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ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified

EXPERT COMPUTER COURSE

SOFT SKILLS

Topics Covered:

#	Topic
1	What are Soft Skills? — Overview and Importance
2	Effective Communication — Features and 7 Cs
3	Communication Skills & Call Handling Skills
4	Listening Skills — Types and Tips
5	Corporate Culture
6	CRM (Customer Relationship Management) Concepts
7	Selling Skills
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9	Vocabulary Development
10	Pronunciation
11	Reading Skills
12	Listening and Speaking Skills
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16	Quick Revision + Important MCQ Questions

SECTION 1: WHAT ARE SOFT SKILLS?

1.1 Definition of Soft Skills

> *Soft Skills are interpersonal and social abilities that determine how effectively a person interacts with others, communicates, and performs in a workplace. They are people skills, character traits, and social intelligence — as opposed to Hard Skills which are technical or job-specific abilities.*

Soft Skills	Hard Skills
Interpersonal, social, communication abilities	Technical, job-specific, measurable abilities
Communication, teamwork, leadership, empathy	Coding, accounting, data analysis, machine operation
Difficult to measure — shown in behaviour and attitude	Easy to measure — tested in exams and certifications
Generally applicable across all jobs and industries	Specific to particular roles or industries
Developed through practice, experience, attitude	Learned through education, training, courses
Examples: Listening, problem-solving, time management	Examples: MS Excel, Python, bookkeeping, carpentry

1.2 Why Soft Skills Matter

- 85% of job success comes from soft skills; only 15% from technical skills (Harvard study)
- Employers rate communication, teamwork, and attitude as more important than technical knowledge
- Promotions and leadership roles are won primarily by people with strong soft skills
- Good soft skills reduce workplace conflict, improve collaboration, and increase productivity
- Essential for customer-facing roles: sales, support, teaching, management, healthcare

Soft Skill Category	Examples
Communication Skills	Speaking clearly, writing effectively, listening actively, presenting confidently
Interpersonal Skills	Empathy, team work, conflict resolution, networking, rapport building
Leadership Skills	Decision making, motivation, delegation, accountability, strategic thinking
Self-Management	Time management, stress management, self-discipline, emotional intelligence
Critical Thinking	Problem solving, analytical thinking, creativity, innovation, judgement
Adaptability	Flexibility, open-mindedness, learning agility, handling change and uncertainty

SECTION 2: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION — FEATURES AND 7 CS

2.1 What is Communication?

> *Communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, and feelings between a sender and a receiver through a medium, in a way that is understood by both. Effective communication means the message is understood as intended.*

Element	Description	Example
Sender	Person who initiates and sends the message	Teacher explaining a concept to students
Message	The information, idea, or feeling being communicated	The concept of networking being taught
Encoding	Sender converts thoughts into words, symbols, or actions	Teacher chooses words and examples to explain networking
Channel / Medium	The pathway through which the message travels	Speech (verbal), whiteboard (visual), email (written)
Decoding	Receiver interprets and understands the message	Students comprehend the networking explanation
Receiver	Person who receives and interprets the message	The students in the class
Feedback	Response from receiver confirming understanding (or not)	Students ask questions or nod in agreement
Noise	Any interference that distorts or blocks the message	Loud fan noise, poor audio, jargon misunderstood

2.2 Types of Communication

Type	Description	Examples
Verbal Communication	Using spoken words to convey messages	Face-to-face conversation, phone call, meeting, presentation, interview
Written Communication	Using written words, symbols, or text	Email, letter, report, WhatsApp message, memo, notice, contract
Non-Verbal Communication	Body language, facial expressions, gestures, posture, appearance	Nodding agreement, eye contact, crossed arms, smiling, tone of voice
Visual Communication	Communicating through images, charts, and graphics	Flowcharts, diagrams, videos, infographics, presentations
Formal Communication	Follows official channels and hierarchy of the organisation	Official letters, board meetings, annual reports, policy documents
Informal Communication	Casual, unofficial interaction between people	Chatting at lunch, WhatsApp groups, water cooler conversation (grapevine)

2.3 The 7 Cs of Effective Communication

> *The 7 Cs are a checklist for effective communication — each 'C' represents a quality that makes communication more professional, clear, and impactful.*

C	Quality	Description	Example
1st C	Clear	Message should have one clear purpose — avoid ambiguity	Instead of 'Meet sometime' say 'Let's meet Monday 10 AM in Conference Room B'
2nd C	Concise	Use minimum words to convey maximum meaning — no unnecessary filler	Instead of 'Due to the fact that' say 'Because'
3rd C	Concrete	Back your message with specific facts, data, and examples	Instead of 'Sales grew' say 'Sales grew 23% in Q3 compared to last year'
4th C	Correct	Accurate grammar, facts, and spelling — no errors	Proofread emails; verify data before sharing in report
5th C	Coherent	Logical, well-organised flow — ideas connected sensibly	Introduction → Main Points → Conclusion structure in emails
6th C	Complete	Includes all necessary information — no critical detail missing	A meeting invitation includes date, time, location, agenda, attendees
7th C	Courteous	Respectful, polite, empathetic tone — consider receiver's perspective	'Could you please review this?' rather than 'Review this immediately'

> **Memory Trick:** Remember: Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, Complete, Courteous — the 7 Cs. Many exams ask you to name all 7 Cs.

