 'read' your clients'/customers body language correctly?

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## Unit 1: Communication



### How to read body language

Reading body language is a difficult skill. While each person uses nonverbal communication differently, there are several common cues to consider that will inform you about a person's feelings, intentions, etc.

- **Posture:** If a person has their shoulders back and spine straight, it is a sign that they are engaged, listening and open to ideas/information. If they are exhibiting poor posture with their shoulders slouched or raised and spine bent, they might be nervous or anxious.
- **Use of arms:** If a person has their arms down to their side, on the table or arranged in some other open way, this is a sign that they feel positive and ready to absorb information. If their arms are crossed/closed, they might be experiencing some sort of negative emotion.
- **Use of legs:** If a person has both feet placed flat on the ground, this is a sign that they feel ready and open to hear your ideas. If their legs are crossed or arranged in some other closed formation, they might be feeling irritated or stressed.
- **Use of facial expressions:** If someone is frowning, has a furrowed brow/tight lips, you might pause to ensure they don't feel confused, angry or some other negative emotion. If someone has a soft smile, relaxed facial muscles or gently raised eye-brows, this is a sign that they feel good about the information you are presenting.

Please go to: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/nonverbal-communication.html> and find further information of culture-specific non-verbal communication

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## Unit 1: Communication

### How to communicate effectively at work/with clients/customers

Here are some tips which might help improving your communication at work.



- **Practice active listening:** Give the person you talk to your undivided attention. Follow up with clarifying questions, use paraphrasing or summarize their thoughts back to them before responding to ensure you fully understand what they were communicating.
- **Monitor nonverbal:** Observe the person you're speaking to as they talk and watch for nonverbal signs that could give a different message than what is being said.
- **Take communication preference into consideration:** Everyone communicates differently. If possible, communicate your preferences and choose methods that are in line with your sender's preferences too.
- **Use constructive criticism:** If necessary, always keep criticism constructive, use positive reinforcement. When you give constructive criticism, be direct, to the point and free from emotion.
- **Keep practicing:** Observe how people respond to your communication and ask trusted team members or also your clients/customers for honest feedback to identify areas where you can improve.



Please watch the video 'Communication skills at work: 4 Key tips': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CIHkuLgeBcA&t=30s>

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Empathic communication

Empathic communication means showing the other person that s/he is listened to and that their inner universe (thoughts, emotions, attitudes, values, etc.) is being understood. Entering into the world of other people and seeing what they see is not something that is easy, but it helps us to avoid making the wrong assumption and misjudgments about the person we talk to.

### How to develop your empathic communication skills?

- Increase the attention by self-detachment and self-decentralization.
- Be more receptive to what the other person is saying.
- Abstain from quickly assessing the situation and giving suggestions to the speaker.
- Increase your active listening by participating in what the other person says. Make the effort to see the situation from their point of view and have the patience to let them finish what they are saying.
- Move from listening to the informative content to listening to the things that cannot be directly or verbally expressed (nonverbal communication).
- Check whether what you heard and what the other person didn't verbalize is correct. Try not to make assumptions.



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## Unit 1: Communication

### Roleplay:

Imagine the following situation: Your hearing-impaired client's hearing aid device is not working and he is very upset and nervous about that. You, as the ATF, want to explain to your client that after lunch you will take the other clients to the planned visit to the museum and then take him to a hearing aid shop to have his device checked and repaired if necessary. Your client can only understand you very poorly without hearing aids.

How can you communicate, which communication methods, aids etc. can you use to convey the information to your client?

Role play the situation, one participant takes the role of the ATF, another participant takes the role of the hearing impaired client. The rest of the participants act as observers and give feedback to the actors afterwards. The role play can be repeated several times, with other participants taking on the role of ATF/client or observer. If necessary, further solutions can be discussed in the group.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Exercises:

### 1) Crucial Conversations Training Exercises

These training exercises focus on some of the core elements of having crucial conversations. By using these exercises, you can improve your communication skills and prepare yourself for future crucial conversations.



Go to <https://www.shortform.com/blog/crucial-conversations-training-exercises/> Please find – and try - the following exercises:

- Exercise 1: Your Crucial Conversations
- Exercise 2: Monitoring Yourself
- Exercise 3: Finding a Mutual Purpose
- Exercise 4: Making Contrasting Statements
- Exercise 5: Master Your Story

**Tip:** On the website <https://zenkit.com/en/blog/workplace-communication-tips-and-tools-for-good-communication> you will find further tips and tools for good communication.

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# Unit 1: Communication

## Exercises:

### 2) Nonviolent communication



Please watch the video about Rosenberg's nonviolent communication: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0>



**Exercise:** Think about different situations or circumstances that could arise in your future job as an ATF. For example, a customer complains because the restaurant she has chosen does not offer gluten-free food ... or a customer wants to visit a remote monastery in addition to the planned city tour, but the other customers do not want to, etc.

How do you react in these situations? Practise appropriate non-violent ways of communicating in role-plays/dialogues.

### 3) Strategies to resolve conflicts

Please go to <https://franticallyspeaking.com/11-effective-communication-strategies-to-resolve-conflict/>

**Exercise:** Consider a possible conflict scenario of your customers, e.g. your customer, Mr. X would like comprehensive further information about a visited sight and continuously asks you as ATF for more information. The other customers would like to continue with the planned programme. Mrs. Y is annoyed and says that Mr. X should buy a travel guide or research further information on the Internet... Think about possible solutions to the conflict according to the five strategies.



## Unit 1: Communication

### Self-assessment – Feedback

#### 'Living Questionnaire'

Share your feedback, assessments and opinions with us by placing yourself on an imaginary line in the room for the following questions/statements - far left means very little/bad, far right means very much/good.

- How much new did you learn in the training?
- How well are you now familiar with the topic of communication?
- To what extent were you able to improve your communication skills as a result of the training?
- As an ATF, do you feel well prepared for different communication situations with future customers and clients?
- How satisfied are you with the training overall?

Preparation for the trainer: possibly stick a line on the floor, think about (further) questions for the feedback survey.

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## Unit 1: Communication

References and material recommended for further study:

### Web-links:

<https://cleverclipstudios.com/en-ch/blog/what-is-a-communication-model>  
<https://franticallyspeaking.com/11-effective-communication-strategies-to-resolve-conflict>  
<https://laofutze.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/schulzvonhthun.pdf>  
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjA90hvnQ0>  
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