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## **EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

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## **LESSON 1. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATION BASICS**

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## Lesson 1. Understanding Communication Basics

### Lesson Objectives

At the end of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Indicate the value of empathic listening and effective feedback.
  - Indicate how speakers' and listeners' nonverbal cues impact communication.
  - Identify vocal factors that contribute to effective communication.
  - Indicate how actively engaging the audience contributes to effective communication.
  - Assess your current communication skills.
- 

### Scope

- Course Overview
  - Lesson Overview and Objectives
  - Effective Communication
  - The Communication Process
  - Communication Basics
  - Listening
  - Activity: Listening Self-Assessment
  - Communicating Nonverbally
  - Using Your Voice
  - Activity: Using Your Voice
  - Engaging Your Audience
  - Activity: Open-Ended vs. Direct Questions
  - Activity: Analyze Your Basic Communication Skills
  - Summary and Transition
- 

### Methodology

The lesson will begin with an overview of the course and a review of the course objectives. A video will discuss the importance of effective communication in emergency management. The participants will then learn about the communication process and review communication basics. Participants will complete a self-assessment of their listening skills and consider how nonverbal communication impacts one's effectiveness in transmitting and receiving messages.

The instructor will review methods for using your voice to improve your communication skills and present strategies for engaging the audience. A video will summarize guidance on using one's voice. Participants will discuss the purposes of open-ended and direct questions. The participants will conclude the lesson by completing a self-assessment of their communication skills.

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### Materials

- PowerPoint visuals 1.1 – 1.30 and a computer display system
  - Instructor Guide
  - Student Manual
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## Lesson 1. Understanding Communication Basics

### Time Plan

A suggested time plan for this lesson is shown below. More or less time may be required, based on the experience level of the group.

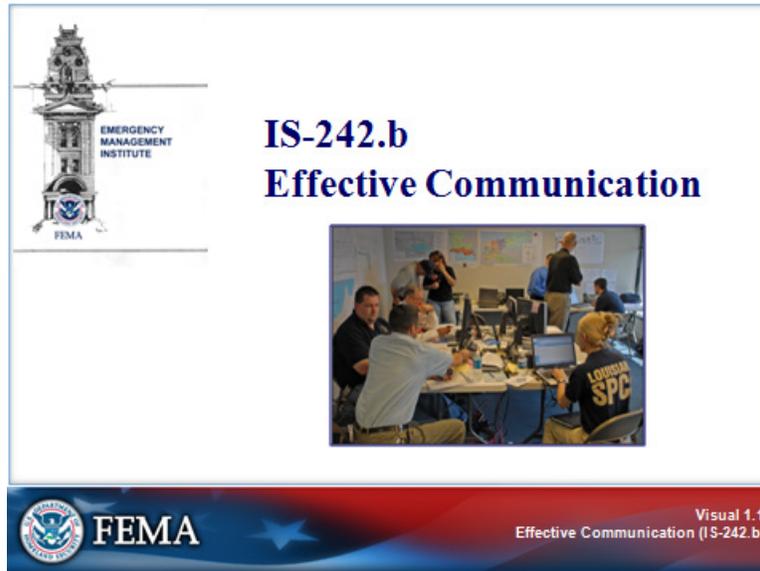
Topic	Time
Course Overview	15 minutes
Lesson Overview and Objectives	2 minutes
Effective Communication	13 minutes
The Communication Process	5 minutes
Communication Basics	5 minutes
Listening	5 minutes
Activity: Listening Self-Assessment	10 minutes
Communicating Nonverbally	5 minutes
Using Your Voice	10 minutes
Activity: Using Your Voice	10 minutes
Engaging the Audience	10 minutes
Activity: Open-Ended vs. Direct Questions	10 minutes
Activity: Analyze Your Basic Communication Skills	15 minutes
Summary and Transition	5 minutes
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>2 hours</b>

Two optional activities are included with this lesson, to be used at the instructor's discretion if time permits:

- Optional Activity #1: Communicating Nonverbally (15 minutes)
- Optional Activity #2: Using Your Voice (5 minutes)

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Visual 1.1**



**Key Points**

Welcome to IS-242.b: Effective Communication.

**Instructor Note:** Introduce yourself and any other instructors. Describe your background and your experience as an effective communicator.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Visual 1.2**

**Course Administration**

- Sign-in sheet
- Course evaluation forms
- Site logistics
  - Emergency procedures
  - Breaks
  - Restrooms
  - Cell phones and other electronic devices—silent



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Visual 1.2  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

**Instructor Note:** Review the following information and answer any additional questions that participants may have.

- Sign-in sheet
- Course evaluation forms
- Site logistics
  - Emergency procedures
  - Breaks
  - Restrooms
  - Cell phones and other electronic devices—silent

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Visual 1.3**

**Introductions**

**Working in pairs, introduce your partner by:**

- Name
- Prior emergency food and shelter experience



 **FEMA**  Visual 1.3  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

**Instructor Note:** Conduct the following introduction activity.

Tell the participants to:

- Pair with another person (if there is an odd number of participants, there will be one group of three).
- Interview that person about their prior emergency management experience.

Allow approximately 5 minutes for participants to interview one another.

Ask each participant to introduce his or her partner.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

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#### Visual 1.4

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**About This Course**

**Being able to communicate effectively is a necessary and vital part of every emergency management professional's job.**

**The goal of this course is to improve your communication skills.**

*Course Goal*

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Visual 1.4  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

#### Key Points

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Being able to communicate effectively is a necessary and vital part of every emergency management professional's job. This course is designed to improve your communication skills.

During an emergency, it is especially challenging and important to communicate accurate information clearly to the target audience. Disaster survivors generally look for someone who can communicate valuable guidance, provide leadership, and lead them in problem solving. When you successfully fill that role, you act to reassure survivors that their government and private organizations are working toward community recovery.