2.4 Features of Effective Communication

Feature	Description
Clarity	Message is easy to understand — simple vocabulary, clear sentences
Brevity	Short and to the point — respects the receiver's time
Precision	Exact, accurate information — no vague generalities
Objectivity	Based on facts, not personal bias or emotion
Persuasiveness	Ability to convince or influence the receiver
Appropriate Tone	Formal with superiors; friendly with peers; empathetic with clients
Active Voice	Prefer active ('I will do this') over passive ('This will be done by me')
Two-way Process	Communication is complete only when feedback is received
Purpose-Oriented	Every communication should have a clear goal
Receiver-Focused	Written/spoken in a way the specific receiver will understand

SECTION 3: COMMUNICATION SKILLS & CALL HANDLING SKILLS

3.1 Professional Communication Skills

Skill	Description	How to Develop
Active Listening	Fully focusing on and understanding what someone is saying — not just waiting to speak	Maintain eye contact; don't interrupt; paraphrase back; ask clarifying questions
Assertiveness	Expressing needs and opinions clearly and respectfully — without being aggressive or passive	Use 'I' statements; state needs directly; maintain calm, firm tone
Empathy	Understanding and sharing another person's feelings and perspective	Listen without judging; acknowledge their feelings; avoid dismissing concerns
Clarity	Being understood exactly as intended	Avoid jargon; use examples; check understanding: 'Does that make sense?'
Confidence	Speaking with self-assurance and composure	Maintain eye contact; steady voice; good posture; prepare thoroughly
Adaptability	Adjusting communication style to different audiences and situations	Formal with senior management; simplified with new employees; technical with experts
Feedback	Giving and receiving constructive criticism professionally	Be specific, timely, balanced (positive + improvement); receive without defensiveness

3.2 Call Handling Skills

> *Call handling refers to the skills required to manage telephone conversations professionally — especially in customer service, help desk, and sales environments. The caller cannot see you, making voice tone and clarity critical.*

Call Phase	Best Practice	What to Avoid
Answering	Answer within 3 rings. Greet professionally: 'Good morning! This is [Name] from [Company], how may I help you?'	Letting phone ring too long; casual greeting; saying 'Hello?' without identification
Active Listening	Don't interrupt. Take notes. Confirm understanding: 'I understand you are having trouble with...?'	Multitasking while caller speaks; interrupting; assuming you know the issue
Tone and Voice	Speak clearly, moderately slow, pleasant tone — smile while speaking (it shows in voice)	Speaking too fast; monotone; rude or disinterested tone
Hold Protocol	Ask permission before holding: 'May I place you on hold for 2 minutes?'. Return within promised time.	Putting on hold without asking; leaving on hold without updates
Handling Complaints	Stay calm, empathise, apologise for inconvenience, focus on solution	Becoming defensive; blaming others; making

Call Phase	Best Practice	What to Avoid
		excuses; arguing with customer
Transferring Calls	Tell caller why transferring, who they will speak with. Stay on line until other person answers.	Blind transfer (just connecting without warning); transferring to wrong department
Closing the Call	Summarise action points: 'So I will email you the details by tomorrow, correct?' Say goodbye warmly.	Ending abruptly; not confirming follow-up actions; hanging up mid-conversation

- LARC Model for difficult calls: Listen → Acknowledge → Resolve → Confirm
- Never say: 'I don't know' — say 'Let me find out for you' or 'I'll connect you with someone who can help'
- Never say: 'That's not my department' — say 'I'll make sure you speak with the right person'

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SECTION 4: LISTENING SKILLS

4.1 What is Listening?

> *Listening is the active process of receiving, interpreting, and responding to verbal messages. It is different from simply HEARING (passive physical process). Effective listening is a conscious mental activity requiring focus and effort.*

Hearing	Listening
Passive — happens automatically	Active — requires conscious effort and attention
Physical process — sound waves reach ears	Mental process — brain processes meaning
No effort required — automatic	Requires focus, concentration, and engagement
Cannot be turned off	Can be trained and improved
Example: You hear background noise	Example: You understand and interpret a lecture

4.2 Types of Listening

Type	Description	Example Situation
Active Listening	Fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what is said — most valuable type	Job interview, counselling session, important meeting, lecture
Passive Listening	Receiving information without much response or engagement — minimal effort	Listening to background music while studying
Critical / Evaluative Listening	Analysing and evaluating the message — judging credibility, logic, and evidence	Listening to a debate, advertisement, or political speech
Empathetic / Therapeutic Listening	Listening to understand feelings and provide emotional support	Listening to a friend's personal problem; counselling
Appreciative Listening	Listening for pleasure or enjoyment — not for information	Enjoying music, poetry, storytelling, humour
Comprehensive Listening	Listening to understand and retain information — academic focus	Attending lectures, presentations, instructions
Informational Listening	Listening specifically to learn new facts and data	News broadcast, training session, documentary
Selective Listening	Hearing only what you want to hear — ignoring the rest	Only hearing the good parts of feedback; hearing own name mentioned

4.3 Tips for Effective Listening

Tip	Description
Give full attention	Put away phone; stop other activities; face the speaker; eliminate distractions
Maintain eye contact	Shows respect and engagement; demonstrates you are focused on speaker

Tip	Description
Don't interrupt	Allow speaker to complete thought before responding — interrupting disrupts message flow
Avoid prejudging	Don't decide your response before speaker has finished — listen completely
Use non-verbal cues	Nod occasionally; lean slightly forward; open posture — signals attentiveness to speaker
Ask clarifying questions	Ask for clarification when unclear: 'Could you elaborate on...?' or 'What do you mean by...?'
Paraphrase and summarise	Repeat key points in your own words: 'So what you're saying is...' — confirms understanding
Take notes	For lectures and presentations — note key points; review soon after
Listen for main ideas	Focus on central themes, not just individual words or details
Manage emotional reactions	Stay calm even if you disagree — emotional reactions block listening
Avoid mental wandering	When mind drifts, consciously refocus — bring attention back to speaker
Identify speaker's purpose	Is speaker informing, persuading, entertaining? Understanding purpose improves comprehension

