

# How We Communicate on the Job

*by Essential Skills*



TRY IT

Let's see if you can identify the formal and informal communication that occurs in the scenario below.

It's 7 p.m. and Tanika is checking in for her shift as a nurse at the hospital. She takes the elevator up to her floor with two other nurses she's worked with before, and they start discussing an upcoming clearance sale on nursing uniforms. After arriving on her floor, Tanika says hello to the other nurses on the floor and then gets verbal reports from the day-shift nurses about the condition of each patient she will be tending to that night, asking for clarification when necessary. She also engages in small talk with some of the nurses during their reports.

From the reports, Tanika learns that her top priority is a 25-year-old man who had his appendix removed earlier in the day. Entering his room, she greets him with a warm smile, introduces herself as his new nurse, and takes his vitals (temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure). Everything appears fine except the man's blood pressure, which is significantly elevated. Although Tanika is concerned, she maintains her calm demeanor as she excuses herself for a moment to call the doctor and explain the situation.

As the doctor suggests, Tanika enters a request for blood work into a computer program that alerts an on-site lab technician to come and take samples from the patient; within minutes, she receives a message in the program alerting her that someone is on the way.



THINK ABOUT IT

How did formal and informal communication overlap in this scenario?

Think about examples of formal and informal communication you engage in at work, school, or at home. How does your form of communication change with who you interact with?