Finely tuned communication skills are also important tools during the emergency planning phase when educating the public about preparedness. In addition, being able to communicate effectively with other emergency management personnel facilitates collaborative working relationships and partnerships.

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

**Visual 1.5**

**Course Objectives**

- **Identify factors that contribute to and detract from effective communication.**
- **Develop a strategy for ensuring that emergency communications meet the needs of the whole community, including those with access and functional needs.**
- **Identify strategies for communicating effectively in emergency situations.**
- **Identify strategies for improving your oral presentation skills.**



**Key Points**

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

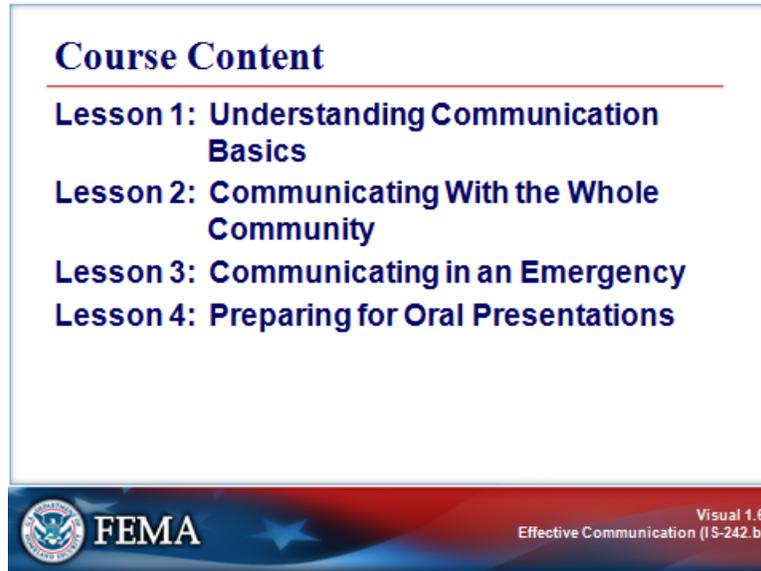
- Identify factors that contribute to and detract from effective communication.
- Develop a strategy for ensuring that emergency communications meet the needs of the whole community, including those with access and functional needs.
- Identify strategies for communicating effectively in emergency situations.
- Identify strategies for improving your oral presentation skills.

### COURSE OVERVIEW

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#### Visual 1.6

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#### Key Points

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This course is comprised of four lessons:

- Lesson 1 offers an overview of communication basics.
- Lesson 2 addresses the importance of communicating with the whole community.
- Lesson 3 presents strategies for communicating effectively in emergency situations.
- Lesson 4 focuses on improving your oral presentation skills.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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#### Visual 1.7

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### Lesson 1 Objectives

- Indicate the value of empathic listening and effective feedback.
- Indicate how speakers' and listeners' nonverbal cues impact communication.
- Identify vocal factors that contribute to effective communication.
- Indicate how actively engaging the audience contributes to effective communication.
- Assess your current communication skills.



Visual 1.7  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)



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#### Key Points

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The remainder of this lesson presents information about basic factors that contribute to effective communication.

At the completion of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Indicate the value of empathic listening and effective feedback.
- Indicate how speakers' and listeners' nonverbal cues impact communication.
- Identify vocal factors that contribute to effective communication.
- Indicate how actively engaging the audience contributes to effective communication.
- Assess your current communication skills.

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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#### Visual 1.8

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#### Instructor Notes: Present the following key points.

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##### Transcript:

Effective communication is essential in the workplace. The average worker spends 50 percent of the day communicating, and one-fourth of all workplace mistakes are the result of poor communication.

As an emergency management professional, you need to be a skillful communicator to achieve your objectives. Your role may involve communicating one-on-one or in small-group discussions; making public presentations at briefings, community meetings, and press conferences; taking part in media interviews; and issuing announcements and warnings.

You must be able to reach a broad audience that includes response partners and other colleagues, private sector and nonprofit organizations, the media, and a very diverse public.

Effective communication is essential before, during, and after an incident. During routine operations, strong communication skills enable you to engage in collaborative planning and promote safety awareness in the community.

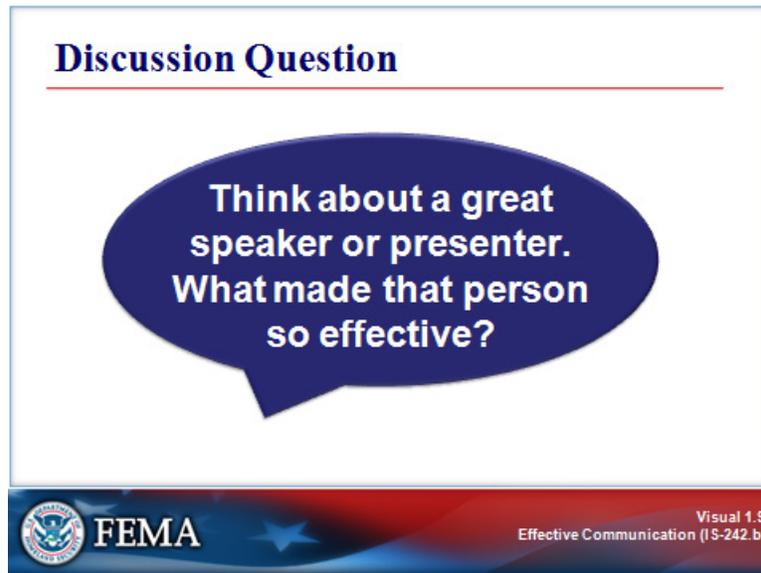
During an incident, communicating clearly and accurately can help to reassure survivors and assist them in making responsible choices.

Following an incident, effective communication helps create a common understanding of the situation so the whole community can work together toward recovery.