4.4 Academic Listening — Lectures

> *Academic listening involves listening to lectures, presentations, and academic talks with the specific goal of understanding, retaining, and using the information for study purposes.*

- Preview: Read about the topic before the lecture — activate prior knowledge to follow better
- Cornell Note-Taking: Divide page into sections — notes during lecture, key words/questions on left margin, summary at bottom
- Note key signals: 'The most important point is...', 'In summary...', 'Three reasons...' — signal main ideas
- Distinguish main ideas from examples: Write main points, note examples briefly
- Listen for emphasis: Repetition, slower pace, louder voice, writing on board = important content
- Review notes: Rewrite and review within 24 hours — strengthens memory retention significantly

4.5 Listening to Talks and Presentations

- Know the structure: Introduction → Main Points → Conclusion — anticipate upcoming content
- Follow the presenter's signposting: 'First...', 'In addition...', 'However...', 'In conclusion...'
- Notice visual aids: Slides, charts, and diagrams reinforce spoken content — link visuals to words
- Prepare questions: Jot down questions while listening — ask during Q&A

- Focus on speaker's purpose: Informing? Persuading? Training? Understanding purpose guides your listening

4.6 Listening to Announcements

- Be prepared: Announcements often come unexpectedly — stay alert in relevant contexts (airports, public places)
- Focus on key information: Who, What, When, Where, Why — the essential 5 Ws
- Listen for action words: 'Passengers are requested to...', 'All staff must...', 'Please proceed to...'
- Write it down: For important announcements (meeting rooms, flight gates), note details immediately
- Ask for repetition politely: 'Could you repeat that please?' if missed — don't guess

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SECTION 5: CORPORATE CULTURE

5.1 What is Corporate Culture?

> *Corporate Culture (also called Organisational Culture) is the set of shared values, beliefs, behaviours, practices, attitudes, and norms that characterise an organisation. It is 'how things are done around here' — the personality of the organisation.*

Element	Description	Example
Values	Core principles guiding decisions and behaviour	Integrity, Innovation, Customer First, Excellence
Norms	Unwritten rules of acceptable behaviour	Always greet colleagues, be punctual, be responsive to emails
Symbols	Visual elements representing the organisation	Logo, uniforms, office design, annual awards ceremony
Language	Specific vocabulary, acronyms, and terms used internally	'EOD' (End of Day), 'KPI', 'Onboarding', 'Synergy'
Rituals	Regular practices and ceremonies	Monday morning standup, annual team outing, Town Hall meetings
Stories	Narratives about the company's history and heroes	'How the founder started the company in a garage'

5.2 Types of Corporate Culture

Culture Type	Description	Example Organisation
Clan Culture	Family-like atmosphere; strong teamwork; mentoring; collaborative; employee wellbeing focus	Technology startups; family businesses; HR-focused companies
Adhocracy Culture	Entrepreneurial, innovative, risk-taking; encourages creativity; fast-moving	Google, Apple, Tesla — innovation-first companies
Market Culture	Results-driven, competitive, customer-focused; emphasis on achieving targets	Sales-heavy companies, investment banks, Amazon
Hierarchy Culture	Structured, formal, rule-following; clear procedures; stability and efficiency	Government organisations, large manufacturing companies, military

5.3 Workplace Etiquette

Area	Professional Behaviour
Punctuality	Arrive on time for work and meetings — value others' time
Dress Code	Follow company dress code — formal, business casual, or smart casual as required
Communication	Use professional language in emails and meetings; avoid slang and offensive language

Area	Professional Behaviour
Meeting Etiquette	Come prepared; don't be on phone; contribute; let others finish speaking
Workplace Conduct	Respect colleagues; avoid gossip; maintain confidentiality; support team members
Digital Etiquette	Professional email signature; reply within 24 hours; don't use personal social media during work
Conflict Resolution	Address issues directly and calmly; go through proper channels; avoid public confrontations

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SECTION 6: CRM (CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT) CONCEPTS

6.1 What is CRM?

> *CRM (Customer Relationship Management) is a strategy, process, and technology that businesses use to manage and analyse interactions with current and potential customers with the goal of improving customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention.*

CRM Concept	Description
Customer Satisfaction	Meeting or exceeding customer expectations — measured via surveys, ratings, Net Promoter Score
Customer Loyalty	Long-term preference for your brand — repeat business; resistant to competitors
Customer Retention	Keeping existing customers coming back — costs 5× less than acquiring new customers
Customer Acquisition	Attracting new customers through marketing, sales, and referrals
Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)	Total revenue expected from a customer over their entire relationship with the company
Touch Points	Every interaction a customer has with your brand (website, call, store, email, social media)
Customer Journey	The complete experience from first awareness to purchase to post-purchase support

6.2 CRM Software and Technology

CRM Software	Company	Used For
Salesforce	Salesforce Inc.	Most popular enterprise CRM — sales, service, marketing automation
Zoho CRM	Zoho Corporation (Indian company)	Popular in India — affordable; good for SMEs
HubSpot CRM	HubSpot	Free CRM — lead management, email tracking, deals pipeline
Microsoft Dynamics 365	Microsoft	Enterprise CRM integrated with Office 365
SAP CRM	SAP	Large enterprises — integrated with SAP ERP
Freshdesk / Freshsales	Freshworks (Indian company)	Customer support and sales CRM

