
UNIT 1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MARINE COMMUNICATION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

English is the most important language of the world because it dominates the world of business. It spreads from Britain to other parts of the world primarily to serve the purposes of trade and commerce. In India, it has been in use for more than two hundred years. It is our associate official language and the language of business and administration. Not only this, it is the language of international business, air traffic control, United Nations, diplomacy, world banking, science and technology, academic research, space travel and global computing.

The English language is easy to learn also. It has only 26 letters while a learner of Chinese or Japanese has to struggle with as many as 2000 characters. Perhaps it could be also one of the reasons for its wide range of acceptability across the world.

Relevance of English to Seafarers

Crews of ships trading internationally must necessarily conduct navigational and safety communications with persons who may be unable to understand their national language of crew personnel. As navigational and safety communications must be precise, simple and clear, so as to avoid confusion and error, this necessitates the a need to standardize the language used in communication.

In 1973 the IMO Maritime Safety Committee agreed at its twenty-seventh session that, where language difficulties arise, a common language should be used for navigational purposes and that language should be English.

Without proper communication skills we would be left with in comprehensible expressions i.e.

I didn't say that I
didn't say it. I said
that I didn't say that
I said it. I want to
make that very clear.

– G. Romney

Communication is the process of exchanging information. Information is conveyed as words, tone of voice, sigh and symbols and body language. Studies have shown that words account for 7 percent of the information communicated. Vocal tone accounts for 55 per cent and body language accounts for 38 per cent. To be effective communicators, team members must be aware of these forms, how to use them effectively, and what the barriers to the communications process are.

It is important to keep up to date and well informed about new developments and changes in the industry. Information needs to be correctly read and understood so that it can be implemented in your career. It is equally important to be able to write accurate accounts and reports of incidents at sea. Reports which provide clear details, structured in the right manner are necessary for the industry.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relevance of requirement of English to all seafarers,
- State of different language learning techniques,
- Identify gaps in your own language needs in terms of grammar/vocabulary, phonology and communication skills.
- Describe the key aspects of effective communication,
- State the importance of effective communication onboard,
- Identity the barriers to effective communication, and
- List techniques for developing effective communication skills.
- State key aspects of accurately obtain information from marine publications,
- Write reports of incidents on board, and
- Explain what are Safety Circulars and Notices.

1.2 AWARENESS AND PREFERENCE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING TECHNIQUES

In the words of John Adair, “Communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and to make himself or herself understood. Or, if you prefer a slightly more formal version, communication is the process by which meanings are exchanged between people through the use of a common set of symbols.”

On many occasions the receiver is not able to clearly receive the message sent from the sender. This happens because of the following barriers to communication:

- (a) **Poor Vocabulary:** In one's own language many people do not know the correct meaning of some words. Lack of good vocabulary can give rise to confusion/oddness in communication.

- (b) **Poor Listening Skills:** Active listening is most important in effective communication. There are many instances wherein because of ineffective listening communication could not be established.
- (c) **Wrong Perception:** When a person indulges in communication, his talk will depend upon the way he perceives the subject or the object as the case may be. For example 'A man was walking on the platform, it was pitch dark. As he stepped forward he stamped on a thick long object. Immediately he started shouting "snake, snake" and rushed forward. People coming behind started shouting "snake, snake" and took to their heels. In the next few seconds, the light came on. The man in front looked back. A thick flexible rubber hose was lying on the pavement'.
- (d) **Lack of Knowledge:** If you are made to sit in a seminar on a technical topic not relating to your own field of knowledge, your head will start reeling and this can bring about a block in the path of communication.
- (e) **Cross Culture:** Working with multinational crew, be aware that the social environment, language spoken and culture varies from one person to another. e.g. in business negotiations with Koreans, it is sign of respect to present items with both hands and business cards with the right hand. Never give a card or anything else with the left hand as it shows disrespect. For communicating effectively, avoid the use of slang and jargon; remember you want the other side to understand you.

Some basic rules of Grammar, Vocabulary, Phonology is given at the end of the Block as an **Appendix**. Since these are very elementary things with which most of you are already well versed, we thought of including these at the end of the Block.

1.3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

(a) Listening Skills

Without active listening there is no communication. Listening is an art. However intelligent and knowledgeable one is, one is bound to face problems, if one is a poor listener.

What is listening? Certainly just not hearing. It is only a part of the listening process. One should hear to start with, understand, absorb and assimilate the message. Next it should be registered in the mind. Necessarily, patience on the part of the listener and a real desire to understand are of paramount importance. Reasons for poor listening could be one of those listed below:

- (i) The subject discussed is of no interest to the listener.
- (ii) The mind is distracted, leading to lack of concentration.
- (iii) Inability to keep pace with the speaker's speed of speech.
- (iv) Wrong perception.

Ways to Become an Active Listener

- (i) Listening must be taken up by the active mind and taken seriously.
- (ii) Many people have the misconception view that if they are listening to somebody, they give him importance, put themselves in a defensive position and feel inferior. There is no question of superiority or inferiority in the listening process.
- (iii) Stop your stray thoughts. When somebody is talking, immediately the mind relates this to some events, the mind starts daydreaming and the result is a waste of time.

- (iv) The views expressed by the person talking to you, may not be agreeable to you. That does not mean that you mentally switch off to what he is saying. Avoid arguments. Such an exercise will aid in stepping up your level of patience which is very essential for active listening.