This course will help you understand what effective communication entails and identify ways to improve your communication skills.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Visual 1.9



Key Points

**Discussion Question:** Think about a great current or historical orator, speaker, or presenter. What characteristics made that person so effective?

**Instructor Note:** Facilitate a discussion around the question. If not suggested by the participants, add that effective communicators:

- Project conviction and passion for their subject matter.
- Have credibility.
- Make even a large audience feel a personal connection.
- Appear poised and confident.
- Are well prepared and organized.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Use nonverbal gestures that draw attention while not being distracting.
- Vary the pace and know when to pause to make a point.
- Energize the listeners with a call to action.
- Maintain a professional demeanor.

**THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS**

**Visual 1.10**

**The Communication Process**

Communication is a two-way process where:

- You send a message using your voice and nonverbal cues.
- The other person listens, interpreting and personalizing the message, and gives feedback verbally and nonverbally.
- Meanwhile, you are listening to the verbal feedback and attending to the nonverbal cues in order to gauge how your message was received and to understand the other person's response.



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Visual 1.10  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

Being an effective communicator involves establishing a personal connection with the audience and using basic communication tools to reach that audience.

To communicate effectively—whether your audience is a single individual or a large group—it is helpful to understand the basic skills that form the building blocks of effective communication.

Let's begin with a brief look at what happens when two people communicate.

Oral communication is fluid and dynamic, and is shaped by both the speaker and the audience. Even in its simplest form, communication is a two-way process in which several things typically happen:

- You send a message using your voice and nonverbal cues.
- The other person listens, interpreting and personalizing the message, and gives feedback verbally and nonverbally.
- Meanwhile, you are listening to the verbal feedback and attending to the nonverbal cues in order to gauge how your message was received and to understand the other person's response.

The process is then repeated in the typical flow of conversation.

**COMMUNICATION BASICS**

**Visual 1.11**

**Communication Basics**

- **Listening**
- **Communicating Nonverbally**
- **Using Your Voice**
- **Engaging the Audience**

Visual 1.11  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

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**Key Points**

This part of the lesson will focus on four basic communication skills:

- Listening.
- Communicating nonverbally.
- Using your voice.
- Engaging the audience.

LISTENING

Visual 1.12



Key Points

Attending, or listening, is critical for successful communication. In fact, almost half of our communication time is spent listening. Listening entails much more than just hearing sound.

- **Hearing** is a sensory experience that gathers sound waves indiscriminately. We can hear something without choosing to listen.
- **Listening** is a voluntary activity that includes interpreting or processing that sound.

### LISTENING

#### Visual 1.13

### Barriers to Effective Listening

- Emotional responses.
- Hearing facts and not feelings.
- Hearing what is expected and not what is said.
- Not seeking clarification.
- Stereotyping.
- The halo effect.
- Resistance to change.



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Visual 1.13  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

#### Key Points

Barriers to effective listening can be external or internal. External roadblocks can include distracters such as noise, an uncomfortable temperature or seating, or an inappropriate location. Try to be aware of external roadblocks and offset them if possible.

Internal roadblocks include conditions or reactions within the speaker or audience, such as:

- Emotional interference or defensiveness.
- Hearing only facts and not feelings.
- Hearing what is expected instead of what is said.
- Not seeking clarification.
- Stereotyping.
- The halo effect (letting a loosely associated factor influence one's perception).
- Resistance to change or automatic dismissal (e.g., "We've never done it that way before.").

When listening, always:

- Keep an open mind.
- Maintain eye contact and show interest.
- Listen for the central themes.
- Consider the speaker's nonverbal behaviors and tone of voice.

While listening, you should avoid:

- Being judgmental.
- Interrupting the speaker.
- Formulating a rebuttal.
- Distorting the message based on your own beliefs.

### LISTENING

#### Visual 1.14



#### Key Points

Active listening involves listening with empathy and paraphrasing. When you listen empathically, you don't just hear words. You attend to thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Empathic listening is highly active and takes practice.

When you paraphrase, you ensure clear understanding by restating main points in your own words. Paraphrasing also provides important feedback that helps speakers gauge how well they are getting their message across as intended.

Using the following active listening techniques will help you to improve your listening skills.

- **Decide to listen and concentrate** on the speaker.
- Use your imagination and **enter the speaker's situation**. Concentrate and try to imagine his or her frame of reference and point of view.
- **Observe** the speaker's vocal inflection, enthusiasm or lack of it, and style of delivery. These are essential components of the message. If you are speaking face-to-face, pay attention to the speaker's facial expressions and other nonverbal cues for more insight into the message.
- **Listen without interruption**. Note key phrases or use word associations to remember the speaker's content.
- **Use paraphrasing or clarifying questions to confirm** that you received the intended message. Paraphrasing demonstrates that you listened by:
  - Summarizing—restating the speaker's statement and feelings.
  - Using your own words—not parroting back what was said.
  - Remaining neutral—expressing neither your agreement nor disagreement (verbally or nonverbally).
- **Provide feedback**. Check your perceptions of how the speaker is feeling—are you putting the text of the message in the appropriate emotional context?

**ACTIVITY: LISTENING SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**Visual 1.15**

**Activity: Listening Self-Assessment**

**Instructions:** Working individually:

- Read each item and then check the box indicating how frequently you actually use this skill.
- Remember, this is a self-assessment, so be honest.

FEMA logo and slide title: Visual 1.15 Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to assess your listening skills

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Instructions:**

- Fill out the assessment on the following page.
- Read each item and then check the box indicating how frequently you actually use this skill.
- Remember, this is a self-assessment, so be honest.

**Instructor Note:** Give the participants 10 minutes to complete this activity. After 10 minutes, note that most of us think we are effective listeners. However, research has shown that we recall only 25 to 50 percent of what we hear. Therefore, we all need to work on our listening skills.

