

Communication

By Jennifer Kenny

Communication is essential in life. When two or more people exchange information, they **communicate**. Someone sends a message and another (or others) receives it.

To avoid misunderstandings, the communication must be clear. Otherwise, there might be fighting and hurt feelings. Communication can help to build or destroy relationships. For example, if you express your feelings using kind words, people will probably respond in a more positive way. If you are mean, people might not want to spend time with you. Good communication is also important to expressing what you need.

In general, there are three ways or styles of communication. The first style is the **passive** communication style. A passive person does not offer any opposition even when feeling pressured. The second style is the **aggressive** communication style. An aggressive person is hostile and unfriendly. The third style is the **assertive** communication style. An assertive person communicates in the healthiest way by being direct yet respectful.

Let's think of a situation and how the three types of people would communicate a response. Imagine your brother read your diary and told others about your secrets. A passive communicator wouldn't say anything, but might hide the diary so it wouldn't happen again. An aggressive communicator might scream to her brother, "I hate you." An assertive communicator would tell her brother, "It hurt my feelings that you did this. Please don't do that again."

One key to communication is effective speaking skills. Your **voice volume** is how loud or soft you speak. Your voice volume helps to communicate a message. When you speak with a loud voice, you may be expressing anger. When you speak softly, you might be communicating a secret. The **inflection** in your voice means your tone and pitch. The words "what are you doing" convey different messages depending on your tone and pitch. They can be angry, arrogant, questioning, or upset. To communicate effectively, send "I" messages. This lets you say how you feel without blaming anyone else. Finally, effective speaking skills show **empathy**, or an ability to understand others.

Good communication involves listening skills that show you care about what the speaker is saying. An active listener asks questions to clarify and gives his full attention. He waits until the person is done before speaking, instead of interrupting. A good listener restates the speaker's words, or paraphrases, to show he cares or to clarify something confusing.

Good communication can also involve **body language**, or nonverbal communication. Your facial expressions, gestures, and posture reveal a lot. Winking, narrowing your eyes, and standing up straight are all examples of body language.

Pay attention to the messages you send. Focus on your communication style, speaking skills, listening skills, and body language. Utilizing these skills effectively is key to clear communication.



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1. When two or more people exchange information, they _____.

- _____ 2. There are three communication styles. Which is not considered a style?
 - A. assertive
 - B. annoying
 - C. aggressive
 - D. passive

- _____ 3. Which is considered the healthiest communication style?
 - A. aggressive
 - B. assertive
 - C. passive

- _____ 4. If someone shouted the words, "I hate you!," he probably has a(n) _____ communication style.
 - A. passive
 - B. assertive
 - C. aggressive

- _____ 5. Your tone and pitch are part of your _____.
 - A. body language
 - B. inflection
 - C. voice volume
 - D. empathy

- _____ 6. Which word means an ability to understand others?
 - A. passive
 - B. inflection
 - C. language
 - D. empathy

- _____ 7. Good communication can involve nonverbal cues.
 - A. False
 - B. True

- _____ 8. Which is not an example of body language?
 - A. winking
 - B. yelling
 - C. clapping
 - D. scrunching your eyebrows

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- _____ 9. An effect caused by poor communication might be that
- A. people respond to you in a positive way.
 - B. you build good relationships.
 - C. everyone understands exactly what you need.
 - D. someone's feelings are hurt.
- _____ 10. What is the main idea of this selection?
- A. People should know what to say if their diary is stolen.
 - B. If you are mean, people might not want to spend time with you.
 - C. Good communication is essential in life.
 - D. Good communication can involve body language.

Are there any ways you could improve your ability to communicate?

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Date _____

Angola's War for Independence Day

By Ekaterina Zhdanova-Redman

When was the last time you had a disagreement with someone? How did it turn out? Being able to resolve conflicts is an important skill in daily life, and people have all kinds of ways to fix problems. For some, talking openly about a problem can fix it. Some conflicts seem unfixable. Have you ever had a disagreement like that? For many people, getting into a fight - or worse yet, a war - is the only way to solve some disputes. Do you agree?