You can receive English language radio in most countries. Two of the best international networks are the BBC World Service and Voice of America. Both of them have special programmes for learners of English. TV is an excellent source for hearing and listening to English. The pictures help you understand what is being said. It is now a lot easier to hear English by Internet. If you're reading this at your computer, you can probably listen to some English-language radio news right now, without even moving!

Outside the English-speaking world, many large cities have cinemas that show films in English, usually with sub-titles. Make it a habit to go to these films. If you need to read the sub-titles, at least you'll be hearing English even if you don't understand it.

Try to make friends with English-speaking people so that you can practise your English through conversation. Of course, this will give practise to your speaking as well as your listening. And if you don't have a lot of time to go out and meet people, or at least you can chat a little on telephone.

Finally, don't worry if you don't understand everything you hear. Hearing comes first, Understanding later!

SAQ 1

Identify the qualities of a Good Listener and a Bad Listener.
Write GL for good listener, BL for bad listener.

Interrupt	Change the Subject	Yes, but in style	Are patient
Gives cues and Prompts	Asks open questions	Take over the conversation	Ask few questions

(b) Speaking Skills

The other three skills you can practice/acquire alone, or on your own, even without taking help from others. You can listen to the radio alone. You can read a book alone. You can write a letter alone. But you can't really speak alone!

There are ways of *breaking the ice* (starting a conversation). People talk about the weather or current events, etc. on the phone and in person. Friends and family discuss what's new. Co-workers make small talk before starting a hard day of work. Even strangers discuss the weather, art and culture etc. Learn the proper vocabulary and expressions, and you will find it easy to start a conversation anytime and anywhere with anyone you meet.

<p>Talking about the weather</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful day, isn't it? • Can you believe all of this rain we've been having? • It looks like it's going to snow. • It sure would be nice to be in Switzerland right now. • I hear they're calling for thunderstorms all weekend. • We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we? • How about this weather?
<p>Talking about current events at any social event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you catch the news today? • Did you hear about that fire at Connaught Place? • What do you think about this labour strike? • I heard on the radio today that they are finally going to start building the new flyover. • How about the cricket match? Do you think they're going to win tonight?
<p>On Board a ship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking forward to the weekend? • Have you worked here long? • I can't believe how busy/quiet we are today, can you? • Has it been a long week? • You look like you need cup of coffee. • What do you think of the new computers?
<p>When out for a shore leave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nice day to be outside, isn't it? • It's a beautiful city. • Introduce yourself and ask for the other person's introduction • Which is the nearest tourist spot here?

SAQ 2

Write a sentence for the following situations:

- (a) Meeting the Captain of the ship for the first time.
- (b) Going to a training Institute for a training programme.
- (c) Visiting your office to complete all joining formalities.

(c) **Reading Skills**

Reading is a very active process. It is true that the writer does a lot of work, but the reader also has to work hard. When you read a text, you have to do some or all of these:

- Imagine the scene in your head;
- Understand clearly what the writer is trying to say;
- When you don't understand a word, try to understand the meaning of the sentence and make an intelligent guess about what the word means;
- Have your goal to understand the message in the text, even if you don't understand every word;
- Use cues like pictures/diagrams;
- Scan the full text beforehand, flip through pages, pay attention to titles and subtitles, etc. to just become familiar with the message and then read the text in depth;
- Try and relate the text to a relevant text that you have read, or any theory or research you are familiar with.

Five Tips for Improving Reading Skills

Tip #1

Try to read at the right level. Read something that you can (more or less) understand. If you need to stop every three words to look in a dictionary, it is not interesting for you and you will soon be discouraged.

Tip #2

Make a note of new vocabulary items. If there are four or five new words on a page, write them in your vocabulary book. But you don't have to write them while you read. Instead, try to guess their meaning as you read; mark them with a pen; then come back when you have finished reading to check in a dictionary and add them to your vocabulary book.

Tip #3

Try to read regularly. For example, read for a short time once a day. Fifteen minutes every day is better than two hours every Sunday. Fix a time to read and keep to it. For example, you could read for fifteen minutes when you go to bed, or when you get up, or at lunchtime.

Tip #4

Be organised. Have everything ready:

- something to read,
- a marker to highlight difficult words,
- a dictionary,
- your vocabulary book, e.g. a telephone index with words listed alphabetically with meanings and Pronunciation,
- a pen to write down the new words you encounter.

Tip #5

Read what interests YOU. Choose a magazine or book about a subject that you like. You need to read loudly and clearly everyday from some book or newspaper. After that you need to comprehend it in your own words. Let all this reading be recorded. Listen to it after that and evaluate yourself as a reader of English Language. Here are two exercises to test your reading skills.

Example 1

A dog is bigger than a mouse, but smaller than an elephant.

A dog is smaller than a mouse.

A dog is very big.

A dog is the biggest.

An elephant is bigger than a dog.

Example 2

Sanjay is English but Teresa isn't; she's American.

Teresa is English.

Sanjay isn't English.

Sanjay isn't American.

Teresa and Sanjay aren't English.

(d) Writing Skills

Writing is the 4th language skill. You should have a knowledge of the English Alphabet, use of large letters, spelling, punctuation and hyphenation.

Some Rules for Using Different Punctuation Marks:

You should use Punctuation marks to structure and organize your material.