## Lesson 1. Understanding Communication Basics

### ACTIVITY: LISTENING SELF-ASSESSMENT

#### Visual 1.15 (Continued)

#### Listening Self-Assessment

**Instructions:** Read each item and then check the box indicating how frequently you actually use this skill when talking with others. Remember, this is a self-assessment, so be honest!

Listening Skills	Usually Do	Should Do More Often
I make others feel at ease when I am talking with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try not to think about other things when listening to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I listen, I can separate my own ideas and thoughts from the speaker's.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can listen to others with whom I disagree.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try not to form a rebuttal in my head while others are talking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I observe others' verbal and nonverbal behaviors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I let others finish speaking before I begin talking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I listen to what others say rather than assume that I know what they are going to say.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As I listen, I figure out how others are feeling.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I ask others to clarify or repeat information when I am unsure what was meant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can remember the important details of what others tell me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I paraphrase (by stating in my own words) main points to make sure that I understand them correctly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I find I'm losing track of what others are saying, I concentrate harder.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**COMMUNICATING NONVERBALLY**

**Visual 1.16**

**Understanding Nonverbal Cues**

- **Nonverbal clusters are several related nonverbal signals that work in concert.**
- **They are more significant than a single signal and reflects a change in attitude and state of mind.**



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Visual 1.16  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

Your nonverbal gestures speak volumes.

Body language alone—including facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and tone of voice—accounts for more than 90 percent of the message we send to others. Our words account for only 7 percent of the message.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “Your actions speak so loud I cannot hear what you are saying.”

Nonverbal clusters are several related nonverbal signals that work in concert. Generally, the presence of a nonverbal cluster is more significant than a single signal because it reflects changes in attitude and state of mind.

For example, yawning by itself could mean a listener is unreceptive to your message, is sleep-deprived, or simply has been sitting still for too long.

Yawning in combination with fidgeting and lack of eye contact, on the other hand, could mean much more, including that your message is not getting across and the person is bored.

If you understand nonverbal cues, you can use them to reinforce your message.

You can also use nonverbal understanding to “read” your audience and gather real-time feedback about whether you are communicating successfully.

The job aid on the next page summarizes nonverbal cues and their meanings.

**Job Aid: Nonverbal Cues**

**Speaker's Nonverbal Cues**

The speaker's nonverbal language reflects attitudes, emotions, state of mind, and related messages. Nonverbal cues include:

- Vocal intonation:
  - Pitch, tone, inflection, volume
  - Rhythm, timing
- Silence
- Personal space
- Body language:
  - Posture, body position
  - Head movements
  - Eye movement, eye contact
  - Facial expressions
  - Fidgeting, yawning

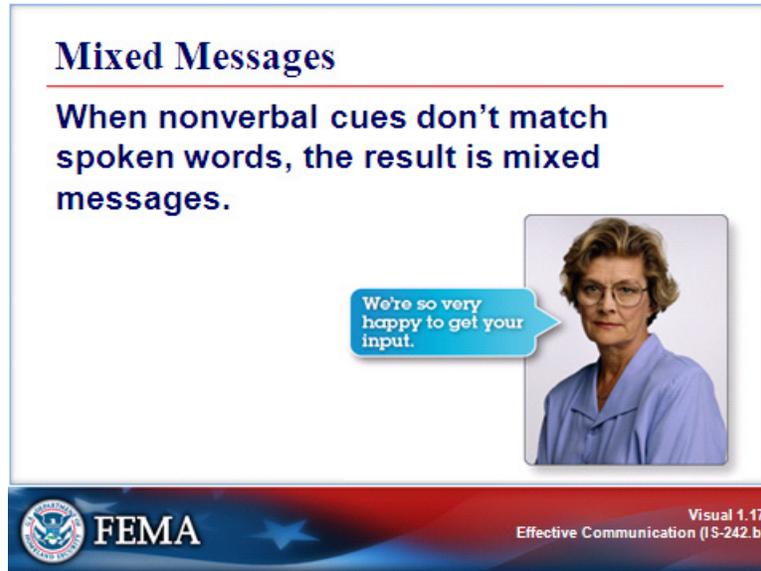
**Listener's Nonverbal Cues**

Indicators of . . .

<b>Boredom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slouching in one's seat</li> <li>• Yawning</li> <li>• Staring out the window</li> <li>• Lack of eye contact</li> <li>• Neutral expression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fidgeting</li> <li>• Closed posture</li> <li>• Drifting attention</li> <li>• Slowness to respond</li> <li>• Neutral or "flat" speech</li> </ul>
<b>Frustration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubbing forehead with hand</li> <li>• Tense, worried expression</li> <li>• Throwing hands up in the air</li> </ul>	
<b>Agreement, Enthusiasm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaning toward the speaker</li> <li>• Making eye contact</li> <li>• Nodding head</li> <li>• Relaxed, open posture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smiling or laughing</li> <li>• Faster speech</li> <li>• Higher pitch</li> </ul>
<b>Disagreement, Confusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frowning</li> <li>• Shaking head</li> <li>• Leaning back or away</li> <li>• Pursing lips</li> <li>• Tightened jaw and closed posture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staring elsewhere</li> <li>• Shallow, rapid breathing</li> <li>• Limited facial expression and hand gestures</li> <li>• Slower speech</li> <li>• Lower pitch</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chewing on eyeglass frames</li> <li>• Wearing a thoughtful, intense expression</li> </ul>	

**COMMUNICATING NONVERBALLY**

**Visual 1.17**



**Key Points**

When nonverbal cues don't match the spoken words, the result is mixed messages.