One country that's had more than its fair share of conflict and war is Angola. Angola is a country in southwestern Africa. It's a pretty big country with comparatively few people. Angola's population is made up of very distinct tribal and cultural groups, each with very strong feelings about their country.

In the late 16th century, explorers from Portugal arrived on Angola's coast. What they found were native Angolan tribes who had strong disagreements and frequent battles. The Portuguese took advantage of the situation and forced many Angolans into slavery.

The Portuguese stayed on to rule Angola for about 400 years. Their presence and their rule created problems for the Angolans. Portugal's treatment of Angola got worse and worse until the 20th century. In 1928, a man named Antonio de Oliveira Salazar became prime minister of Portugal. Salazar was a dictator, and he sought to strictly control all of Portugal's overseas colonies, including Angola.

Through the Portuguese-led government in Angola, Salazar's regime tried to crush Angola's independence movement. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Portuguese government in Angola had opponents arrested and thrown in jail. The Portuguese military restricted travel in and out of Angola.

Members of one of the opposition groups, called the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, or MPLA, had enough of the Portuguese government. On February 4, 1961, they raided a prison to free some political prisoners. That event began years of violence in Angola's war for independence.

Angola finally got its independence. Portugal had enough of the fighting, so they left the country in 1975. Unfortunately, independence only brought about more violence. Angola's different political groups had strong feelings about how to run their country. Civil war broke out, and it's only been since 2002 that Angolans have experienced any kind of peace.

No one can say whether or not Angola would have independence without the war that started in 1961. But the people of Angola remember that day as a national holiday each year on February 4.



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Angola's War for Independence Day

Questions

- _____ 1. Angola was ruled by what country?
- A. Portugal
 - B. Spain
 - C. England
 - D. United States
- _____ 2. Angolans loved their foreign rulers.
- A. True
 - B. False
- _____ 3. The Salazar regime was kind to Angolans.
- A. False
 - B. True
- _____ 4. In what year did Angola gain independence?
- A. 1965
 - B. 1985
 - C. 1975
 - D. 2005
- _____ 5. What happened on February 4, 1961?
- A. A jail was broken into.
 - B. The prime minister was assassinated.
 - C. Angolans overthrew their government.
 - D. Salazar resigned.
- _____ 6. Independence meant the end of war for Angola.
- A. False
 - B. True
- _____ 7. Portugal ruled Angola for about how long?
- A. 400 years
 - B. 300 years
 - C. 100 years
 - D. 200 years
- _____ 8. Angolans were never forced into slavery.
- A. False
 - B. True
- _____ 9. Which of these sentences from the passage best supports the main idea?
- A. Some conflicts seem unfixable.
 - B. In the late 16th century, explorers from Portugal arrived on Angola's coast.
 - C. Angola is a country in southwestern Africa.
 - D. One country that's had more than its fair share of conflict and war is Angola.

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Bob Barker

By Beth Beutler

"Ladies and gentlemen, please enter your bid."

Can you guess how many times Bob Barker (born December 12, 1923) has said that phrase?

Bob Barker has been the host of the longest running game show in game show history since 1972. Do you know the name of the show? Well then, "C'mon down! You are the next contestant on The Price is Right!"

Bob has met a huge number of people through the years of hosting game shows. He hosted another show, Truth or Consequences, for 19 years. In addition to his hosting duties, he also has served as Executive Producer of the Price is Right since 1987. Only broadcaster Vince Scully has a longer term employment in daytime television.



Although Bob is best known for his hosting responsibilities, he has had the privilege of entertaining in other ways. In 1995, he appeared in NBC's *Something So Right*, playing Mel Harris' father. In 1996, he appeared as himself in the movie *Happy Gilmore*. Overall though, he has been happy to continue to host the popular *Price is Right*, a game show that invites contestants to "come on down" and bid on items, winning or losing prizes based on how well they do. His hosting responsibilities also offer him a place to talk about his concern for animals. At the end of every show, Bob encourages people to help keep the pet population down by spaying or neutering their pets.