- (a) **Quotes:** Although you will still see the double quotation marks used to quote direct speech it is more and more common to punctuate speech and direct quotations with single quotation marks with the double quotation marks reserved for quoting 'speech within speech'.

Example: 'I haven't spoken to Peter for months,' Dianne said. 'The last time I spoke to him he said, "I'm going to Bahrain and won't be back for about three years", I've heard nothing since then'.

Other uses of the quotation mark

See below a different use of single quotation mark:

- (i) *I've always thought that he was very annoying, a bit of a 'pain in the neck.'*
- (ii) Single quotation marks are also used when quoting a title of a book or journal etc.
'Principles of Navigation' by Capt. S.S.S. Rewari and Capt. Joseph
- (b) **Period or Full Stop:** You put a full stop to mark the end of a sentence
- (c) **Exclamation Mark:** The exclamation mark is used to express exasperation, astonishment or surprise or to emphasise a comment or short, sharp
- (d) **Semicolon:** The semicolon is somewhere between a weak full stop and a strong comma and used to join phrases and sentences without having to use a conjunction (*and, but* etc.) where the phrases or sentences are linked but independent.
- (e) **Apostrophe:** This is used for two different reasons:
- (i) to show possession and ownership - e.g. Ship's Captain, Company's Agent.
- (ii) to indicate a contraction - he's (he is), we're (we are), they're (they are).
- (f) **Hyphen:** A hyphen joins two or more words together (e.g. x-ray, door-to-door) while a dash separates words (e.g. She was trapped - no escape was possible).

- (g) **Capitals:** Use capitals in the following cases:
- (i) At the start of any sentence.
 - (ii) With proper nouns e.g. The ship will arrive Lisbon on Thursday, the sixth of July 2006.
 - (iii) With adjectives which come from proper nouns e.g.: Japanese, Chinese, Indians.
 - (iv) For the first and all of the main words in titles.
 - (v) For the pronoun 'I' e.g: In the future I hope that I will be able to visit Turkey.
- (h) **Comma:** Comma is used to separate phrases, (e.g. On my birthday I went to the cinema, ate dinner in a restaurant, and went dancing) nouns, adjectives, verbs, or series of clauses (e.g. The car smashed into the wall, flipped onto its roof, slid along the road, and finally stopped against a tree).

Writing paragraphs with the PREP formula:

P: Start with the main POINT of your paragraph

The first sentence is usually called a "topic sentence". Simply state whatever the topic is. Try to start with an interesting sentence. Instead of saying "*Sandhya is a teacher*", say "*Sandhya is one of the best English teachers in this institute!*".

R: Give the REASON why you believe this

Next, write why you think so. You might write, "*Students need a kind teacher to guide them, so they always move in the right direction and don't waste time.*" You might also try to link this sentence to the next one, to help make a smoother "transition".

E: Give an EXAMPLE to support your belief

Find an example, or maybe two. This will "paint a word picture" in your readers' minds, which they will remember long after they finish reading. "*I never listened to English much before I heard of Ms. Sandhya, but now I listen to her jokes, sayings and dictations. Listening has helped me improve my speaking ability in English, and now I'm moving up to a better job.*" Sounds great, doesn't it?

P: Repeat your POINT one more time

Your readers will often remember the last thing you write more than anything else. If you can, try to use different words to say the same thing. "*Sandhya has helped tens of thousands of students learn to listen to English. She deserves the title of 'Best Teacher' more than anyone I have ever met.*"

Writing Memorable Conclusions:

When people are given a list of things to memorize, researchers found that they best remember items at the beginning and end of the list. It is the same way when people read. If you have a strong conclusion, people are more likely to remember your main message. Here are some suggestions on how to *write memorable conclusions*.

(i) **Use a broad statement to summarize your main idea**

If you are writing about the environment, for example, you could end with a broad statement such as, "It's up to us to protect the environment because, after all, we only have one world".

(ii) **Express your hopes for the future**

"My hope is that in ten years, we will no longer have to see newspaper stories about young children who cannot afford to get an education", would be a good way to end a paper on providing financial aid to poor families.

OR "Hope to hear from you soon on the above matter."

Some More Tips for writing skills:

- Use short sentences, and put one message in one sentence.
- Use an average of 25 words per paragraph.
- Use simple, “everyday” words.
- Do not put ideas in negative form.
- The adverb always follows the verb.

See below some examples of official letters

(I) *Letter to Training Institute*

Place: New Delhi

Date: 20-11-2005

From

To

Subject: Booking of one Seat for a Training Programme for Tanker Familiarisation

Dear Sir,

I have been advised by my company to undergo a training programme for tanker familiarisation. I would like to book my name for the next programmer scheduled in the month of June 2006.

I will appreciate it if you can please advise me on the fee structure, duration and the documents required for attending the programme.

Kindly confirm the schedule and my booking for the above programme at your earliest convenience please.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely

(XYZ)

(II) *Letter of Request for early relief*

From

Subject: For early relieving from duties

Dear Sir,

This is with reference to my early sign off.

I have been suffering from chronic fatigue and stress for the last few days. As I am not able to cope up with the work pressure, and hence I request you to kindly relieve me of my duties as soon as possible.

My contract period finishes on 17th June, 2006. I have already completed 5 months of my official contract of 6 months duration.