Often, nonverbal cues contradict or supersede verbal messages, and listeners instinctively react with mistrust and caution. Mixed messages can indicate that the speaker:

- Is experiencing conflict.
- Is not sincere.
- Is not committed to the message.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY #1: COMMUNICATING NONVERBALLY**

**Visual 1.18**

**Optional Activity #1: Communicating Nonverbally**

**Instructions:** Work in partners as follows:

- Choose one partner to do a one-minute self-introduction as described in the Student Manual.
- Have the other partner use a smartphone or video-capable cell phone to record a video of the speaker.
- Play back the tape with the sound off, so only the speaker can see it. The speaker will then evaluate his/her nonverbal language using the questions in the Student Manual.
- Repeat the process for the other partner.
- Be prepared to share any insights you learn.



The slide footer features the FEMA logo on the left, a blue and red decorative banner in the center, and the text 'Visual 1.18 Effective Communication (IS-242.b)' on the right.

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to become aware of your own nonverbal language.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Instructions:** Work in pairs as follows:

- Your instructor will pair up all participants so that each one can work with a partner. (If there is an uneven number of participants in the class, there will be one group of three.)
- Using a smartphone (or a cell phone capable of recording video), one partner will record a video of the other person doing a one-minute self-introduction, as described on the following page of the Student Manual.
- If there are pairs in which neither person has a video-capable phone, the instructor will divide those individuals among the groups that have such a phone.
- Each partner will have a turn being recorded while introducing himself/herself.
- Decide which person will go first.
- Play back the first video with the sound off so that you alone can see it, and consider the questions about your nonverbal communication that appear in the Student Manual.
- Repeat the process with the other person doing a self-introduction while the first partner records a video.
- Again, play back the video with the sound off so that only the second speaker can see, and consider the questions in the Student Manual.
- The instructor will ask for volunteers to share any insights they learned about their own nonverbal communication through this activity.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY #1: COMMUNICATING NONVERBALLY**

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**Visual 1.18 (Continued)**

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**Optional Activity: Communicating Nonverbally**

**The Setting:** Find a private space in the training room. Imagine you are in a public meeting room, where you are mingling informally with community members who have arrived early for an information session on how to apply for disaster assistance.

**Instructions for Your Self-Introduction:** Take just a minute to think about your particular information as suggested in the prompts below, and jot down a few notes if you wish. Then, while your partner uses a cell phone/smartphone to record a video of you, introduce yourself to an imaginary group of 3 community members whose homes have been impacted by severe flooding.

- Your name
  - Where you're from
  - How long you've been doing emergency management work
  - Any personal experience with flooding
  - Your commitment to help people here deal with the flood damage
- 

**Instructions for Evaluating Your Nonverbal Communication:** Now watch the brief video with the sound turned off. Consider the following questions:

- Does my body language reinforce my message?
- Are there any mannerisms of which I wasn't aware?
- Does my facial expression, posture, or use of hands send any unintended message?
- How could I improve my nonverbal language to communicate more effectively?

**USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.19**

**Using Your Voice Effectively**

- Use clear, concise language.
- Speak loud enough to be heard.
- Vary the pace.
- Slow down for important points.
- Use the pause.
- Avoid speaking with a monotone voice.



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Visual 1.19  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

Public speaking doesn't come naturally to everyone, but it is a skill that can be learned. Understanding the basics and practicing will make most of us better speakers. It's also helpful to begin small (e.g., a small group and informal setting) and work up to greater challenges.

When presenting to an audience, be sure to:

- Use clear and concise language.
- Speak loud enough to be heard.
- Vary the pace of your presentation.
- Slow down for important points.
- Use the pause.
- Avoid speaking with a monotone voice.

**USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.20**

**Projecting Your Voice**



- If the room is large, use a microphone.
- Use short phrases and slow your pace.
- Lower your pitch.
- Don't try to talk over noise and side conversations.
- Rest your voice and drink water.

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Visual 1.20  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

To make yourself heard, imagine that you are talking directly to the person who is farthest away, not the person in the front row. Standing up makes it easier to create volume. The following techniques can help you project your voice:

- If the room is large, use a microphone.
- Use short phrases and slow your pace.
- Lower your pitch to reduce stress and to make your voice carry.
- Don't try to talk over noise or side conversations.
- Rest your voice between presentations and take a drink of water.

**USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.21**

**Avoiding Fillers**

**At transition points, or when you hear yourself adding a filler:**

- **Pause.**
- **Take a breath.**
- **Gather your thoughts.**



 **FEMA** Visual 1.21  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

At transition points, or when you hear yourself adding a filler:

- Pause. (Remember: Pauses will feel longer to you than to your audience!)
- Take a breath.
- Gather your thoughts.

The job aid on the next page summarizes strategies to use your voice effectively.

**Job Aid: Using Your Voice Effectively**

**Do's and Don'ts**

**DO . . .**

- Use clear and concise language.
- Speak loud enough to be heard.
- Vary the pace of your presentation.
- Slow down for important points.
- Use the pause.

**DON'T . . .**

- Speak with a monotone voice.
- Be afraid of pauses.

**Projecting Your Voice**

- Have plenty of water to drink. Avoid tea and coffee to prevent dehydrating your vocal area.
- Stand when presenting (if possible).
- If the room is large, use a microphone.
- Take a deep breath.
- Use short phrases and slow your pace.
- Lower your pitch to reduce stress and to make your voice carry.
- Don't try to talk over noise or side conversations.
- Rest your voice between presentations and take a drink of water.

**Avoiding Fillers (um's and ah's)**

At transition points, or when you hear yourself adding a filler:

- Pause.
- Take a breath.
- Gather your thoughts.

**Remember: Pauses will feel longer to you than to your audience!**

### VIDEO: USING YOUR VOICE

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#### Visual 1.22

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#### Key Points

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This video summarizes important guidance about using your voice.

#### Transcript:

Think of your voice as an instrument. When used effectively, it can convey your message and engage your listeners. This is especially true when presenting to a group—for example, at a briefing or in a community meeting.

