

A communication questionnaire

Good communication skills are the building blocks of healthy relationships. Communication skills help us develop our social connections and our relationships with others at work.

Good communication is about being able to speak and listen well. It's about understanding what's going on for the other person. Are they talking to you because they want to give you some information, or because they are unhappy about something? You need to listen carefully so you can understand the meaning of what's being said and make sure the other person feels heard and understood.

Being a good communicator is good for your well-being. When you find your voice, you start to build your individuality and then your power. Being a great communicator will make you shine at work. It doesn't matter whether you drive trucks or work in hospitality — you will have to talk to customers and colleagues, so good communication skills are critical.

Test your communication skills by answering the following questions.



QUESTIONS

Q1: You're at home, and your mum is talking to you about how messy your room is and how she wants you to clean it. How carefully do you listen to what she's saying?

- a) I completely switch off.
- b) I listen just enough to get the gist of what she's saying.
- c) I look like I'm listening, but I'm actually zoned out because I've heard it all before.
- d) I listen to the details (e.g. when she wants the room cleaned by and if there will be any consequences if I don't do it).
- e) I listen carefully and take on board what she's saying.
- f) Not sure.

Q2: You work at a shoe shop. A customer has asked if you have a shoe in a certain size. The shop is out of stock in that size, but you can order it in for them. How confident would you be to share this information with the customer?

- a) I would be too shy or whakamā to do this.
- b) I wouldn't be confident. I'd be worried that the customer might get mad at me, so I'd probably ask someone else to talk to them.
- c) I would manage OK. I'd be a bit nervous about saying the right thing but I'd give it a go.
- d) I would be fine; more practice will help me become more confident.
- e) I would feel confident and able to do this. No worries!
- f) Not sure.

Q3: How aware are you of your body language?

- a) Not aware of it. Doesn't bother me.
- b) Not that aware. I've heard about body language, but I don't really know what it's all about.
- c) Sort of aware. I don't always pay attention to it. My words and my body can say very different things, like if I tell someone I'm sweet but the look on my face tells them I'm not.
- d) Aware enough. I try to make sure my body and my words communicate the same thing, like if I tell someone I'm OK, I try not to look uptight or stressed out when I say it.
- e) Very aware. I make an effort to look friendly (by smiling, making eye contact and/or not checking my phone all the time).
- f) Not sure.

Q4: It's your first day in a new job. Everyone's heading to the lunch room for lunch. How easy will it be for you to socialise with your new workmates?

- a) Too hard. I'll avoid them by having lunch outside or by hanging out in the toilet.
- b) Very difficult. I'll just eat my lunch quietly and not say anything unless someone else talks to me first.
- c) Difficult. It's hard talking to 'randoms', especially when we probably don't have anything in common.
- d) Not that easy, but I'll try to talk to at least one other person.
- e) Easy enough! I have no trouble talking to strangers.
- f) Not sure.

Q5: Your brother borrowed your work boots without asking you. He left them at his work, and they got stolen. This upsets you. How would you talk to your brother about it?

- a) I wouldn't be able to talk to him about it while I'm angry.
- b) I would not be calm. I'd let him know how angry I am and that's it.
- c) I would struggle to stay calm. I'd probably focus on how selfish he was and how he's created a big problem for me.
- d) I would be calm enough to tell him how angry I was, and I would want to know how he planned to replace them.
- e) I would be angry but I'd stay calm. I wouldn't want to wreck my relationship with my brother over a pair of boots. I would want to know why he did it and what he planned to do to replace them.
- f) Not sure.

Q6: If you were unsure about how to do something at work, how would you feel about asking your supervisor or boss for clearer instructions?

- a) I wouldn't ask. Asking questions makes you look dumb.
- b) I wouldn't feel good about it. I'd only ask if there was no other option.
- c) Uncomfortable but I'd do it anyway.
- d) OK, but I'd wait until no one else was around before asking.
- e) Just fine. I'd want to make sure I got the job done properly.
- f) Not sure.

Q7: What do you think about the idea of speaking with your boss differently to how you speak with your mates?

