Communicating with Technology

by Sophia Tutorial

WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will think about how you use technology to communicate. Throughout all of human history, there have been four major communication revolutions. About two million years ago, humans first began to develop the ability to speak in complex ways. About 5,000 years ago, humans first developed writing. About 500 to 600 years ago, humans developed the first printing presses. Today, we are living in the fourth communications revolution by utilizing a new technology -- specifically, digital communication. Given how ubiquitous digital communication has become in such a short time, it would be easy to fail to recognize how transformational of a time we are living in is. You will have an opportunity in this lesson to reflect on the power of digital communication and consider how you will use it. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Introduction
2. Communicating with Technology
3. Finding Your Voice
4. Steps to Presentation Success

BEFORE YOU START

Why is technology important in your life?

1. Introduction

In the past few units of this course, you've explored ways to identify credible sources and use critical thinking to understand them better. You've practiced critical thinking by reading sources and considering questions related to the fight for civil rights in the United States. Along the way, you've learned lessons from U.S. history about how people used agility, communication, technology, and problem solving in the past. These are lessons that we can apply to our own experience in the present and in the future.

In the final phase of our study of U.S. history, we'll consider how technology has changed the world around us and what lessons we can learn from these periods of change. We will start by exploring military technology, then move on to the worlds of medicine, communication, and politics. We will see how people use agility to create new technology—and how they use that new technology for problem solving. In the final touchstone of this course, you'll also use your technology and communication skills to create a presentation based on the sources you examined earlier in the course. You've done the research to develop a solid argument; now it's time to communicate it to your audience.

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2. Communicating with Technology

Communication is a critical skill for success in the workplace and in everyday life. Whether you're writing, speaking, or even just raising an eyebrow at someone, you communicate every day with the people around you.

So far in our study of history, we've seen the importance of communication during difficult times. Communication can help workers stay agile in a changing economy and can help activists make a case for lasting change in American society. In this challenge, we're going to look at how to create and communicate a message effectively—and how you can use technology to do so.

Let's begin by taking a look at the role oral communication plays in the workplace.

THINK ABOUT IT

How can you communicate in a clear and compelling way with the people around you?

3. Finding Your Voice

Oral communication in the workplace can take many forms, from a casual conversation to an informal meeting to a formal presentation. Effective oral communication helps with securing new business and updating current clients. As an essential part of team collaboration, it also affects employee satisfaction and company leadership. Communication helps employees provide feedback or ideas to managers and helps managers keep their teams updated on policies and company strategies. This essential skill can even help you advance your career, since good communication is among the top skills employers look for in new hires (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2018).

Presentations like the one you'll make at the end of this unit are a way to bring your oral and written communication skills together. In the workplace, presentations might be formal (e.g., given at a conference or a board meeting) or informal (e.g., given at a staff meeting or a peer training). Either way, effective presentations require preparation. Planning, research, and organization will help you craft a clear message. Your goal with any presentation is to get an idea across in a way that is compelling and convincing.

4. Steps to Presentation Success

Whether it's for school or work, your presentation will be stronger if you follow a few simple steps from the start.

Step	Description
1. Consider Your Audience and Purpose	To make an impact with your presentation, you need to consider who you're talking to. Will they be more likely to respond to a formal and professional tone, or will being more casual and friendly help you better connect with them? Once you know who your audience is, take a moment to think about the purpose of your presentation. Are you informing the audience about an issue? Persuading them to agree with

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	your point of view? Trying to convince them to take a particular action? Once you know your purpose, you'll know what the main idea of your presentation is, and you'll be able to make sure the information you include supports it.
2. Do Your Research	Thoroughly researching your presentation topic is important for two reasons. First, you need to provide solid evidence to effectively communicate with your audience. In the workplace, this might mean anything from the latest statistics for your team's sales performance to quotes from client satisfaction surveys. For your presentation in this course, your evidence will come from your primary and secondary sources. Regardless of the form your research takes, it will make your presentation more convincing for your audience. Second, thoroughly researching your topic can help you feel more confident as you're preparing for a presentation. When you know your facts, you'll be more comfortable in front of the audience. It will be easier for you to call on your agility skill as you answer audience questions and participate in discussions after your presentation is over.
3. Organize and Coordinate	Just as when you write an essay or a report, you need to make sure to organize your thoughts for a clear presentation. The good news is that presentation technology like PowerPoint makes this easy. Including a topic for each slide will help you deliver a clear, concise, and focused message.

Over the next few lessons, we're going to look at how technology has changed one specific aspect of American society over time: the military. Leaders in the military are always looking for ways to avoid "fighting the last war," and developing weapons and defense technology is a way to create forward-thinking rather than backward-looking strategies.

SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that we are living in the midst of a digital communication revolution. The **introduction** explained that this unit considers the effect of this revolution on four aspects of American life: the military, healthcare, communications, and politics. As these examples will show, learning how to **communicate with technology** is a critical skill for personal and professional success. You will therefore practice **finding your voice** by creating a formal presentation at the end of the unit, using the **steps to presentation success** as a guide.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: Strategic Education, Inc. 2020. Learn from the Past, Prepare for the Future.

REFERENCES

Employers Want to See These Attributes on Students' Resumes (2018, December 12). National Association of Colleges and Employers. www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/employers-want-to-see-these-attributes-on-students-resumes

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