6.3 Communication in CRM

- First Contact Resolution (FCR): Resolving customer issue in the first interaction — reduces callbacks and frustration
- Customer Service Standards: Response time targets, resolution time, escalation procedures
- Empathy in CRM: Acknowledge customer frustration; apologise genuinely; focus on resolution

- Personalisation: Address customer by name; reference previous interactions; know their history
- Follow-up: Check if issue was resolved to satisfaction; builds trust and loyalty
- Feedback Loops: Collect customer feedback → analyse → improve service processes

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SECTION 7: SELLING SKILLS

7.1 What is Selling?

> *Selling is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to a potential buyer (prospect) and persuading them to make a purchase. Modern selling focuses on solving customer problems rather than just pushing products.*

Selling Stage	Description	Key Skill Needed
Prospecting	Identifying potential customers who may need your product/service	Research, networking, lead generation
Building Rapport	Establishing trust and a positive relationship before selling	Listening, empathy, small talk, common ground
Needs Assessment	Understanding what the customer actually needs through questions	Questioning skills, active listening
Presentation	Showing how your product/service addresses their specific needs	Communication, product knowledge, storytelling
Handling Objections	Addressing customer concerns and doubts professionally	Empathy, problem-solving, product knowledge
Closing	Getting the customer to commit to purchase	Confidence, timing, negotiation
Follow-up	Post-sale communication for satisfaction and repeat business	Relationship management, communication

7.2 Handling Objections

Common Objection	Response Strategy
'It's too expensive'	Emphasise value and ROI: 'Let me show you what you get for that investment...' Compare cost of NOT solving the problem
'I need to think about it'	Find the real concern: 'Of course. What specific aspect would you like to think over?' — address that concern
'I'm already using another product'	Ask about limitations: 'What does it do well? What would you improve?' — position your product's advantages
'I don't have time right now'	Respect their time, schedule follow-up: 'Completely understand. When would be a better time — Thursday or Friday?'
'I need to talk to my manager'	Offer to help: 'Happy to speak with them together. Would that be helpful?'

- SPIN Selling: Situation questions → Problem questions → Implication questions → Need-Payoff questions
- FAB Technique: Feature → Advantage → Benefit (always translate features to customer benefits)

SECTION 8: BEHAVIOURAL SKILLS

8.1 What are Behavioural Skills?

> *Behavioural Skills are the habits, attitudes, and personal qualities that determine how a person interacts with others and approaches work. They include emotional intelligence, time management, stress management, and interpersonal behaviour.*

Behavioural Skill	Description	How to Demonstrate at Work
Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ)	Awareness and management of your own emotions and understanding others' emotions — 4 components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management	Stay calm in conflict; acknowledge others' feelings; give constructive feedback; manage stress
Time Management	Planning and organising tasks to make efficient use of available time	Prioritise with Eisenhower Matrix (urgent/important); use to-do lists; avoid procrastination; meet deadlines
Teamwork	Working cooperatively with others toward a common goal — sharing responsibility, supporting teammates	Contribute fairly; listen to others' ideas; help when needed; celebrate team success
Problem Solving	Identifying problems, analysing causes, generating solutions, and implementing fixes	Define problem clearly; gather facts; brainstorm solutions; evaluate options; act; review
Adaptability / Flexibility	Adjusting positively to changing situations, new information, and unexpected challenges	Accept change without resistance; learn new skills willingly; stay productive during uncertainty
Professionalism	Maintaining high standards of behaviour, ethics, and attitude at work	Be punctual; honour commitments; dress appropriately; maintain confidentiality
Initiative	Taking action proactively without being told — identifying opportunities and problems independently	Volunteer for new tasks; suggest improvements; go beyond minimum requirements
Resilience	Recovering quickly from setbacks, failures, and criticism without giving up	View failures as learning; maintain positivity; persevere despite obstacles

8.2 Emotional Intelligence (EI)

> *Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand, manage, and effectively use your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is often more important than IQ for career success.*

EI Component	Description	Example
Self-Awareness	Knowing your own emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and how they affect others	Recognising when you are becoming stressed and pausing before reacting
Self-Regulation	Controlling impulses; thinking before acting; managing emotional reactions	Not sending an angry email; staying calm in a crisis; controlling frustration
Motivation	Inner drive to achieve beyond external rewards — goal-directed, persistent	Staying committed when facing obstacles; consistently exceeding expectations
Empathy	Understanding others' emotional states and perspectives — essential for leadership	Understanding a colleague's stress about a deadline; adapting communication accordingly
Social Skills	Managing relationships, influencing others, navigating social networks	Conflict resolution, teamwork, persuasion, inspiring and leading others

> **EI in Interviews:** Behavioural interview questions test EI: 'Tell me about a time you handled a difficult colleague' — answer shows self-regulation and empathy. Use STAR format: Situation → Task → Action → Result.