- a) I think it's stupid. People should accept you as you are.
- b) I wouldn't speak to the boss unless I absolutely had to. Better to say nothing, then you won't get it wrong.
- c) I understand it, but I don't like it much. It makes me feel uneasy, and it's hard to be friendly when you can't be yourself.
- d) I am comfortable with this. It's just like talking to other seniors in your life (e.g. grandparents, kaumātua, ministers). You should keep it nice and respectful.
- e) I see the boss as the person who is paying me to do a job. I want to impress them. I am always on the lookout for "work lingo", so I can use the right words to show I fit in and belong there.
- f) Not sure.

Q8: Your boss has asked you to explain to your workmates how you make the flat whites that the customers all rave about. She's asked all the staff in the café to gather around so you can demonstrate and talk through what you do. How does this make you feel?

- a) I don't like it and don't want to do it.
- b) I feel self-conscious and super-nervous and am sure I'll screw up. I don't like public speaking, and I don't like blowing my own horn.
- c) I am worried that I will not do a great job with everyone watching.
- d) I feel a mix of pride and terror. I will find it hard to talk and demonstrate at the same time. I could do one or the other but probably not both.
- e) I'm a great coffee maker. I'll be fine talking the others through it. I also like that the boss is giving me the chance to shine.
- f) Not sure.

Q9: You work at Just Jeans. A young woman about your age asks your opinion on how the jeans she is trying on fit her. You think they look too tight and uncomfortable. What do you say to her?

- a) I tell her to make up her own mind. If she is happy in real tight jeans, that's her business.
- b) I tell her she looks great.
- c) It depends on whether she is friendly or not. If she is, I'll talk to her about other styles. If not, I'll just say *a* or *b* above.
- d) I politely suggest that they look a little tight and suggest some other styles that might look better on her.
- e) I ask how she feels about them and, if needed, help her find either a bigger size or a different style. If she really likes them, though, I'll be positive about her choice.
- f) Not sure.

Q10: Your boy/girlfriend has suggested you make time for a talk about your relationship. How does this make you feel?

- a) Not good. These sorts of talks never end well.
- b) Nervous and defensive, wondering what I've done wrong. I'd also want the talk to happen right away so I don't have to wait and worry.
- c) Worried and stressed out until the 'meeting' happens.
- d) Puzzled as to why we need to make a special time to talk. Why not just talk right away?
- e) Fine. It's always good to work on relationships to keep them strong.
- f) Not sure.

RESULTS

Now take a few moments to look back over your answers. Do you notice any patterns in the way you responded to these questions?

If you mostly chose As

It seems likely you are either very shy / whakamā or maybe a bit anti-social. You do not like to put yourself in unfamiliar or uncomfortable social situations, so you avoid these whenever possible. You also do not like having to give an opinion or ask questions of people you don't know well (your boss, for example).

If you want a job and want to do well at it, you will need to work on your confidence and your communication skills. If you are somewhat anti-social, you may also need to reflect on how to be more respectful and polite towards others. Most jobs require people to communicate with workmates, customers, supervisors and, on occasion, the boss.

Have a look at the related activities and YouTube clips for advice on how to become a more confident and effective communicator.

If you mostly chose Bs

It's probable that you are lacking in self-confidence and need more practice in communicating with people that are outside your whānau and friends networks.

Believing in yourself and the value of what you can add to a conversation is important. Nelson Mandela said that it serves no one to make yourself small and hide away your light.

Check out the communication resources to see how you can become a good communicator.

If you mostly chose Cs

It seems like you might be a worrier (e.g. You worry about saying the right thing at the right time.) Constant worrying, negative thinking and always expecting the worst can take a toll on both your emotional and physical health. It can sap your emotional strength; leave you feeling restless and jumpy; cause sleeping problems, headaches, stomach aches; and make it difficult to concentrate at work or school.

Have a look at some of the communication resources that might help you to worry less and become more confident.

If you mostly chose Ds

You are a good communicator with typical levels of nervousness and self-doubt felt by all young adults. It's great you are prepared to put yourself out there and give things a go. Remember if you don't nail it the first time, you can learn from it and do better the next time. Keep up the good work!

Have a look at the articles / activities and YouTube clips in the communication resources to help you get even better.

If you mostly chose Es

You are an excellent and very confident communicator. Well done! Remember to remain humble as you shine in the workplace, as this will ensure you keep your feet on the ground, and you will be well liked and respected by all you work with!