



Getting the Message Across: Written and Oral Communication

Middle School Food and Agricultural Literacy Curriculum

Precepts

- M. Communications
 - M1. Demonstrate technical and business writing skills
 - M4. Communicates appropriately with co-workers and supervisors
 - M5. Operates effectively in the workplace

National Standards

- CS.01.02.02.b. Utilize communication skills to collaborate in a group setting.
- CS.03.01.01.b. Select the appropriate form of technical and business writing or communication for a specific situation.
- NL-ENG.K-12.3 – Evaluation Strategies
- NL-ENG.K-12.5 – Communication Strategies
- NL-ENG.K-12.12 – Applying Language Skills

Student Learning Objectives

- As a result of this unit the student will...
- Apply foundational and life skills learned through agriculture in the school and community setting.
- As a result of this lesson, the student will ...
- Demonstrate oral and written communications.

Content Outline

Objective 1. Demonstrate compromise, consensus, and community building concepts for carrying out different tasks, assignments, and projects.

I. What Is Communication?

- Communication is defined as:
 - An act or instance of transmitting
 - Information communicated— a verbal or written message
 - A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior

Time

Instruction time for this lesson: 45 minutes.

Resources

Joseph, Albert. (1998). *Put It In Writing*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. — O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., Rubenstein, H. (2004). *A Speaker's Guidebook*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St.Martin's.

Tools, Equipment and Supplies

Transparencies/Projector
Writing Surface
MS.IAS.3.3.TM.A – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.TM.B – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.AS.A – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.AS.B – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.AS.C – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.AS.D – one per teacher
MS.IAS.3.3.ASSESS.A – one per student

Key Terms

The following terms are presented in this lesson and appear in **bold italics**:

Deliver

Receive

Interpret

Written Communication

Oral Communication

1. It involves three phases:

- ***Deliver***: to give the verbal or nonverbal information to someone else
- ***Interpret***: decoding and understanding the information that is given
- ***Receive***: to get the verbal or nonverbal information from someone else

II. **Effective Oral Communication:**

- Clear and Concise
- Does not use slang
- Presented clearly
- Match nonverbal cues with what you're saying
- Thinks about the audience
- Has been practiced



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III. Effective Written Communication:

- Clear and Concise
- Keep sentences short and simple
- Should sound right when read aloud
- Is proofread more than once
- Uses proper grammar
- Is appropriate for the given audience

Interest Approach

Hello Again!

If the **MS.IAS.3.1** and **MS.IAS.3.2** were presented before this lesson, reference the importance and ask for students to recall the key elements of group communication.

Descartes e-Moment®

Give students MS.IAS.3.3.AS.A

We have spent quite a bit of time talking about the importance of communication. When I say DESCARTES, you will use the Descartes Scroll I just gave you. Spend three minutes capturing things you know and things you don't know. Leave the "things you learned" portion blank. That is where you will capture everything new you learned at the end of the lesson.

Elicit student examples to help set the context around the communication process.

Great! Communication is all around us. It is a part of our casual conversations with friends, the textbooks you use, and the marketing on the candy you eat. It's all about getting a message from a sender to a receiver.

Who will be the first volunteer to play a little communication game?

Choose one student and have them stand at the front of the room near you.

We are going to play a game called, "Can You Communicate?" The game is simple. You will pull a piece of paper from two different jars. One jar contains messages or items you must get the class to guess.

The other jar contains the way you can communicate with the class. For example, if you draw "The Cat and the Hat" as your topic, you will communicate by writing words on the board.

Utilize **MS.IAS.3.3.AS.B** to create topics and communication method cards. The only rules are you have to use only the method of communication given and you cannot say or write the exact words of the clue. Your goal is to get the class to guess the topic you drew. What questions are there?

Answer any student questions and place the two jars in front of the student volunteer.

Let's begin. First of all, show some love for our first volunteer.

Elicit some applause.

Please choose your topic and remember to keep it to yourself. Great! Now you must choose the method of communication, and you can read that to the entire class.

Have the student explain the method of communication to the class.

Begin!

Once the topic is guessed, celebrate the success and then choose another student and repeat the process as time permits. 1-3 students should be adequate.

We communicate in many ways. Most people think of communication as only talking or **oral communication**, but **written communication** is just as important. In today's world with Facebook, Twitter, e-mail, and text messaging, we communicate more than ever without speaking. Bottom line, what is important is that the message you are trying to send is properly received on the other end.

Today we are going to, as a class, demonstrate our ability to communicate both through writing and speaking. We are also going to help each other grow our ability to communicate our message.

So let's get started.



Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

Objective 1. Demonstrate oral and written communications.