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SECTION 9: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

9.1 Why Vocabulary Matters

> *Vocabulary is the foundation of all communication. A rich, precise vocabulary allows you to express ideas more clearly, understand complex texts, sound more professional, and adapt to different contexts.*

Strategy	Description	How to Practice
Read Extensively	Reading exposes you to vocabulary in natural context — best passive learning method	Read newspapers (The Hindu, Times of India), books, professional articles, industry journals daily
Contextual Learning	Learn words in context (sentence) not just isolated definitions	When encountering new word: read full sentence; infer meaning; check dictionary; note example
Word Families	Learn root word + all its forms: noun, verb, adjective, adverb	'Communicate': communication (n), communicative (adj), communicatively (adv)
Collocations	Words that naturally go together — more useful than individual words	'Make a decision' not 'do a decision'; 'heavy rain' not 'strong rain'
Word Lists by Topic	Learn vocabulary grouped by professional theme	Business English: stakeholder, deliverable, benchmark, KPI, synergy, leverage
Spaced Repetition	Review new words at increasing intervals — maximises memory retention	Anki flashcard app; review on Day 1, Day 3, Day 7, Day 14, Day 30
Active Use	Actually using new words in speech and writing — most effective way to retain	Try to use 3 new words per day in emails or conversations

9.2 Professional Vocabulary — Business English

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example Usage
Stakeholder	Anyone with an interest in or affected by a project/decision	We need to inform all stakeholders about the delay
KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	Metric used to measure success toward a goal	Our KPI for this quarter is reducing response time to under 2 hours
Deliverable	A product or result that must be produced and delivered	The deliverable for this project is a 20-page technical report
Benchmark	A standard or point of reference for comparison	We need to benchmark our performance against industry standards
Escalate	Raise an issue to a higher authority for resolution	If the client is dissatisfied, please escalate to the manager
Synergy	Combined effort produces greater result than individual efforts	The merger created synergy between the two teams

Word / Phrase	Meaning	Example Usage
Leverage	Use something to maximum advantage	We can leverage our existing customer base for the new product
Proactive	Taking initiative before a problem arises	We need a proactive approach to customer complaints
Bottom line	The final outcome or most important factor	The bottom line is we need to increase revenue by 20%
Action item	A specific task assigned to someone with a deadline	The action item for Ajay is to send the report by Friday

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SECTION 10: PRONUNCIATION

10.1 Why Pronunciation Matters

> *Pronunciation is the way in which words are spoken. Clear pronunciation ensures your spoken messages are understood correctly. Poor pronunciation can cause misunderstandings even when vocabulary and grammar are perfect.*

Pronunciation Aspect	Description	Practice Tips
Stress (Word Stress)	Emphasis on specific syllable within a word: phoTOgraphy vs PHOtograph	Listen to native speakers; use dictionary stress markings; record yourself
Intonation	Rise and fall in pitch within a sentence — signals meaning and emotion	Questions rise (?); statements fall (.). Falling = certain; Rising = uncertain/questioning
Rhythm	Pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables — gives language its natural flow	English is stress-timed — stressed syllables are regular; unstressed are reduced
Linking / Connected Speech	Words flow together in natural speech: 'I am' → 'I'm', 'going to' → 'gonna'	Listen to podcasts and authentic speech; practise reading aloud linking words
Vowel Sounds	English has 20 vowel sounds (12 pure vowels + 8 diphthongs) — more than most languages	Minimal pairs practice: ship/sheep, bit/beat, hat/hot
Consonant Clusters	Groups of consonants together: 'str-', 'spl-', '-nds'	Drill difficult clusters: 'strength', 'splits', 'hands'

- Listen and repeat: Shadow native speakers — listen to a sentence, immediately repeat mirroring rhythm and stress
- Record yourself: Compare your recording to native speaker — identify specific sounds to work on
- Tongue twisters: 'She sells sea shells by the seashore' — improve articulation and fluency
- Minimal pairs: Practice distinguishing similar sounds: 'ship' vs 'sheep', 'live' vs 'leave'
- IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet): Learn basic IPA symbols — helps read pronunciation guides in dictionaries

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SECTION 11: READING SKILLS

11.1 Types of Reading

Reading Type	Description	When to Use
Skimming	Read quickly to get the general idea (gist) — don't read every word	First read of an article; checking if a document is relevant; getting overview
Scanning	Searching for a specific piece of information — looking for keywords	Finding a phone number in a directory; looking for a date in a document
Intensive Reading	Reading carefully and thoroughly for complete understanding — analysing every detail	Contracts, technical manuals, exam passages, important emails
Extensive Reading	Reading large amounts for general comprehension and enjoyment — wider vocabulary	Novels, magazines, online articles — builds overall language proficiency
Critical Reading	Evaluating the author's arguments, evidence, and biases	Academic research, news analysis, evaluating reports

11.2 SQ3R Reading Strategy

> *SQ3R is a structured reading method for maximum comprehension and retention of academic texts: Survey → Question → Read → Recite → Review.*

Step	Action	Purpose
Survey (S)	Glance through headings, subheadings, summary, and diagrams before reading	Get overview; activate prior knowledge; set expectations for content
Question (Q)	Turn each heading into a question: 'Types of Communication' → 'What are the types of communication?'	Creates purpose for reading; brain actively searches for answers
Read (R1)	Read the section to find answers to your questions	Active, purposeful reading — not passive page-turning
Recite (R2)	After each section, look away and say/write the main points in own words	Tests comprehension; identifies gaps; strengthens memory
Review (R3)	At end, review notes and check all questions answered; re-read unclear sections	Consolidates learning; links new information to existing knowledge

SECTION 12: LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

12.1 Public Speaking Skills

> *Public speaking is the art of communicating effectively to a live audience. It includes preparing, structuring, delivering, and adapting a speech or presentation.*

Aspect	Best Practice
Preparation	Know your topic thoroughly; research beyond what you'll say; anticipate questions
Structure	Introduction (hook + overview) → Body (3-5 main points) → Conclusion (summary + call to action)
Opening Hook	Start with a story, statistic, question, or quote — captures audience immediately
Eye Contact	Look at different sections of audience; don't read from notes; maintain 2-3 seconds per person
Voice Projection	Speak loud enough for back row; vary pitch, pace, and volume for emphasis and interest
Pace	Speak slower than you think necessary; pause for effect; pauses aren't awkward — they add impact
Body Language	Stand tall; use hand gestures naturally; don't fidget; move purposefully around stage
Managing Nervousness	Prepare thoroughly; deep breathing before; focus on audience not yourself; channel nervous energy positively