CBS showed their appreciation to Bob in a special way in 1998. On March 11, the 5,000 episode was taped. Following the taping, CBS held a ceremony re-dedicating Stage 33 at the historic CBS Television City in Los Angeles as the Bob Barker Studio. This was the first time CBS had dedicated a stage to a performer.

You might think that since Bob has spent so many years in entertainment that he was just born into it. Actually, though, Bob was born in Washington State and actually spent most of his growing years on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota. His mother taught school there until they moved to Springfield, MO. He attended high school there as well as Drury College, where he received a basketball scholarship. He became a Navy fighter pilot for World War II, but the war ended before he saw much action.

After he left the Navy, he went back to college and also started to work at a radio station. He began to host shows that involved the audience, and he became very good at it. He eventually hosted his own show, followed by starting on *Truth or Consequences* in 1956. Bob is still friends with Ralph Edwards, the man who hired him for that job. Every December 21st, they drink a toast at lunch to commemorate the day when Edwards hired Bob for the job.

Much of Bob Barker's life in the industry has been pleasant. He has won various awards, including being listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as television's "Most Durable Performer," and numerous Emmy Awards, among others. One dark time was when he was accused of harassment by one of his coworkers, but he was found not guilty.

Bob was married to Dorothy Jo Gideon from 1945 until her death in 1981. Now he spends much of his time pursuing his love of animals, while continuing to be a delightful host of a perennial favorite game show. He is a vegetarian, crediting that lifestyle with the ability to stay working at his age. He also enjoys learning more about the Civil War, has a black belt in karate, and enjoys playing golf. One of his good friends is Rosie O'Donnell, and Vanna White, hostess on the *Wheel of Fortune*, was one of his contestants on the *Price is Right* years ago! One thing he does not do, ironically, is shop. He has said, "I don't do my own shopping, my housekeeper does that for me, so I'd be doomed if I was a contestant on the show."

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Bob Barker

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1. What show did Bob Barker host before the Price is Right?

_____ 2. Bob loves to shop himself.

- A. False
- B. True

3. Bob credits his ability to keep working to following a _____ diet.

_____ 4. Which of the following celebrities was a contestant on his show?

- A. Vince Scully
- B. Katie Couric
- C. Rosie O'Donnell
- D. Vanna White

5. What is something close to Bob Barker's heart?

6. He and Ralph Edwards drink a toast once a year to commemorate his hiring to host Truth or Consequences. On what date do they do this?

_____ 7. What could be the main idea of this story?

- A. If you do something you love, you could be doing it for a very long time.
- B. Some people have very good luck.
- C. We should not eat meat.
- D. Many celebrities are animal rights activists.

January 6th - the Alternate Christmas

By Brenda B. Covert

In the United States, the twelve days of Christmas begin on December 13, so that the twelfth day lands on Christmas Day. According to TV, radio, and print advertising, those twelve days are for shopping, shopping, and maybe a little more shopping.

Other cultures celebrate the twelve days of Christmas too. However, December 25 is considered to be the first day of Christmas, and the twelfth day is January 6. December 25 was adopted in the fourth century by the Western Christian Church as the date of the Feast of Christ's birth. The Eastern Christian Church celebrates January 6 instead. It is believed that this difference resulted in the tradition of the Twelve Days of Christmas.

On January 6 is the Feast of Epiphany, also called The Festival of the Three Kings (or Magi) or simply Twelfth Day. According to tradition, the names of the kings are Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. On the night when Jesus was born, these three kings saw a bright star and followed it to Bethlehem. There they found the infant Jesus and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



To celebrate Three Kings Day in Bavaria and Austria, children dress up as kings from New Year's Day through January 6. They go from door to door holding up a large star, caroling and singing a Three Kings' song. You might say it's a little like the U.S. Halloween custom of trick-or-treating, because the costumed children receive money or sweets. However, these star singers are actually collecting charitable donations. At one time the money went to unemployed craftsmen and veterans; nowadays it goes to a church or Third World charities.