I am looking forward to your assistance in the above matter.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Place: New Delhi

(Cadet XYZ)

Date: 20-05-2006

To

SAQ 3

Summarize each of the following paragraphs in one sentence.

- (i) On a Saturday afternoon the engine room was prepared for UMS and, at 1500, the Bridge was informed that all checks had been completed and that the Engine Room was now in Unmanned Mode. At 1653 hrs the duty engineer received an alarm in his cabin, he went down to the Engine Control Room: "HFO purifier No.2 abnormal"

He then went to check the purifier room and in the way he realised there was a strong smell of plastic burning. Upon investigation, it appeared that the smell was coming from the Group Distribution / Starter Board which supplies power for the purifiers, automatic filters and fuel pumps. Realising this, the duty engineer ran to the Engine Control Room to call the ETO for assistance. Upon The ETO's arrival, they switched of the power supply to the switchboard and the ETO started to open the panels to see which one was overheating. Meanwhile the Duty Engineer called the bridge to advise them of the problem. Upon hearing this information, the Bridge sounded the General Alarm.

The Master, upon arrival on the bridge, activated the Emergency Shut Down and the main engine stopped.

- (ii) A new painting was hanging in the Hemlock Mills Art Gallery. Throughout the day, visitors stood before the new exhibit and speculated as to what it represented.

"I think it's a terrifying monster," said Misty. "There's no name on it, but I'm sure it was drawn by a famous artist."

"I would say that it's a picture of a park as seen from an airplane," mused James. "I see many trees and roads."

Miss Culture, the local art critic for the Hemlock Weekly News, made her pronouncement. "This is clearly a masterpiece created by an artist who wishes to be anonymous at this stage of his or her career."

The brilliant strokes of colour symbolize a person who is looking back at an exciting lifetime of accomplishments!”

At that moment, Mr. Lightman, the gallery curator, entered the room. “Isn’t it great?” he asked with a big smile on his face. “My three year old did that this morning. He says it’s a maze. I think it’s amazing.

1.4 KEY ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communication is a two-way process that starts with the sender.

1.4.1 Sender

The sender should be conveying information necessary for mission accomplishment. The sender must be proactive in making the receiver understand the message. Too often, what is said is not what is heard. To prevent this from happening, do the following:

State one idea at a time.

State ideas simply.

Explain when appropriate.

Repeat if appropriate.

Encourage feedback.

Read between the lines. Did your choice of words, tone of the sentence, and body language (intentional gestures or subconscious movements) convey the same meaning?

1.4.2 Message

The message is simply the information the sender wants to communicate to the receiver. The message is usually verbal, but it can also be non-verbal. To reduce potential problems, the sender should:

- Use correct terminology (standard commands).
- Speak clearly.
- Time the message to be sent when the receiver is able to listen.
- Use appropriate vocal tone and volume. Commands must be heard and perceived as an imperative, not a question or comment. *When breaking error chains, or returning others to situational awareness, express a tone of urgency and importance.*
- Be relevant to the receiver, and not a distraction. The message needs to be inclusive and informative. Inclusive means that it contains everything necessary for the receiver to understand the sender’s point. Informational means it is something that the receiver needs to know.

1.4.3 Receiver

The receiver needs information to accomplish his/her task. *The effectiveness of the team often rests on its members’ ability to listen.* Unfortunately, most people find listening difficult.

The receiver must exert control over the communication process. For receivers to have control, it is important that they ensure that the senders understand what the receivers want and why they want it.

Example 6.1

Without the conning officer exerting positive control over the flow of information from the navigation evaluator and shipping officer, important information could be buried in the large amount of information that is periodically relayed during a transit in a congested waterway.

1.4.4 Feedback

Feedback does not happen by accident; it is the result of a deliberate, on-going questioning process engaged in by the sender. Feedback must be given so that a person receiving it can hear it in the most objective and least distorted form. To make team members open to TIMELY feedback, the feedback must have the following characteristics:

- Descriptive, *not* Evaluative.
- Well Intended, *not* Hurtful.
- Specific, *not* general.
- Well timed, *not* Delayed.
- Balanced, *not* One-Sided.

The following actions have been observed in teams with effective communications skills.

They are

- acknowledge (“Roger”) communications.
- provide information in accordance with situation.
- provide information when asked.
- repeat, as necessary, to ensure communication is accurately received.
- use standard terminology when communicating information.
- request and provide clarification when needed.
- ensure statements are direct and unambiguous.
- inform the appropriate individuals when the mission or plans change.
- communicate all information needed by those individuals or teams external to the team.
- use nonverbal communication appropriately.
- use proper order when communicating information.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ON BOARD

The benefits of effective communication are many and obvious as they enhance all aspects of our personal and professional lives. Ineffective or misunderstood communications in our personal lives may give rise to problems or embarrassment but in our professional lives the results of misunderstandings may have much more serious consequences.

In the world of international shipping, with seafarers from many countries sailing on ships trading to all parts of the world, effective communication among those on board and between ship and shore is vitally important.

Although used in a slightly different context, a phrase from some British propaganda during World War II neatly sums up the dangers of ineffective communications: 'Careless talk costs lives'. That may be over-dramatic in most cases where communications among seafarers or between ship and shore go awry but it does illustrate the importance of effective communications and the real dangers if they go wrong.