When making presentations, you need to control the volume, pace, tone, inflection, and enunciation. Always speak loudly and clearly, even when using a microphone. Standing rather than sitting helps you project your voice.

Be sure to vary the pace of your presentation while not going too fast or slow. People who speak in a monotone should not be surprised when audience members begin nodding off.

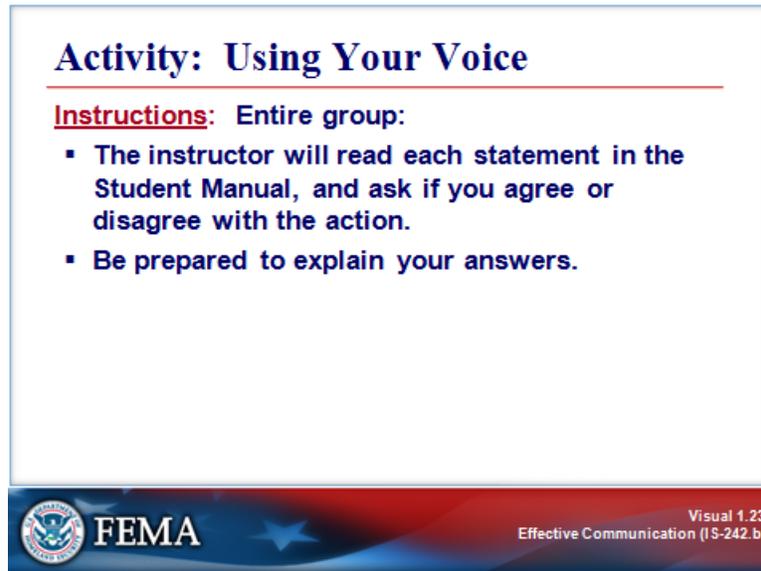
Sound confident by using a downward inflection to end a sentence. For example, don't say, "More and more people are concerned about community preparedness than ever before?" You're telling, not asking.

Pauses are important. [Pause] Pausing before and after you make an important point causes people to listen more carefully. In addition, pausing makes your presentation sound more conversational and helps you avoid using fillers such as: . . . like, . . . um, or . . . ya know.

While you are presenting, make sure to take care of your voice. Have plenty of water to drink and avoid caffeine, since it can dehydrate your vocal area. And remember: breathe deeply.

**ACTIVITY: USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.23**



The slide features a white background with a blue border. At the top, the title "Activity: Using Your Voice" is written in a blue serif font. Below the title, the word "Instructions:" is underlined in red, followed by "Entire group:". Two bullet points in blue text follow: "The instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual, and ask if you agree or disagree with the action." and "Be prepared to explain your answers." At the bottom of the slide, there is a red and blue banner with the FEMA logo on the left, the text "FEMA" in white, and "Visual 1.23 Effective Communication (IS-242.b)" on the right.

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to identify actions you can take to use your voice effectively.

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Instructions:** Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each of the statements in the Student Manual, and ask if you agree or disagree with the action.
- Be prepared to follow up the answers with a group discussion.

**Statements:**

- Pat is participating in a panel discussion. His throat is sore and he is hoarse. To get an extra lift, he chooses to drink coffee during the presentation.
- Tanya knows she has a tendency to say “right” at the end of sentences. She decides that it is better to pause to collect her thoughts.
- Maria, an inexperienced presenter, is addressing a large group in a room with poor acoustics. She decides not to use the microphone, thinking that it will make her more nervous.
- At a presentation before the town council, the program is running a little behind schedule. Rather than rush the pace of the presentation, Pete decides to eliminate some unnecessary content.

**ACTIVITY: USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.23 (Continued)**

**Instructor Note:** If not suggested by the participants, note the following explanations for the correct responses:

**DISAGREE:** Pat is participating in a panel discussion. His throat is sore and he is hoarse. To get an extra lift, he chooses to drink coffee during the presentation.

Reminders:

- Have plenty of water to drink. Avoid tea and coffee to prevent dehydrating your vocal area.
- Rest your voice between presentations and take a drink of water.

**AGREE:** Tanya knows she has a tendency to say “right” at the end of sentences. She decides that it is better to pause to collect her thoughts.

Reminders:

- At transition points, or when you hear yourself adding a verbal filler, take a breath, and gather your thoughts.
- Don’t be afraid of pauses. Pauses will feel longer to you than to your audience!

**DISAGREE:** Maria, an inexperienced presenter, is addressing a large group in a room with poor acoustics. She decides not to use the microphone, thinking that it will make her more nervous.

Reminders:

- If the room is large, use a microphone. After practicing with a microphone, you’ll find that it is more of a help than a hindrance.
- Stand when presenting (if possible).
- Lower your pitch to reduce stress and to make your voice carry.

**AGREE:** At a presentation before the town council, the program is running a little behind schedule. Rather than rush the pace of the presentation, Pete decides to eliminate some unnecessary content.

Reminders:

- Vary the pace of your presentation.
- Slow down for important points.
- Use the pause.

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITY #2: USING YOUR VOICE**

**Visual 1.24**

**Optional Activity #2: Using Your Voice**

**Instructions:**

- Use the presentation video you created in Optional Activity #1.
- Listen to your voice without looking at the video screen.
- Evaluate your performance using the questions in the Student Manual.

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Visual 1.24  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to become aware of your own nonverbal language.

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Instructions:**

- Use the presentation video you created with your partner in Optional Activity #1.
- Listen to your voice without looking at the video screen.
- Evaluate your performance using the following questions.

Consider these questions:

- Does my voice project well enough to be heard clearly at the back of the room?
- How are my pitch, tone, and pace? Would lowering the pitch help me project better and sound more confident? Are the tone and pace varied enough to sustain interest?
- Overall, does my vocal demeanor match the message I am trying to convey?
- What improvements could I work on to communicate more effectively?

**ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE**

**Visual 1.25**



**Engaging Your Audience**

- Understand your audience.
- “Read” your audience and be sensitive to nonverbal cues.
- Listen carefully and paraphrase.
- Use questions and allow time for response.

Visual 1.25  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

FEMA

**Key Points**

To summarize, the ability to engage your audience—whether an individual or a group—is a key element of effective communication. Basic strategies for engaging an audience include the following:

- Understand your audience, and use that understanding to tailor your communication.
- “Read” your audience and be sensitive to nonverbal cues.
- Listen carefully, using paraphrasing to confirm your understanding.
- Use questions to encourage interaction and allow time for audience response—even if it means remaining silent.

Additional ways to get your audience involved include:

- Clear your mind of all distractions.
- Try not to place a barrier, such as a lectern or podium, between you and the audience.
- Avoid standing in a fixed position, slouching, fidgeting, or shifting your weight.
- Use natural and spontaneous gestures and positive facial expressions.
- Avoid nonverbal behaviors that could be seen as negative or judgmental.
- Don’t be afraid to let your conviction and passion for the subject matter show.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm through your voice, facial expressions, and body movements.
- Draw people in by walking toward them.
- Avoid distracting behavior such as looking at your watch, or jingling change.

**ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE**

**Visual 1.26**

### Asking Questions

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**Open-Ended Questions:**

- Require more than a “yes” or “no” answer.
- Begin with “what,” “how,” “when,” or “why.”



**Direct Questions:**

- Require a simple “yes” or “no” answer or statement of fact.
- Begin with “is,” “can,” “how many,” or “do.”



**FEMA**

Visual 1.26  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

Asking questions can help you evaluate what listeners are thinking and how they are receiving information. For encouraging interaction, open-ended questions are more effective than direction questions.

Type	Description	Uses
<b>Open-Ended Question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires more than a “yes” or “no” answer.</li> <li>• Usually begins with “what,” “how,” “when,” or “why.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To stimulate thinking and decisionmaking.</li> <li>• To encourage discussion.</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Question</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a simple “yes” or “no” answer or statement of fact.</li> <li>• Often begins with “is,” “can,” “how many,” or “does.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To confirm facts.</li> <li>• To stop a discussion.</li> </ul>

Questions should be clear, simple, and concise. Focus each question on a single issue.

**Avoid Confusing Questions That Require More Than One Answer**

“When presenting information is it more important to use verbal or nonverbal information, and what is the best way of reinforcing verbal points with visuals?”

**Better Question**

“What is an example of how you’ve used both verbal and nonverbal information to reinforce an important learning point?”

**ACTIVITY: OPEN-ENDED VS. DIRECT QUESTIONS**

**Visual 1.27**

**Activity: Open-Ended vs. Direct Questions**

**Instructions:** Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual, and ask if it is an open-ended or a direct question.
- The instructor will then ask for volunteers to reword each question so that it is now the other type of question.



The slide features the FEMA logo on the left, which includes the text 'FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY' and 'FEMA'. To the right of the logo is the text 'Visual 1.27 Effective Communication (IS-242.b)'. The slide has a blue and red background with a white box containing the text.

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to identify open-ended and direct questions.

**Time:** 5 minutes

**Instructions:** Entire group:

- Your instructor will read each statement in the Student Manual, and ask if it is an open-ended or a direct question.
- The instructor will then ask for volunteers to reword each question so that it is now the other type of question. So for instance, if a statement is a direct question, the instructor will ask the volunteer to rephrase that direct question into an open-ended question.

**Statements:**

- Is it important to involve stakeholders when developing plans?
- Why do community members react this way?
- How many of you have prior experience with sheltering and mass care?
- How would you respond to such a statement?
- Do you agree with this approach?

**ACTIVITY: OPEN-ENDED VS. DIRECT QUESTIONS**

**Visual 1.27 (Continued)**

**Instructor Note:** If not suggested by the participants, provide the following responses:

**Direct Question:** Is it important to involve stakeholders when developing plans?

**Possible Open-Ended Question:** How can we involve stakeholders when developing plans?

**Open-Ended Question:** Why do community members react this way?

**Possible Direct Question:** Are community members happy with this plan?

**Direct Question:** How many of you have prior experience with sheltering and mass care?

**Possible Open-Ended Question:** What kind of prior experience do you have with sheltering and mass care?

**Open-Ended Question:** How would you respond to such a statement?

**Possible Direct Question:** Do you agree with that statement?

**Direct Question:** Do you agree with this approach?

**Possible Open-Ended Question:** What are the problems with this approach?

**ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE**

**Visual 1.28**

**Handling Responses**



- **Acknowledge the response in a positive manner.**
- **Avoid answering your own question.**
- **If a response is unclear, ask clarifying questions.**

 **FEMA**  Visual 1.28  
Effective Communication (IS-242.b)

**Key Points**

When you ask open-ended questions, you hope to receive lots of answers and comments. To encourage participant responses:

- Acknowledge all responses in a positive manner. Never ignore a response or comment, and never judge a person's response or declare that an answer is wrong.
- Avoid the tendency to answer your own question. Instead, wait a few seconds, so that someone can respond. If too much time passes, then rephrase the question.
- If a response is unclear, ask a clarifying question and allow sufficient time for the person to rephrase or clarify the response.

**ACTIVITY: ANALYZE YOUR BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

**Visual 1.29**

**Activity: Analyze Your Basic Communication Skills**

**Instructions:** Working individually:

- Review the job aid on basic communication skills.
- Analyze your own strengths and areas for improvement in each basic skill area.

The slide features a blue and red footer with the FEMA logo on the left, the text 'FEMA' in the center, and 'Visual 1.29 Effective Communication (IS-242.b)' on the right.