I. What Is Communication?

Utilize MS.IAS.3.3.TM.A

Earlier we gave our own definitions of communication. Webster defines communication as an act or instance of transmitting, information communicated—a verbal or written message, or a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior.

What are some ways you can think of that messages are communicated?

Elicit Responses: Responses could include: radio, newspapers, textbooks, songs, speeches, billboards, posters, podcasts, social networking websites, cell phones, text messages.

You're exactly right; people **deliver** a message in many ways.

Let's quickly review what it takes to communicate any message.

Utilize MS.IAS.3.3.AS.B

First, it takes a person who wants to **send** a message. Second, a person or group of people **receiving** the message **interprets** that message. Finally, those **receivers** accept the message the way they heard it.

Is the message always **interpreted** the way the **sender** wanted it to be? Why or why not? What are some examples of a message not being **interpreted** correctly?

Elicit student responses. Hopefully discussion will include both verbal and written communication examples. Good examples to build on are e-mails that are not interpreted correctly, things that people say that are taken wrong, or a written message that doesn't make any sense to the reader.

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How well the sender crafts the message is important so the message isn't **interpreted** incorrectly. Let's try our hand at communicating using various methods.

II. Practicing Written and Oral Communication.

Utilize MS.IAS.3.3.TM.B

Break students into six equal groups. Have the six different provided scenarios taped on the board or some other surface so that students cannot see the content of the scenario (**MS.IAS.3.3.AS.C**). On the visible side of the scenario draw a door and number each scenario one through six so that students can choose the door they want. Divide the class number by six to determine the group sizes.

Before we begin practicing, we must break into six equal groups. When I say GROUP, You have 30 seconds to find a group of five (more or less depending on class size) and have your chairs moved into a group. At the end of the 30 seconds, be ready to choose one of these secret doors. GROUP.

Help ensure students develop appropriate groups.

Thanks. Now we must choose the secret door for our group. Behind each of these doors is a communication task for your group to complete. Each one is different and will test your ability to send a message to another group. When you are finished, you will partner with another group, share your communication and they will give feedback on how well they **interpreted** and received the message. You have eight minutes to finish your task, so your group will have to be pretty focused to accomplish the task. Your time begins when you get your door. What questions are there?

Who will choose the first door?

When students choose a door, give them the profile sheet. Monitor throughout the eight minutes to make sure groups are working on the task. As they are working you can pass out the group feedback form. Each student needs one form (**MS.IAS.3.3.AS.D**). Provide time markers so that students know when they have three minutes remaining. When eight minutes is up have all students put down their tools and look for further instructions.



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We all just planned to send a message, but each of us in a very different way. Now, we will see what message is actually received and **interpreted** by some of your classmates. When I say COACH, you will pair with the group closest to you and share your message in the way you were asked to. For example, if you were asked to write an e-mail, you will simply hand the e-mail to the other group. If we were asked to do a short speech, give the speech to the group. The job of the group listening is to give feedback on the communication using the forms on your table. You all have forms to use on your tables. The page is broken in half. One side includes gems, or things that went well. The other half is opportunities for growth, or things that could have been better. Finally, when the presentation is done, you write what you thought the message was and give them your feedback form. What questions are there? COACH.

Monitor students and provide time reminders to keep students on task.

Now that you have all had a chance to communicate your message and evaluate your partner group, what did you find about communication?

What worked well and what did not work well?

Did you **receive** and **interpret** the message just as the other group intended? Why or why not?

What makes great **written communication**?

What makes great **oral communication**?

As students answer the last two questions regarding written and oral communication, capture it on the board. Answers should include the elements below.

Effective Oral Communication:

- Clear and concise
- Does not use slang
- Presented clearly
- Match non-verbal cues with what you're saying
- Thinks about the audience
- Has been practiced

Effective Written Communication:

- Clear and concise
- Keep sentences short and simple
- Should sound right when read aloud
- Is proofread more than once
- Uses proper grammar
- Is appropriate for the given audience

Review/Summary

Communication is the number one quality employers seek in new employees. It affects each of us every single day. We communicate in many different ways. Today we discussed **written and oral communications**.

Pull out your Descartes scroll and spend two minutes adding all the things you have learned in the last column. Be ready to share your favorite piece.

Who will share what new thing they learned first?

Elicit responses and connect them to the content of the lesson.

Depending on the next lesson you will teach, preview what is coming. If following the sequence, your lesson will be learning what experiential learning is and choosing some opportunities to participate in.

We have now covered three different elements of how we communicate and work together as a group. Next time, we will begin moving into how we can learn through experiences. See you tomorrow!



