



دانشگاه مهندسی و علوم کامپیوتر



مهندسی



IEEE  
IRAN SECTION



# Stuff you Don't Learn in Engineering School: Effective Communications

**Dr Mona Ghassemian**



**Communication tips that are not included in any formal curriculum.**

- ✓ **Tips for effective email communications**
- ✓ **Hints for winning personal statements**
- ✓ **The impact of reference letters**
- ✓ **Power of presentation**
- ✓ **The essay-writing process**

# Why should you attend this workshop?

## Biggest “Gaps” for graduates

- Teamwork
- Effective at meetings
- Leadership skills
- Writing
- Negotiating
- Creativity
- Ethics
- Setting priorities
- Taking responsibility
- Public speaking
- Risk-taking
- Interpersonal skills
- Decisiveness
- Action oriented

# Effective Communications

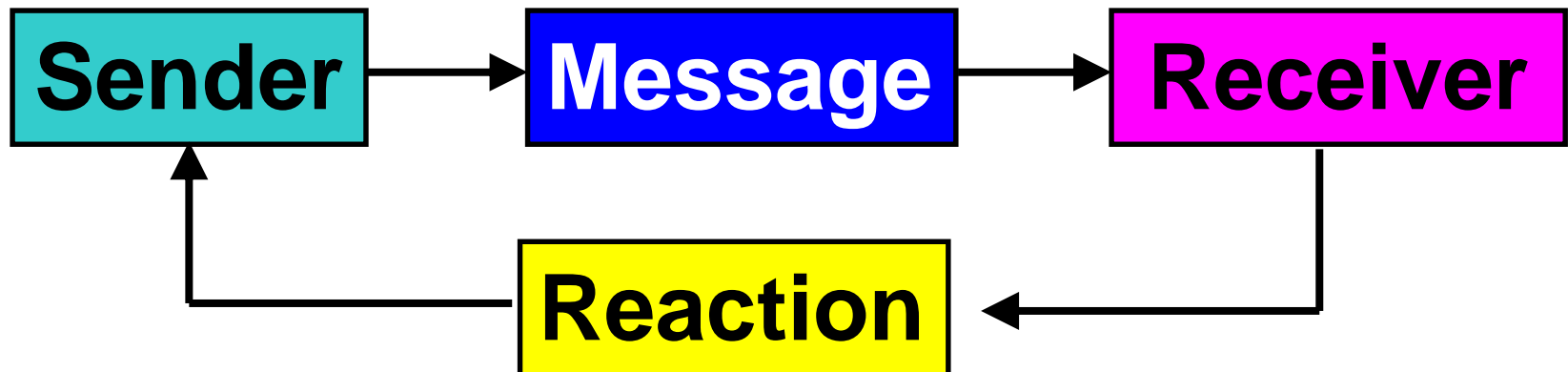
- The power of presentation,
- Tips for effective email communications,
  - The impact of reference letters.
- The essay-writing process,
  - Hints for winning personal statements.



# Communication Process

A message sender creates a message for the message receiver.

The receiver and the sender react, asking for more information and getting answers, to find out whether the message has been understood.



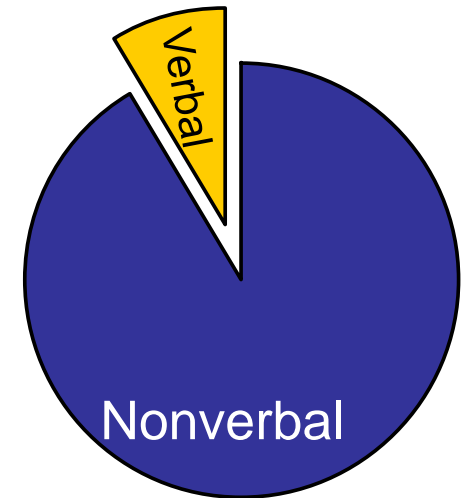
# Types of Communication

Communication can be either:

**Verbal:** Spoken words

**Nonverbal:** ?

Only 7 to 11% of all communication is verbal, and the rest is nonverbal



# Activity: Nonverbal Communication

## What do these mean?



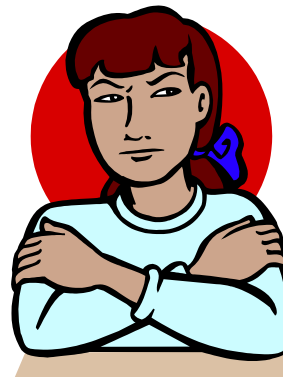
The way we stand and sit

Facial expressions

Silence

Eye contact

Gestures (smiling, leaning forward, nodding)



# The Communication Equation

## What you hear

Tone of voice

Vocal clarity

Verbal expressiveness



40% of the message

## What you see or feel

Facial expression

Dress and grooming

Posture

Eye contact

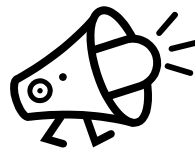
Touch

Gesture



50% of the message

WORDS ...