The IMO analyses reports of casualties and accidents to see if there are any lessons to be learnt for the future. Many accidents are found to be due mainly to operational issues of proper procedure, maintenance and design, rather than to proper implementation of regulations, Effectiveness of bridge resource management and particularly ineffective relationships among masters, crew and pilot are recurrent themes. Communication difficulties often occur in these areas due to cultural differences but also because of language 'barriers'.

Communication provides information that crew, officers and all the people related to marine industry need to make decision by transmitting the crucial data and facts. Communication is important as it facilitates identification and evaluation of alternatives to navigate and operate with safety and security.

Communication acts to control team member's behaviour in several ways. Marine industry has authority hierarchies and formal guidelines that employees at each rank are required to follow. When mariners at a particular rank are required to follow their job description or comply to company policies, communication is performing a control function.

Communication fosters motivation by clarifying to mariners what is to be done, how well they are doing, and what can be done to improve their performance if it is sub par. The formation of specific tasks, feedback on progress towards tasks and reinforcement of desired behaviour, all stimulate motivation and require communication.

Not only this, communication gives vent to the emotional expression of feelings and for fulfilment of social need. None of the above functions of communications can be seen as more important than the other.

SAQ 4

- (a) What are the key aspects of communication?
- (b) Effective Communication is crucial for marine industry. Justify the statement.
- (c) What should you keep in mind to ensure effective communication?
- (d) Describe important functions of communication in marine industry.

1.6 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Barriers are influencing factors which impede or breakdown the continuous communications loop. They block, distort, or alter the information. By identifying the barriers and applying countermeasures, team members can effectively communicate.

Encoding Barriers

The process of selecting and organizing symbols to represent a message requires skill and knowledge. The obstacles listed below can interfere with an effective message.

- (a) **Lack of Sensitivity to Receiver:** A breakdown in communication may result when a message is not adapted to its receiver. Recognizing the receiver's needs, status, knowledge of the subject, and language skills assists the sender in preparing a successful message.

For e.g. While giving instructions to officers and crew from different nationalities, the officer incharge may have to sometimes use more of actions and gestures to put his point of view across.

For e.g. If an officer is angry with the cadet, for example, an effective response may be just listen to the person for a while and then ask for forgiveness with a promise to do the work in the right manner next time.

- (b) **Lack of Basic Communication Skills:** The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence.
- (c) **Insufficient Knowledge of the Subject:** If the sender lacks specific information about something, the receiver will likely receive an unclear or mixed message.

Have you ever attended a class and experienced how some people can explain complicated terms and ideas in a simple way? Others cannot. Why?

- (d) **Information Overload:** If you receive a message with too much information, you may tend to put up a barrier because the amount of information is coming so fast that you may have difficulty in comfortably interpreting that information.

If you are communicating any message during an emergency, pick two or three piece of important information to emphasize instead of overwhelming your receiver with an information avalanche.

- (e) **Emotional Interference:** An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. If someone is angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message.

If you don't like someone, for example, you may have trouble "hearing" them.

Transmitting Barriers

Things that get in the way of message transmission are sometimes called "noise." Communication may be difficult because of noise and some of these problems:

- (a) **Physical Distractions:** A bad weather or a noisy sea/engine room can destroy communication. If an e-mail message or letter is not formatted properly, or if it contains grammatical and spelling errors, the receiver may not be able to concentrate on the message because the physical appearance of the letter or e-mail is sloppy and unprofessional.
- (b) **Conflicting Messages:** Messages that cause a conflict in perception for the receiver may result in incomplete communication.

For example, if a person constantly uses jargon or slang to communicate with someone from another country who has never heard such expressions, conflicting messages are sure to result.

- (c) **Channel Barriers:** If the sender chooses an inappropriate channel of communication, communication may cease.

Detailed instructions presented over the telephone, for example, may be frustrating for both communicators. If you are on a computer technical

support help line discussing a problem, it would be helpful for you to be sitting in front of a computer, as opposed to taking notes from the other person and then returning to your computer station.

- (d) **Long Communication Chain:** The longer the communication chain, the greater the chance for error. If a message is passed through too many receivers, the message often becomes distorted.

If a person starts a message at one end of a communication chain of ten people, for example, the message that eventually reaches is usually liberally altered.

Decoding Barriers

The communication cycle may break down at the receiving end for some of these reasons:

- (a) **Lack of Interest:** If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Miscommunication may result in both cases.
- (b) **Lack of Knowledge:** If a receiver is unable to understand a message filled with technical information, communication will break down.

Unless a computer user knows something about the Windows environment, for example, the user may have difficulty organizing files if given technical instructions.

- (c) **Lack of Communication Skills:** Those who have weak reading and listening skills make ineffective receivers. On the other hand, those who have a good professional vocabulary and who concentrate on listening, have less trouble hearing and interpreting good communication. Many people tune out who is talking and mentally rehearse what they are going to say in return.
- (d) **Emotional Distractions:** If emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, they can also disrupt reception.

If you receive a notice from your captain regarding proposed changes in work procedures and you do not particularly like your captain, you may have trouble even reading the report objectively. You may read, not objectively, but to find fault. You may misinterpret words and read negative impressions between the lines. Consequently, you are likely to misunderstand part or all of the report.

- (e) **Physical Distractions:** If a receiver of a communication works in an area with bright lights, loud noises, excessively hot or cold work spaces, or physical ailments, that receiver will probably experience communication breakdowns on a regular basis.