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Application

Extended classroom activity:

To extend this lesson, teachers could prepare a number of examples of communication to present to the students. These could include a podcast, a famous speech, an instruction manual, Facebook status changes, a commercial and a picture of a billboard. Students could be asked to evaluate the message that is being sent. They could then list the advantages and disadvantages of each method of communication. The examples could be pulled from the students: as an assignment each student should bring in one creative form of communication.

FFA activity:

This lesson can be tied to various contests that young FFA members could participate in such as the creed contest, various essay writing opportunities, or parliamentary procedure.

SAE activity:

Students could expand on the different types of oral and written communication in order to become better communicators while in a workplace. For example, students can work on formal letters, e-mails, phone messages, proper customer communication, etc.

Evaluation

To evaluate students' understanding you have the option of collecting the Descartes moment forms or utilizing **MS.IAS.3.3.ASSESS.A**

Answers to Evaluation

For **MS.IAS.3.3.ASSESS.A** use the following answers:

1. Effective Oral Communication:

- Clear and concise
- Does not use slang
- Presented clearly
- Match non-verbal cues with what you're saying
- Thinks about the audience
- Has been practiced

2. Effective Written Communication:

- Clear and concise
- Keep sentences short and simple
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- Uses proper grammar
- Is appropriate for the given audience

3. Sample Thank You letter



What is Communication?

Communication is defined as:

- **An act or instance of transmitting**
- **Information communicated—a verbal or written message**
- **A process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior**

It involves three phases:

- **Deliver: to give the verbal or nonverbal information to someone else**
- **Interpret: decoding and understanding the information that is given**
- **Receive: to get the verbal or nonverbal information from someone else**



Effective Oral Communication:

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Descartes Communication Scroll

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

[illegible]



Jar 1: Communication Topic

It's raining cats and dogs.

Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Little fish in a big pond.

Bite off more than you can chew.

Put the pedal to the metal.

Were you born in a barn?

I am so hungry I could eat a horse.

On top of the world.

Jar 2: Method of Communication

You can say only five words

Draw pictures with your non-dominant hand

You can only write three complete sentences

You must act out the phrase – no words at all

You can talk, but not look at the class at all

Only the class can ask you questions

You can communicate however you want

You must write on the board in text message slang



Secret Door #1

Task: You have the chance to record a Public Service Announcement at your local radio station. You will have 30 seconds to convince people to participate in your fundraising barbeque and benefit auction. It is important that you give them all the information they need and persuade them to come help your chosen cause. This PSA will be played on the radio throughout the next month. It CANNOT be over 30 seconds. You will be timed each time you give the PSA, so you need to practice the timing.

Secret Door #2

Task: Your group is chosen to give the daily school news over the intercom. The cheerleaders are having a carwash on Friday at the local drive-in. The football team will be playing their rivals this Saturday and they need everyone there to cheer them on. All schedule changes must be submitted by the end of today. The local FFA chapter won the state parliamentary procedure contest. And finally, the principal wants to remind students that texting during class is against school policy and cell phones will be taken if they are out.

This announcement should be fun, but the students also need to remember what you said. Also, remember teachers and principals are listening.

Secret Door #3

Task: You currently are working at a local movie theater to make extra money. You really like your job, but the boss doesn't say much and is nice as long as you are doing what you are supposed to. You need to reduce your hours below what is required, but you don't want to totally lose your job. You have to do this because you have joined the science bowl team, which meets during one of your shifts. Your boss requests that all comments be made by e-mail. His e-mail is meanboss@themovie.com. Create a quick e-mail asking for the reduction in hours.

Secret Door #4

Task: Your local FFA chapter is asked to write to your congressman letting him know how much FFA has done for you. The congressman, Bob Jones, has been in Congress for more than 20 years. He was raised on a farm, but he believes math, science, and reading are the most important things taught in school. The next time Congress meets, they will vote on a bill that will change the amount of money FFA and agricultural education receives. Make sure you use the best formal letter format you know.

Secret Door #5

Task: You took a project to the local county fair and were named the Grand Champion. A local feed store owner purchased your project for \$1000. You need to write a thank you letter to the person who bought your project. It is important to let him know how the money will be used and to thank him for his support. This card would be best if done informally. He will most likely hang this card up in his office reminding him of how great your project was.

Secret Door #6

Task: A student organization that you are a part of is selling holiday turkeys and hams as a fundraiser. Your team needs money to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana, so you can compete in the national competition since you won the state competition. Create a script of what you would say to people who might be interested in buying your products.



Communication Feedback Form

Name: _____

Opportunities for Growth	Gems: Things that were great!
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

After interpreting and receiving the information, what would you say the message was?



Name: _____

Directions: In the spaces provided, answer each question.

What are three tips for effective oral communication?

What are three tips for effective written communication?