12.2 Conversation Skills

Skill	Description	Example
Starting Conversations	Initiating dialogue confidently — use open-ended questions or comments about shared context	'What brings you to this conference?' 'I noticed you work in education — what level do you teach?'
Small Talk	Casual conversation on neutral topics — builds rapport before business discussion	Weather, current events (non-controversial), shared experiences, common contacts
Keeping Conversation Going	Ask follow-up questions; expand on topics; share relevant personal experience; avoid yes/no questions	'That's interesting — how did you get into that field?' rather than 'Do you like your job?'
Active Participation	Show interest through verbal affirmations: 'I see', 'Really?', 'That makes sense'	Verbal nods signal engagement and encourage speaker to continue
Graceful Exit	End conversations politely without abruptness	'It's been great speaking with you. I need to check in with the team — let's connect later'

SECTION 13: WRITING SKILLS

13.1 Principles of Effective Writing

Principle	Description	Application
Know Your Audience	Write for the specific reader — their knowledge level, role, and needs	Technical report for engineers vs summary email for management
Clear Purpose	Every piece of writing should have one clear goal	To inform: share information. To persuade: get action/agreement. To request: ask for something.
Logical Structure	Introduction → Body → Conclusion for all formal writing	State purpose → provide details/evidence → summarise and next steps
Active Voice	Subject performs the action — clearer and more direct	'Ajay sent the report' not 'The report was sent by Ajay'
Short Sentences	Average sentence 15-20 words — easier to read and understand	Break complex sentences into two shorter ones
Paragraph Unity	Each paragraph focuses on ONE main idea	Start with topic sentence; support with details; close with conclusion
Proofread	Check for spelling, grammar, clarity, and tone before sending	Read aloud; use spell check; ask someone else to review important documents

13.2 Professional Email Writing

Email Element	Best Practice
Subject Line	Clear, specific, action-oriented: 'Action Required: Q3 Report Due Friday' not just 'Report'
Greeting	Match formality to relationship: 'Dear Mr. Sharma,' (formal) / 'Hi Ajay,' (semi-formal) / 'Hello Team,' (group)
Opening Line	State purpose immediately: 'I am writing to...' or 'Following our meeting on...'
Body	One idea per paragraph; use bullets for multiple points; keep total under 200 words if possible
Closing	State required action and deadline: 'Please confirm by Tuesday, 28 May'
Sign-off	'Regards,' (professional), 'Best regards,' (warm-professional), 'Sincerely,' (formal)
Signature	Name, designation, company, phone number — professional and complete
Reply Time	Within 24 hours for professional emails; immediately for urgent matters

SECTION 14: INTEGRATED SKILLS

14.1 What are Integrated Skills?

> *Integrated Skills refers to the ability to combine multiple communication skills simultaneously. In real-world tasks, you rarely use just one skill — reading, writing, listening, and speaking are used together.*

Integrated Task	Skills Combined	Example
Attending a meeting	Listening + Speaking + Reading (agenda) + Writing (notes)	Team meeting — read agenda, listen to discussion, ask questions, take minutes
Writing a report based on research	Reading + Writing	Read multiple sources, synthesise information, write structured report
Participating in a group discussion	Listening + Speaking	Hear others' points, build on them, counter respectfully, contribute ideas
Giving a presentation after research	Reading + Writing (notes) + Speaking + Listening (Q&A)	Research topic, write slides, present, handle audience questions
Customer interaction	Listening + Speaking + possibly Writing (email follow-up)	Listen to customer issue, respond helpfully, write follow-up email

14.2 Communication Integration Framework

- Think → Speak: Organise thoughts before speaking — pause, plan, then deliver
- Read → Write: Read widely to improve writing — exposure to good writing improves your own
- Listen → Respond: Active listening feeds better, more relevant responses
- Write → Speak: Writing notes, speeches, and scripts improves spoken delivery
- All four skills reinforce each other — practicing one improves all others

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SECTION 15: NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

15.1 What is Non-Verbal Communication?

> *Non-Verbal Communication (NVC) is the transmission of messages through means other than words — body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, appearance, space, and touch. Studies suggest 55-93% of communication is non-verbal.*

- Albert Mehrabian's Rule (7-38-55): 7% words, 38% tone of voice, 55% body language — when there's inconsistency
- Non-verbal cues can reinforce, contradict, substitute, regulate, or accent verbal messages
- Contradicting verbal message: Saying 'I'm fine' while looking down, shoulders slumped, voice flat

15.2 Types of Non-Verbal Communication

Type	Description	Positive Example	Negative Example
Facial Expressions	Face shows emotions — most powerful NVC	Genuine smile, raised eyebrows of interest	Frowning, rolling eyes, blank expression
Eye Contact	Shows attention, confidence, and respect	Steady eye contact during conversation	Avoiding eye contact, excessive staring
Gestures	Hand and arm movements that emphasise or replace speech	Open palms upward, nodding, pointing to visuals	Crossed arms, finger pointing at person, fidgeting
Posture	Overall position and bearing of the body	Upright, open stance facing speaker	Slouching, turning away, leaning away
Proxemics (Space)	Distance maintained between people — varies by culture	Appropriate conversation distance (1-2 metres in professional context)	Standing too close (invades personal space), too far (seems disinterested)
Haptics (Touch)	Physical contact — highly context and culture dependent	Firm handshake, pat on shoulder (with consent)	Inappropriate touching, limp handshake
Paralanguage (Voice)	Tone, pitch, volume, speed, pauses — HOW we say things, not WHAT	Warm, clear, varied tone; appropriate pace	Monotone, too loud, speaking too fast, sarcastic tone
Appearance	Dress, grooming, hygiene — creates first impression	Professional, appropriate, clean	Inappropriate dress for context, unkempt