Responding Barriers

The communication cycle may be broken if feedback is unsuccessful.

- (a) **No Provision for Feedback:** Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must search for a means of getting a response from the receiver.

If a sender does not permit any interruptions nor questions while discussing projects, he may find that team members may not completely understand what they are to do. Face-to-face oral communication is considered the best type of communication since feedback can be both verbal and nonverbal. When two communicators are separated, care must be taken to ask for meaningful feedback.

- (b) **Inadequate Feedback:** Delayed or judgmental feedback can interfere with good communication.

If your Chief Officer gives you instructions in long, compound-complex sentences without giving you a chance to speak, you may pretend to understand the instructions just so you can avoid the stress of the conversation. Because you may have not fully understood the intended instructions, your performance may suffer.

1.7 TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Good communication skills require a high level of self-awareness. Understanding your personal style of communicating will go a long way toward helping you to create good and lasting impressions on others. By becoming more aware of how others perceive you, you can adapt more readily to their styles of communicating. This does not mean you have to be a chameleon, changing with every personality you meet. Instead, you can make another person more comfortable with you by selecting and emphasizing certain behaviours that fit within your personality and resonate with another.

There are three basic communication styles:

- Aggressive
- Passive
- Assertive

To get a general idea of your communication style, the following descriptions of the three basic types can be of help.

	Elements of the Aggressive Style	Elements of the Passive Style	Elements of the Assertive Style
Mottos and Beliefs	"Everyone should be like me." "I am never wrong." "I've got rights, but you don't."	"Don't express your true feelings." "Don't make waves." "Don't disagree." "Others have more rights than I do."	Believes self and others are valuable. Knowing that assertiveness doesn't mean you always win, but that you handled the situation as effectively as possible. "I have rights and so do others."
Communication Style	Close minded Poor listener Has difficulty seeing the other person's point of view Interrupts Monopolizing	Indirect Always agrees Doesn't speak up Hesitant	Effective, active listener States limits, expectations States observations, no labels or judgments Expresses self directly, honestly, and as soon as possible about feelings and wants Checks on others feelings

Clearly, the assertive style is the one to strive for.

Keep in mind that very few people fit completely into one or another style. In fact, the aggressive style is essential at certain times such as:

- when a decision has to be made quickly;
- during emergencies;
- when you know you're right and that fact is crucial;
- to increase productivity.

Passiveness also has its critical applications:

- when an issue is minor;
- when the problems caused by the conflict are greater than the conflict itself;
- when emotions are running high and it makes sense to take a break in order to calm down and regain perspective;
- when your power is much lower than the other party's;
- when the other's position is impossible to change for all practical purposes (i.e., government policies, etc.).

Remaining aware of your own communication style and fine-tuning it as time goes by gives you the best chance of success in life.

Communicating effectively will build trust and enable you to empower others. Build your confidence, personal power by learning to communicate assertively.

Try using the following guidelines to develop effective communication skills:

Give and get positive feedback: Positive feedback focuses on what an individual or team does well. Positive feedback lets the person know what they should continue to do. Feedback must be given so that a person receiving it can hear it in the most objective and least distorted way possible. People are open to **TIMELY** feedback.

Learn the importance of asking questions: Ask for clarification when overloaded or having difficulty with a task.

Ask for information from others when not clear, ask task-related questions without any hesitation; Be careful in how you ask for input: "Read between the lines!"

Identify characteristics of non-verbal communication: Observing non-verbal cues provides information regarding what the sender wants to convey. Your perception of the message and the sender's intent for the message may be different. Word choice, tone of voice, body position, gestures and eye movements reflect the feelings behind the spoken word.

Practice assertive communication: Assertive people *recognize boundaries between their ideas and those of others*. People responding assertively are aware of their feelings. Tensions are kept in a normal, constructive, and situational appropriate range. Assertive people stand comfortably, but firmly, and speak in a steady tone of voice. Assertive words include statements reflecting responsibility for self, "I think", "I feel", "I want", and cooperative words such as, "let's see, how can we resolve this", "what do you think", and "what do you see".

Understand the benefits of using effective listening techniques: Hearing is not listening for meaning; seeing traffic "red" light may not be recognizing it as a warning.

To actively listen, the receiver needs to:

- Focus attention on the message, giving it momentary priority. If possible, look at the sender.
- Listen and look for the indirect message content (nonverbal) as well as hearing the words. Observing non-verbal cues provides information

regarding what the sender wants to convey. Your perception of the message and the sender's intent for the message may be different. Word choice, tone of voice, body position, gestures and eye movements reflect the feelings behind the spoken word.

- Keep an open mind and suspend judgment.
- Verify what was heard. Don't assume that your perception of the message agrees with the sender's intent. Provide feedback to the sender.

SAQ 5

- (a) What are the techniques for effective communication?
- (b) What is the difference between active listening and assertive behaviour?
- (c) What is the purpose of feedback? What should one do to become active listener?
- (d) Recognizing barriers to effective communication is a first step in improving communication style. Do you recognize these barriers from your own personal and professional experience?

1.8 READING MARITIME RELATED ARTICLES

By reading maritime *related articles*, you will improve your marine vocabulary, awareness and understanding of the given situations on board the ship. For *reading comprehension*, you should practice looking for the main idea by reading quickly through a passage. Then you should read more thoroughly for the purpose of answering the questions.