10% of the message!



# What is Communication?

What does it mean to you?

*The process of communication is what allows us to interact with other people; without it, we would be unable to share knowledge or experiences with anything outside of ourselves. Common forms of communication include speaking, writing, gestures, touch and broadcasting.*

Wikipedia definition

# Power of presentation



# Speaking better

- Know the Subject
- Know your Audience
- Practice
- Be Sincere
- Be Enthusiastic



# Understanding Communication

**We are going to consider:**

The 2-Way communication process

Effective communication skills

Barriers to effective communication

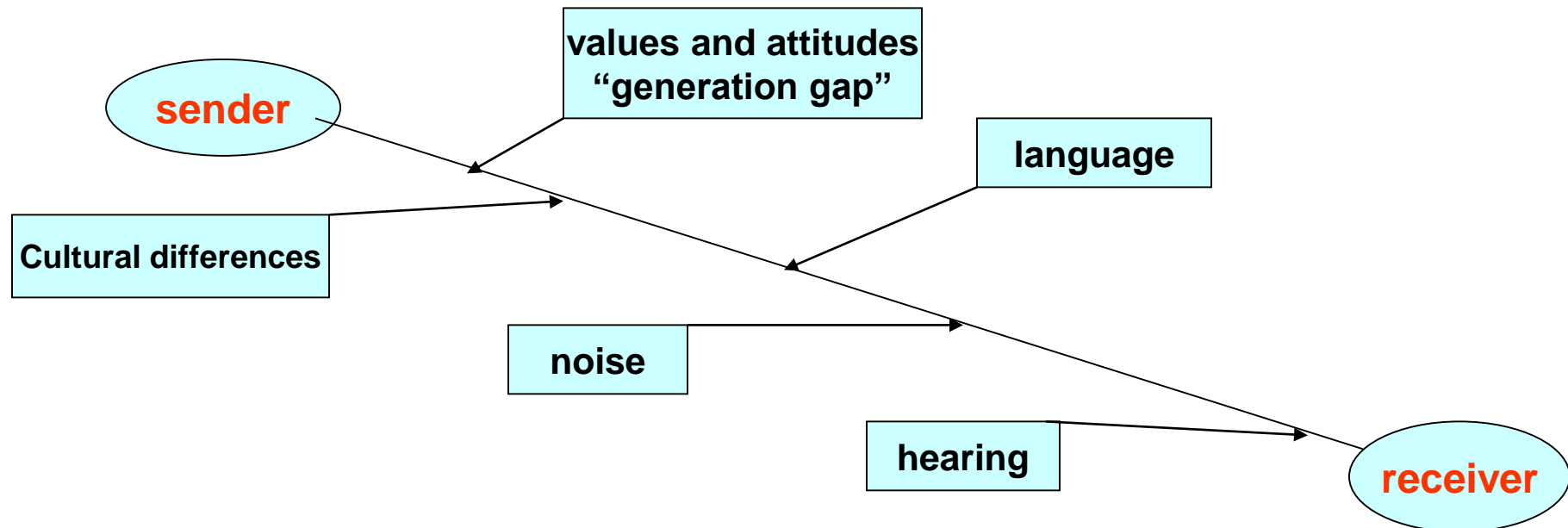
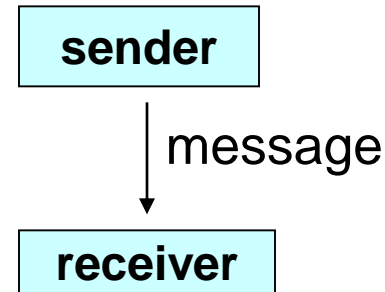
# Communication is a 2-way process

Communication skills involve:

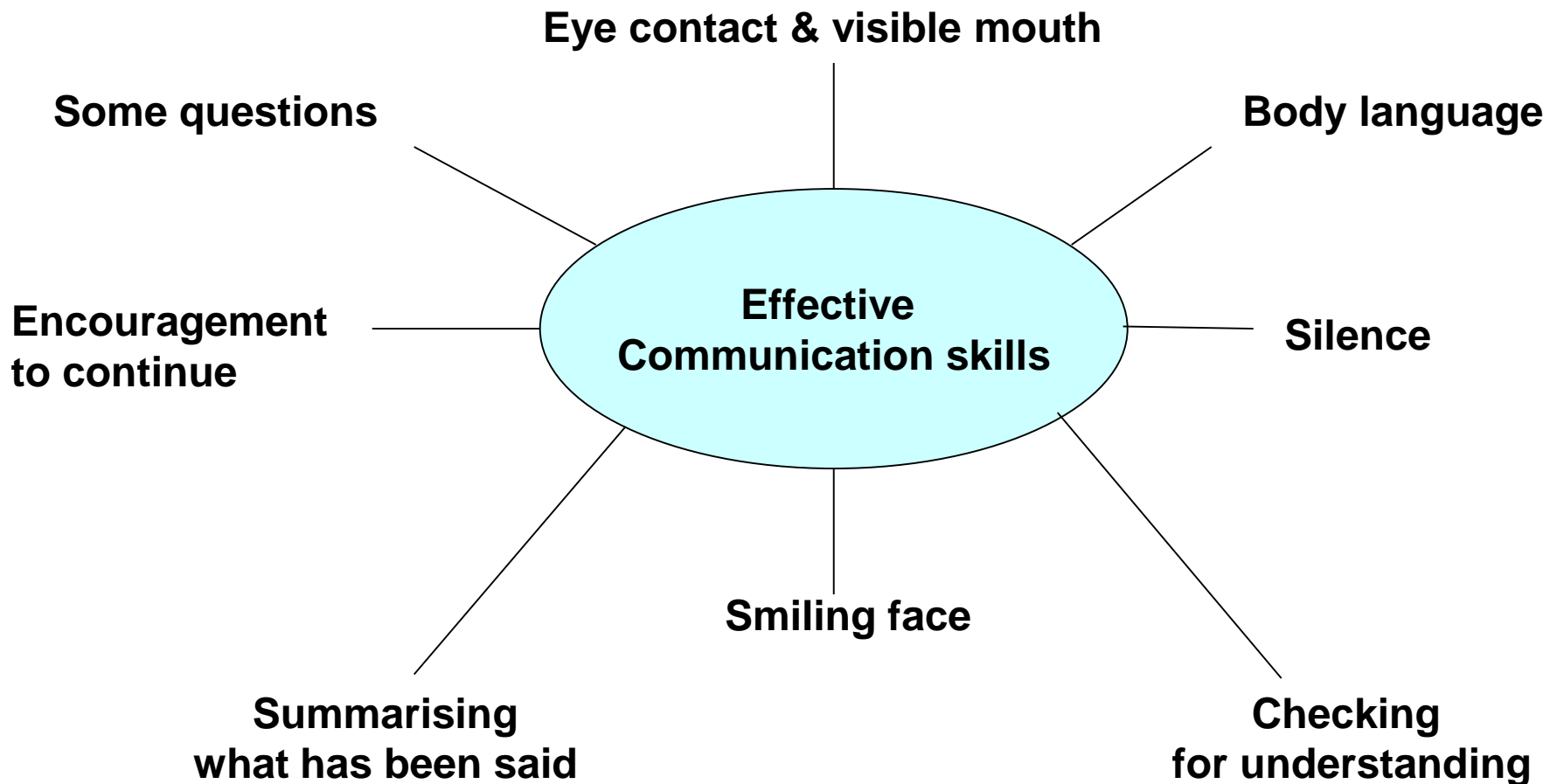
Listening to others (Receiving)

Asserting/ Expressing (Sending)