15.3 Positive Body Language in Professional Settings

Situation	Positive NVC to Use
Job Interview	Firm handshake, upright posture, natural eye contact, genuine smile, nodding when interviewer speaks
Giving a Presentation	Open arms, purposeful gestures, scanning audience with eyes, confident stance, appropriate movement
Active Listening in Meeting	Leaning slightly forward, eye contact, nodding, note-taking, open body position
Handling Customer Complaints	Calm, open posture; empathetic facial expression; not rushing away; giving full attention
Team Discussion	Open posture; turn body toward speaker; approachable expression; inclusive eye contact around room

15.4 Cultural Differences in Non-Verbal Communication

- Eye contact: Direct eye contact is confidence in Western cultures; may be disrespectful in some Asian/Middle Eastern contexts
- Head nod: In India, sideways head wobble means 'yes/okay' — can confuse foreign counterparts
- Personal space: Americans/Europeans prefer larger personal space; South Asians and Middle Easterners may stand closer
- Touch: Handshake is universal in business; bear hug common in Russia; bowing in Japan and Korea
- Thumbs up: Positive in Western cultures; offensive in some Middle Eastern and South Asian contexts
- Silence: Americans often uncomfortable with silence; Japanese use silence meaningfully; misread as agreement or disagreement

> **Professional Tip:** In global workplaces, observe and adapt to cultural norms. When unsure, mirror the other person's greeting style rather than imposing your own cultural default.

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SECTION 16: QUICK REVISION POINTS

Key Points for Exam

Communication

- 7 Cs: Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, Complete, Courteous
- Communication process: Sender → Encoding → Channel → Decoding → Receiver → Feedback (+ Noise can interfere)
- Non-verbal: 55% body language + 38% tone + 7% words (Mehrabian's rule for inconsistent messages)

Listening & Speaking

- Active listening: Full attention + no interruption + eye contact + paraphrase + questions
- Types of listening: Active, Passive, Critical, Empathetic, Appreciative, Comprehensive
- Public speaking structure: Hook → Introduction → Body (3-5 points) → Conclusion → Call to Action

Professional Skills

- EI (Emotional Intelligence): Self-awareness + Self-regulation + Motivation + Empathy + Social Skills
- SPIN Selling: Situation → Problem → Implication → Need-Payoff questions
- STAR for behavioural interviews: Situation → Task → Action → Result
- CRM goal: Increase customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention

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SECTION 17: IMPORTANT MCQ QUESTIONS

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

> *20 important exam questions. Correct answer marked with ✓ and explanation provided.*

Q1. The 7 Cs of effective communication are:

(a) Clear, Confident, Correct, Complete, Concise, Courteous, Creative
(b) Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, Complete, Courteous ✓
(c) Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete, Confident, Creative, Courteous
(d) Clarity, Completeness, Conciseness, Consistency, Correctness, Courtesy, Context

Explanation: *The 7 Cs are: Clear, Concise, Concrete, Correct, Coherent, Complete, Courteous. These are the seven qualities that make communication effective, professional, and impactful.*

Q2. What is the difference between Hearing and Listening?

(a) They are the same thing
(b) Hearing is active; Listening is passive
(c) Hearing is passive (physical); Listening is active (mental process requiring effort and focus) ✓
(d) Listening only applies to music; Hearing applies to speech

Explanation: *Hearing is a passive physical process — sound waves reach the ears automatically. Listening is an active mental process requiring conscious effort, attention, and interpretation of the message.*

Q3. Which type of listening involves analysing and evaluating the speaker's arguments?

(a) Appreciative Listening
(b) Passive Listening
(c) Empathetic Listening
(d) Critical/Evaluative Listening ✓

Explanation: *Critical or Evaluative Listening involves analysing the speaker's message — judging its logic, evidence, and credibility. Used when listening to debates, advertisements, or arguments where you need to assess the quality of the reasoning.*

Q4. Non-Verbal Communication includes:

(a) Only spoken words
(b) Writing and text messages
(c) Body language, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, and tone of voice ✓
(d) Only official written documents

Explanation: *Non-Verbal Communication includes everything EXCEPT the actual words — body language, facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, personal space, touch, and paralanguage (tone, pitch, pace of voice).*

Q5. According to Mehrabian's communication rule, what percentage of a message is conveyed through body language?

(a) 7%
(b) 38%
(c) 55% ✓
(d) 93%

Explanation: *Mehrabian's 7-38-55 rule (for emotional/inconsistent messages): 7% words, 38% tone of voice, 55% body language. This means body language carries the most weight when verbal and non-verbal messages conflict.*

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Q6. Which of the 7 Cs ensures the message includes all necessary information?

(a) Correct
(b) Concise
(c) Complete ✓
(d) Coherent

Explanation: *Complete means the message contains all necessary information — no critical detail is missing. An incomplete message forces the receiver to ask follow-up questions, wasting time and causing potential misunderstanding.*

Q7. The LARC model in call handling stands for:

(a) Listen, Assess, Respond, Close
(b) Listen, Acknowledge, Resolve, Confirm ✓
(c) Lead, Assess, Redirect, Complete
(d) Learn, Ask, Respond, Check

Explanation: *LARC = Listen (fully hear the issue) → Acknowledge (validate customer's concern) → Resolve (provide solution) → Confirm (verify issue resolved). This structure ensures professional, complete call handling.*

Q8. Which reading strategy involves reading quickly to get the general idea of a text?