In Puerto Rico, children receive gifts on Three Kings Day. Their gifts are not delivered by Santa Claus, but by three kings who, like Santa, reward good children. Puerto Rican children don't hang stockings by the chimney; rather, they get some hay, straw, or grass and place it in boxes under their beds the night before Three Kings Day. It is food for the kings' camels. Instead of the American tradition of milk for Santa, Puerto Rican children set out a bowl of water for those thirsty camels! In the morning the children look to see what gifts were left by the kings. Good children get candies, sweets, or toys. Naughty children find dirt or charcoal in their boxes.

In Mexico Three Kings Day is called *el DÃ-a de los Reyes*. Children hope that the three kings will come bringing gifts for them as they did for the Christ child. The custom in some regions is to leave out shoes into which treasures may be left by the visiting kings.

The traditional treat for the holiday is the *Rosca de Reyes*, a crown-shaped sweet bread decorated with jewel-like candied fruits. Before baking, tiny figures of babies are hidden in the dough. Whoever gets a piece of the bread containing a baby is expected to host the next party within a month's time.

People in France also follow the custom of baking a cake with a surprise inside for Three Kings Day, as do the people of Spain.

Parades and other festivities are held on the eve of Three Kings Day in Spain, where three men dressed as kings ride more often in decorated cars than on camels and throw tiny hard candies to the children. The children have already written their letters to the "royal postman," much as American children write to Santa. They believe that the royal postman delivers their letters to the three kings.

While Spaniards traditionally get together on Christmas Eve to eat, they save the gift exchange for Three Kings Day. Some lucky children receive presents on both Christmas and Three Kings Day!

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The people of Italy celebrate Three Kings Day with a religious service that is usually attended by the entire family. Afterwards children open the gifts brought, not by the three kings, but by *La Befana*, an ugly witch who rides a broomstick and leaves coal for naughty children.

The people of Chile and other South American countries celebrate Three Kings Day with colorful parades and the tradition of gift-giving as well.

In the Philippines, Christmas celebrations begin December 16 with a religious service, the first of many during the season. People display star lanterns in their windows. The star lantern represents the star of Bethlehem that the three kings followed. Lantern festivals can be found all across the Philippines at this time of year. On January 6, they have parades that present both the three kings and also the wicked King Herod (who according to scripture wanted to kill the newborn babe).

If you are one of those people who wish Christmas would never end, you might want to urge your family and friends to celebrate the twelve days of Christmas. You could incorporate some new traditions into your festivities and have an extra-long holiday season!

January 6th - the Alternate Christmas

Questions

_____ 1. Which title best suits this story?

- A. The Longest Holiday Ever
- B. What Three Kings Day Means to Me
- C. Customs of Three Kings Day
- D. Why We Should Celebrate Three Kings Day

_____ 2. In Puerto Rico, children leave treats for:

- A. Santa
- B. camels
- C. reindeer
- D. three kings

3. In how many continents is this holiday celebrated? Name them.

4. Which three countries have holiday customs that are similar to Halloween customs in the United States?

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- _____ 5. Children in Central and South American countries do not hang stockings by the chimney. Which of the following seems the likeliest reason why they don't?
- A. They don't wear stockings.
 - B. They have no chimneys due to the warm climate.
 - C. They prefer the kinds of gifts that fit into shoes.
 - D. They don't believe in Santa.