Follow the formula of ABC:

- (a) Choose the most *appropriate words*
- (b) Be *brief*
- (c) Strive for *Clarity* of thought

“Clear Thinking” is the key to all good expression.

It is not necessary for you to understand everything in a reading passage. You just need to be able to answer the questions. There will be many terms that you do not recognize. Do not let this bother you. If you need to know the meaning of a word to answer a question, try to identify the root word or the context. The questions usually follow the same sequence as the passage (the first question will not be about information in the last paragraph). Try to stay alert for this part of the test! It is worth a lot of marks.

Question Types

- Main idea
- Detail/Fact
- According to the passage...
- What does the author believe?
- Definitions (closest in meaning)

- Tick the sentence that explains...
- Which is NOT supported by the passage?
- What can be inferred?
- Add this sentence to the reading
- What is the topic of a paragraph?
- Why/Where is something mentioned?
- Pronouns

Test yourself with the following comprehension exercise:

The person first discovering fire should instantly raise the alarm and commence fighting the flame. If the fire is rapidly and correctly attacked it may well be restricted to small outbreaks rendering major measures unnecessary. Alarm bells should, if necessary be rung throughout the ship, a continuous ringing being the usual signal, bearing in mind that too many persons at the scene of the fire may cause confusion. At sea, emergency stations should be sounded and the boats swung out ready for lowering if it is thought that the fire is, or will be, of major proportions. It is imperative to gain rapid access to a fire, but in many cases this may be impossible, where movements are hampered by rising smoke and heat. Every endeavour should be made to discover whether the fire has an air feed at low level, where a cool, fresh air supply will benefit the fire-fighters. If no means of access exists, the air feed should be blocked. A hose can be lowered from above, on lines, and directed at the sight of fire.

Cutting holes in plating to gain access may be obtained by lowering a hose handler over the side of a boatswain's chair so that he can direct a water jet through a portable. Generally the officer in charge of fire fighting operations should not take part in the actual fire fighting, but should attend the entire perimeter of the zone and keep himself fully informed so that he is the ideal person to direct personnel.

SAQ 1

- (a) On discovering fire what should instantly be done?
- (b) Why is it imperative to gain rapid access to a fire?
- (c) How a hose can be useful in fighting fire?
- (d) Generally, what should the officer in-charge of fire fighting operations should do?

1.9 WRITING REPORTS OF INCIDENTS ON BOARD

Before you start writing a report you must know the technique of writing reports. A report, by definition, is a “statement describing what has happened” or “describing a state of affairs”. It is supposed to be a detailed examination of a situation or problem, of action taken, or of findings of an investigation. It is written in a clear informative way, often drawing conclusions, making recommendations and suggesting courses of action. The purpose of such reports is usually to bring information to the attention of senior management authorities so that any decision regarding the matters under review can be taken by them with full knowledge of the background, facts and circumstances.

The key language points to remember are those relevant to writing an essay—sentence construction, paragraphing, logical sequence of ideas and simplicity of expression. A report can best be written by following the guidelines given below:

Assemble the Material

- Collect all relevant material—notes, documents, etc.

Plan the Report

- Consider the purpose of your report: whom is it for, why does he/she want it, how will he/she use it?
- State the aim and emphasis of the report briefly.
- Decide what information is important and what is irrelevant.
- Arrange the points of information in a logical sequence and in order of importance. Make rough notes.
- Draft a working plan on a separate sheet of paper.
- Decide where you might need illustrations or diagrams.

Draft the Report

- Write the introduction: state the subjects, the purpose, and summarize your findings.
- Write the body of the report.
- Write the conclusion (and recommendations).
- Summarize the report in a sentence.

Edit the Report

- Examine the draft. Does it fulfil what the report is expected to do?
- Check the grammar, spelling, punctuation and style.
- Read the text aloud to yourself, or, better, to someone else.
- Check your illustrations.
- Finally, if possible, let someone qualified to give constructive criticism look at your draft.

A REPORT

From:	The 2nd Officer, XYZ
To :	The Master, ABC
Date:	12th April 2006
Sub:	Fight between the Boson and the Fitter

Regarding the incident of the fight that occurred between Boson and Fitter on 9th April 2006, I carried out an investigation and collected the following facts:

- (a) 75% of the crew believed that the Boson was responsible for the fight as he used foul language with the Fitter while asking for some tools.
- (b) 25% feel that the Fitter was responsible as he also replied back in the same tone and thus causing the fight.
- (c) Even I witnessed that first the Boson used abusive language and misbehaved with the Fitter and provoked him to reply back in a very unfriendly manner.
- (d) As desired by you, I conducted a meeting with the crew and told them the importance of unity and team work and warned them that since such incidents affect the safety and security of the ship, a strict disciplinary action would be taken against the guilty.

The crew members have assured me that such an incident will never happen again and they will give their best to maintain a healthy and peaceful atmosphere on the ship.

2nd Officer

1.10 SAFETY CIRCULARS AND NOTICES

A circular is a letter or memorandum addressed to a number of persons or intended for general circulation. Salient features of a circular letter are given below:

- (a) A circular letter is essentially an information giving letter.
- (b) It has to be carefully planned. In order to be effective, it should convey the Information as clearly as possible.
- (c) The style of the circular will depend on the type of information that has to be given.
- (d) The writer has to be persuasive in his approach since it is an unsolicited letter and there is a possibility of it being ignored.
- (e) “Your-attitude” is the predominant note of an effective circular letter. From the very beginning the second person “you” should be used instead of impersonal expressions like “our agents”, “our charter ers”, “everyone concerned”, etc.