(a) Scanning
(b) Intensive Reading
(c) Skimming ✓
(d) Critical Reading

Explanation: *Skimming is reading quickly over a text to get the general idea (gist) without reading every word. Scanning is searching for specific information. Intensive reading is thorough, word-by-word reading.*

Q9. Emotional Intelligence (EI) includes which of the following components?

(a) IQ, Memory, Creativity, Speed
(b) Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social Skills ✓
(c) Vocabulary, Grammar, Pronunciation, Fluency
(d) Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

Explanation: *Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ) includes: Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills. These five components were identified by Daniel Goleman. EI is often more important than IQ for professional success.*

Q10. Corporate Culture refers to:

(a) The legal structure of a company
(b) The shared values, beliefs, behaviours, and norms that characterise an organisation ✓
(c) The financial performance of the company
(d) The IT systems used by a company

Explanation: *Corporate Culture is the personality of an organisation — its shared values, beliefs, norms, rituals, symbols, and language. It is 'how things are done around here' and influences every aspect of employee behaviour.*

Q11. The SPIN selling technique stands for:

(a) Sales, Profit, Investment, Numbers
(b) Situation, Problem, Implication, Need-Payoff ✓
(c) Strategy, Planning, Implementation, Numbers
(d) Service, Price, Information, Needs

Explanation: *SPIN Selling (by Neil Rackham): Situation questions (understand context), Problem questions (identify issues), Implication questions (explore consequences), Need-Payoff questions (highlight solution value). Used in consultative B2B sales.*

Q12. Active Listening involves all of the following EXCEPT:

(a) Maintaining eye contact with the speaker
(b) Paraphrasing what the speaker said to confirm understanding
(c) Planning your response while the speaker is still talking ✓
(d) Asking clarifying questions when something is unclear

Explanation: *Planning your response while the speaker is still talking is the opposite of active listening — it is called 'reloading' and means you're not truly hearing the message. Active listening requires full attention until the speaker finishes.*

Q13. CRM stands for and its primary goal is:

(a) Customer Resource Management — to manage resources
(b) Customer Relationship Management — to improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention ✓
(c) Corporate Risk Management — to reduce business risks
(d) Client Reporting Model — to create reports

Explanation: *CRM = Customer Relationship Management. The primary goal is to manage interactions with customers to improve satisfaction, build loyalty, and increase retention. It involves strategy, processes, and software (Salesforce, Zoho, HubSpot).*

Q14. Which body language signals attentiveness and genuine interest during a conversation?

(a) Crossed arms and looking away
(b) Checking phone repeatedly
(c) Leaning slightly forward, eye contact, nodding occasionally ✓
(d) Yawning and looking at your watch

Explanation: *Attentiveness is signalled by: leaning slightly forward (engagement), regular eye contact (interest), occasional nodding (understanding), and open body posture. Crossed arms, phone checking, and yawning signal disinterest or defensiveness.*

Q15. The SQ3R reading strategy stands for:

(a) Scan, Question, Read, Review, Recite
(b) Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review ✓
(c) Skim, Query, Read, Record, Revise
(d) Search, Question, Respond, Review, Recite

Explanation: *SQ3R = Survey (glance through headings/summary) → Question (turn headings into questions) → Read (read to find answers) → Recite (recall main points in own words) → Review (check all questions answered). Maximises comprehension and retention.*

Q16. Proxemics in non-verbal communication refers to:

(a) The use of hand gestures
(b) The tone and volume of voice
(c) The use of personal space and distance in communication ✓
(d) The use of facial expressions

Explanation: *Proxemics is the study of how people use personal space in communication. The comfortable conversation distance varies by culture and relationship. In professional Western contexts, 1-2 metres is typical. Invading personal space causes discomfort.*

Q17. When handling a customer complaint, the BEST approach is:

(a) Tell the customer they are wrong
(b) Stay calm, show empathy, apologise for inconvenience, and focus on finding a solution ✓
(c) Transfer immediately to another department
(d) Ask the customer to call back later

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Explanation: *The best approach to complaints: Stay calm → Listen fully → Show empathy ('I understand how frustrating this must be') → Apologise for inconvenience → Focus on resolution. This turns a negative experience into a loyalty-building one.*

Q18. Which type of listening requires the listener to provide emotional support to the speaker?

(a) Critical Listening
(b) Comprehensive Listening
(c) Empathetic/Therapeutic Listening ✓
(d) Informational Listening

Explanation: *Empathetic (Therapeutic) Listening involves listening to understand feelings and provide emotional support — not analysing or offering solutions. Used in counselling, supporting a friend, or managing upset colleagues or customers.*

Q19. The FAB technique in selling refers to:

(a) Find, Analyse, Buy
(b) Feature, Advantage, Benefit ✓
(c) Fast, Accurate, Best
(d) Follow-up, Action, Business

Explanation: *FAB = Feature (what the product has) → Advantage (what the feature does) → Benefit (how it specifically helps THIS customer). Always translate features into customer benefits — customers buy benefits, not features.*

Q20. Vocabulary collocations are important because:

(a) They make speech sound more technical
(b) They help with pronunciation only
(c) Words that naturally go together sound more natural and professional than random word combinations ✓
(d) They are required for formal writing only

Explanation: *Collocations are words that naturally go together in a language (make a decision, heavy traffic, strong coffee). Using correct collocations makes your English sound natural and professional. Incorrect collocations ('do a decision', 'big traffic') immediately sound unnatural to native speakers.*

Best of Luck for Your Exam!

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