- _____ 6. What one tradition do most of the countries honor for the holiday season?
- A. singing carols
 - B. leaving food out for the camels
 - C. a beneficent person bestowing gifts on all the good children
 - D. having parades

7. Which two countries mentioned in this story follow the custom of baking non-edible items inside a dessert?

8. Which country do you conclude has the longest holiday season?

America: A Melting Pot of Cultures

By Brandi Waters

The United States is a country of immigrants. It is a place where people from all over the world come to build a better life. Some immigrants bring their families. Some bring a few of their favorite things. Others come alone with nothing but determination. One thing that every immigrant brings with them is their culture. A person's culture is the customs and beliefs that they hold. A person's culture is strongly tied to the country where they grew up. It is tied to their relationship with their family. Many people come to America from so many different places all over the world. For this reason, many people call America a "melting pot" of cultures.

The "melting pot" idea compares America to a giant soup pot. Each immigrant is an ingredient added to the pot. Each immigrant adds their own flavor. After each immigrant comes to America, they connect to other people. People learn about each others' culture. This is the beginning of the soup pot of America melting together.

American immigration began in 1607 with the colony of Jamestown. In 1620, another group of people left England to build a settlement in America. These people called themselves Pilgrims. They wanted to go to a place where they could practice their religion freely. They wanted to be free of the control of the English government. Both of these groups worked hard to build good settlements.

The settlements were successful. Many more people left their homes in Europe to build a better life in America. They came from England and the Netherlands. They came from Sweden and France. They came from Spain. Many came from Ireland and Germany. Many people came to America from Africa, too. The Africans were captured and brought to America against their will. When they arrived, they were sold as slaves to the colonists. By 1770, more than two million people had moved to America. One-fourth of the people were slaves.

Later on, more people came to the United States than ever before. Factories were being built in Europe. Cities there were becoming dirty and crowded. People wanted a better life. Many of the people moved to America.

During the same time, Chinese immigrants also came to America. They came to the west coast of the United States. People were arriving in America on both coasts. They began to spread out across America. Many people settled in a place that reminded them of their homeland. America was a land of people from all over the world. America became a melting pot of cultures.

In cities all over America, you can see the different cultures that formed our country. Many things that you may think of as being "American" are really from a foreign culture. Some of the best examples of this are the foods that we eat. Pizza and spaghetti are foods that all Americans know and love. But both foods are recipes from Italy. Baseball is an all-American sport. But the hot dogs that you eat during the game are a food that was brought to America by German immigrants.

Over time, pizza and hot dogs have become a part of what is considered to be American food. In the same way, different groups of people have come together to define what an American is. An American can be a person of any background. An American can be of any faith. An American can be of any skin color. They can speak English plainly. They can speak English with an accent. Some may speak no English at all. American culture is made up of the traditions of our families. It is made of our food and the music that we listen to. American culture changes as more people come to America. Each new immigrant adds something new to American culture. The flavor in the soup of America's melting pot is always changing!



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America: A Melting Pot of Cultures

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- _____ 1. What is a person's culture?
- A. the relationships the build with other people
 - B. their homeland
 - C. skin color
 - D. their beliefs and customs
- _____ 2. Why did the Pilgrims immigrate to America?
- A. they wanted the freedom to practice their religion as they believed was right
 - B. to own more land
 - C. to find a place that reminded them of England
 - D. they were brought to America as slaves
- _____ 3. How many people had come to America by 1770?
- A. two million
 - B. ten million
 - C. five million
 - D. four million
- _____ 4. Which "American" food was brought to America by German immigrants?
- A. ice cream
 - B. hot dogs
 - C. tacos
 - D. pizza
- _____ 5. America is often called _____.
- A. a country of immigrants
 - B. a melting pot of cultures
 - C. all of the above
- _____ 6. What is the main idea of the story?
- A. Food is an example of culture.
 - B. Over time, pizza and hot dogs have become part of what is considered to be American food.
 - C. The United States is a country of immigrants.
 - D. Every immigrant brings with them him a part of his own culture and adds something new to America's culture.
- _____ 7. *America is a melting pot of cultures.* This statement compares America to a pot of soup. What type of figurative language is used in this statement?
- A. Metaphor
 - B. Onomatopoeia
 - C. Hyperbole
 - D. Alliteration