**Key Points**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to analyze your basic communication skills.

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Instructions:**

- Review the job aid on basic communication skills, located on the following pages.
- Analyze your own strengths and areas for improvement in each basic skill area.

**Instructor Note:** Give the participants 10 minutes to complete this activity. After 10 minutes ask for volunteer participants to share what they have discovered.

## Lesson 1. Understanding Communication Basics

### Job Aid: Summary of Basic Communication Skills

Do's . . .	Don'ts . . .
<b>Listening</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Keep an open mind.</li><li>✓ Maintain eye contact and show interest.</li><li>✓ Listen for the central themes.</li><li>✓ Consider the speaker's nonverbal behaviors and tone of voice.</li><li>✓ Ask for clarification.</li><li>✓ Paraphrase the meaning and feelings being expressed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Be judgmental.</li><li>✗ Fake attention.</li><li>✗ Interrupt the speaker.</li><li>✗ Begin formulating a rebuttal.</li><li>✗ Distort the message based on your own beliefs or thoughts.</li></ul>
<b>Nonverbal Communication</b>	
<b>Eye Contact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Look at people's eyes.</li><li>✓ Continually scan the group with your eyes.</li><li>✓ Look at the whole group.</li></ul>	<b>Eye Contact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Avoid eye contact.</li><li>✗ Scan the group too rapidly or infrequently.</li><li>✗ Only look at one or two people or at only one side of the room.</li></ul>
<b>Body Movement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Position your body so you face the majority of the people.</li><li>✓ Vary your position in the room.</li><li>✓ Stand with good posture.</li><li>✓ Walk toward people when they speak.</li></ul>	<b>Body Movement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Talk to your notes, easel, or board.</li><li>✗ Turn your back to part of the group.</li><li>✗ Stand in fixed positions.</li><li>✗ Slouch.</li><li>✗ Distance yourself from people.</li></ul>
<b>Gestures and Facial Expressions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Use natural and spontaneous gestures.</li><li>✓ Smile and be animated.</li><li>✓ Convey emotion affirmatively.</li></ul>	<b>Gestures and Facial Expressions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Engage in distracting behavior such as looking at your watch, or jingling change.</li><li>✗ Look disinterested.</li><li>✗ Use gestures or expressions that could be seen as negative or judgmental.</li></ul>
<b>Using Your Voice</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Speak loud enough to be heard.</li><li>✓ Vary the pace of your presentation.</li><li>✓ Slow down for important points.</li><li>✓ Use the pause.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Mumble.</li><li>✗ Use "fillers" such as "like" or "um."</li><li>✗ Speak with a monotone voice.</li><li>✗ Be afraid of pauses.</li></ul>

**Job Aid: Summary of Basic Communication Skills (Continued)**

<b>Do's . . .</b>	<b>Don'ts . . .</b>
<b>Engaging Your Audience</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ask clear, concise questions.</li><li>✓ Ask open-ended questions.</li><li>✓ Focus each question on a single issue.</li><li>✓ Acknowledge responses in a positive manner.</li><li>✓ Allow time for the audience to answer.</li><li>✓ Let your conviction and passion for the subject matter show.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✗ Ask questions that require two distinct answers.</li><li>✗ Answer your own question! Rephrase your question if you don't get an answer.</li><li>✗ Ignore comments or questions.</li><li>✗ Declare an answer is wrong.</li><li>✗ Be afraid to remain silent while waiting for responses.</li></ul>

## Lesson 1. Understanding Communication Basics

### Basic Skills Analysis Worksheet

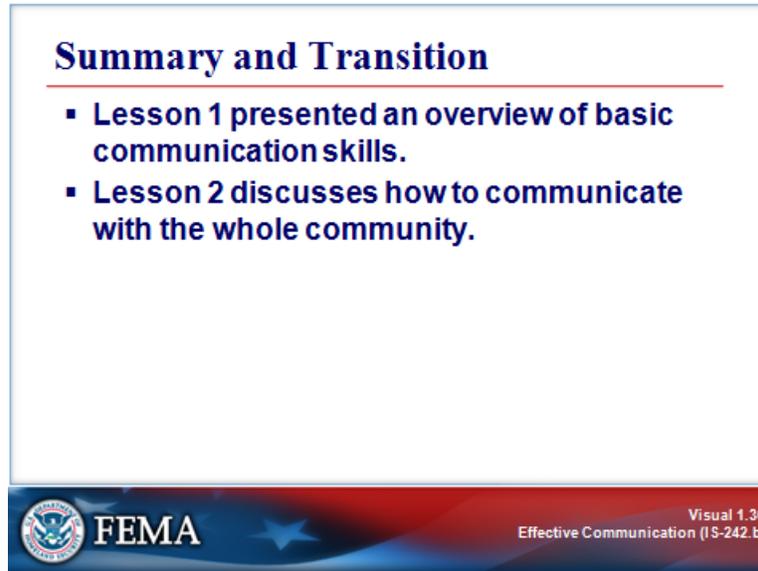
<b>Listening</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I do well:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I could improve:</li></ul>
<b>Managing Your Own Nonverbal Communication</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I do well:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I could improve:</li></ul>
<b>Observing and “Reading” Nonverbal Communication in Others</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I do well:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I could improve:</li></ul>
<b>Using Your Voice</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I do well:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I could improve:</li></ul>
<b>Engaging Your Audience</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I do well:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What I could improve:</li></ul>

### SUMMARY AND TRANSITION

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#### Visual 1.30

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#### Key Points

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This lesson presented an overview of basic communication skills. You should now be able to:

- Indicate the value of empathic listening and effective feedback.
- Indicate how speakers' and listeners' nonverbal cues impact communication.
- Identify vocal factors that contribute to effective communication.
- Indicate how actively engaging the audience contributes to effective communication.
- Assess your current communication skills.

The next lesson will discuss communicating with the whole community.

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