M.T. ABC

Safety Circular No. 4511

Date: May 5, 2006

The Master desires all the members of the staff on board to observe safety precautions within the vicinity of the ship.
Cigarette butts and lighters have been seen lying in the non-smoking zone.
You all are requested to strictly follow all safety regulations for the safe and smooth sailing of the ship.

Sd/-
Master

M.T. ABC

Notice No. 3200

Date: May 5, 2006

This is to inform all on board that the ships clock will be put back retarded by one hour tonight.

By Order
Sd/- Master

M.T. ABC

Notice No. 3201

Date: May 8, 2006

Change in Meal Timings

This is to inform all on board that meal timings have been changed with effect from May 9, 2006 as per the following new schedule:

Breakfast	8.00-8.30 hrs.
Lunch	13.30-14.00 hrs.
Dinner	20.00-20.30 hrs.
By Order	
Sd/- Master	

1.11 SUMMARY

Effective communication is an essential ingredient to safe and efficient ship operations. Communication can be achieved in many ways. This unit has explained the importance of effective communication, how it is impeded and how it can be arrived at.

Through this unit the students would be able to understand the importance of English language as a medium of communication. It is a language which dominates the world of international business, world banking, limited nation, academics, science and technology etc. therefore it becomes very essential for the students to have the knowledge of English language. This unit has covered all this in a very compact and concise manner for the students to understand and follow some very basic rules of speaking, writing and reading English.

In today's work atmosphere good communication skills are vital for all of us. Through this unit you have learnt some basic rules of English grammar, some tips to improve communication skills which include speaking, listening and writing skills. This knowledge will help you in your interpersonal communication and official communication.

In this unit, you learnt about the various forms of communication that you will need to understand, act upon on board a ship. You this learnt the importance of being able to use the (English) language accordingly for effective communication. In this connection we may add that a good resource for learning English language can be the internet.

Internet is a wonderful gift for students and teachers of the English language. It has opened up doors and created opportunities that were inconceivable just a few short years ago, and it promises to evolve into an ever more expansive medium in the future. What can students do on the Internet? They can access information just about any subject they desire in English. They can use interactive exercises to practice their reading, listening, writing, and even speaking skills. They can communicate with other students from anywhere in the world. The logical place for any student to start would be to explore those areas in which he/she possesses a keen interest. An understanding of how to use a search engine must be a prerequisite to any effective use of authentic English sites. It is also important to help students find resources that are appropriate to their level and relatively easy to use.

1.12 ANSWERS TO SAQs

SAQ 1

Attempt yourself.

SAQ 2

Attempt yourself.

SAQ 3

Attempt yourself.

SAQ 4

(a) Key aspects of communication are

- (i) Senders message should be proactive
- (ii) Message should be relevant, informative and understandable
- (iii) Receiver message should be attentive

(b) Effective communication helps to enhance aspect of personal and professional lives. In the marine industry ships travel from one country to another. With varied culture and language effective communication is very important for sea farers to excel in.

- Effective communication facilitates
 - Identification
 - Transmission of crucial data
 - Evaluate alternatives to navigate etc
- } Elaborate

(c) Answer found in 6.2.4 section of the unit

(d) Communication fasters motivation

- Helps to give vent to emotional expression of feeling and fulfillment of social need.

SAQ 5

Techniques for effective communication

- (a)
- (i) Give and get positive feedback
 - (ii) Learn to ask questions for clarification
 - (iii) Identify characteristics of non-verbal Communication
 - (iv) Practice assertive communication

(b) Attempt yourself

(c) Feedback is very essential for the

- Communication cycle to be complete
- To see that the communication has been meaningful and in the right Direction feedback is essential.
- To have instructions understood, and actions performed accordingly – feedback is essential.

To be an active listener:-

- (i) Focus attention on the message
- (ii) Listen/look for the indirect message content as well as hearing the words.

- (iii) Keep an open mind and suspend judgment
- (iv) Verify what was heard
- (v) Provide feedback
- (d) Attempt yourself

SAQ 6

- (a)
 - (i) Raise a alarm, possible ring the alarm bell.
 - (ii) Start immediately to put off the flame
 - (iii) Avoid crowding the scene of fire
 - (iv) If the fire is intense, lowering of the boats should commence.
- (b) Rapid access to fire is required so that movement does not get hampered due to rising heat and smoke. Supply of fresh air is very essential for fire fighters.
- (c) Attempt the answers yourself.
- (d) How will enable the fire fighters to lower the how from a height and try to put off the fire directly by the water-jet at the sight of fire.
- (e) He should not take part in the actual fire fighting operations
 - Instead he should monitor the entire operation personally.
 - Keep himself fully informed give necessary instruction.

1.13 KEY WORDS

- Assertiveness** : It is the ability of team members to state and maintain a position that may be counter to the position of others, until convinced by the facts, not the authority or personality of another, that their position is wrong.
- Active Listening** : Active Listening is a process used by the receiver to facilitate communication and enhance performance. It requires the receiver to be active in the communications process.
- Feedback** : Effective receivers verify their understanding of the message with the sender using feedback to promote effective communication.