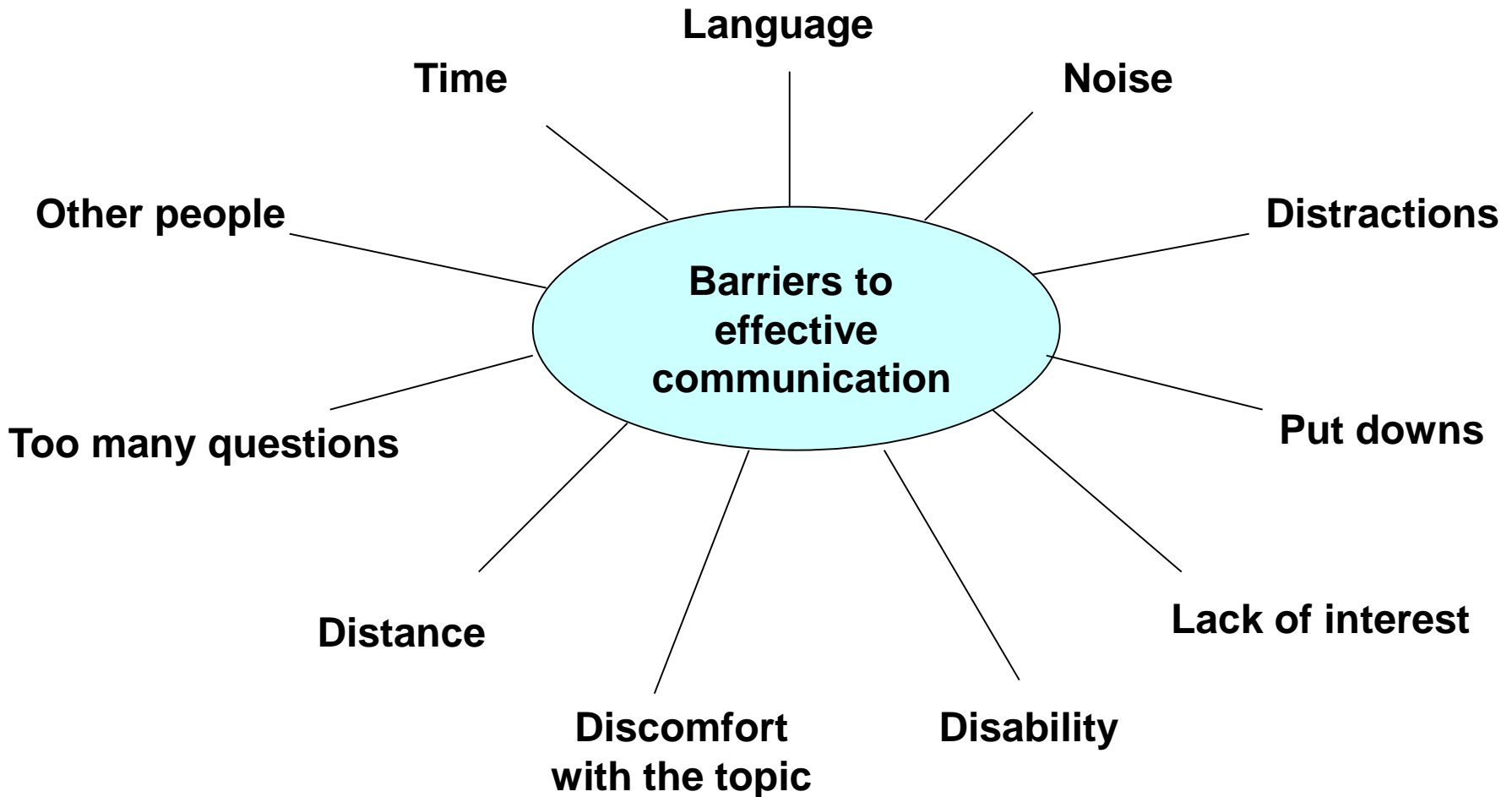
Barriers to communication can lead to misunderstanding and confusion



# Effective Communication Skills



# Barriers to Effective Communication



## Activity 1: Presenting your idea on Communication



- Divide into pairs
- Each pair should choose a listener and a speaker
- *Each speaker has 1-2 minutes to speak about a topic of their choice*



# The Art of Listening

“If we were supposed to talk more than listen, we would have been given two mouths and one ear.”

Mark Twain



# Listening Skills



Active Listening

Responding

Paraphrasing

Asking questions for clarification

Mirroring the other person's language

# Active Listening

Stay active by asking questions.

Some questions you can ask yourself as you listen are:

1. What key point is the speaker making?
2. How does this fit with what I know from experience?
3. How can this information benefit me?



# Active Listening: Non-Verbal Communication

- Turn your body and tilt your face toward the speaker.
- Use other parts of your body besides your ears to receive the message:
  1. Look at the speaker to pick up nonverbal signals or cues
  2. Your eyes will also send signals to the speaker
  3. When the speaker sees a receptive audience they are motivated to work harder to communicate their message
- React to the speaker by nodding your head.

**Looking and Acting Like a Good Listener**

Responses to check that your perceptions are correct

Responses to encourage further communication

Open ended and Closed questions



# Cultural Diversity



What do we know about the communication styles of different cultures?

Consider verbal and non verbal, including dress constraints, language difficulties, taboos.

## Constraints on Communication

Legal Obligations

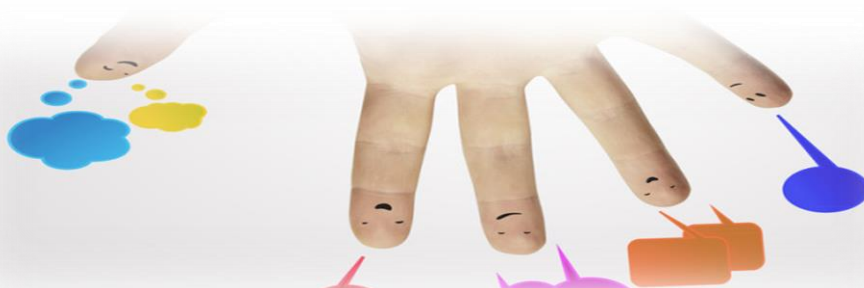
Anti Discrimination

Privacy Laws

Code of Conduct of Organisation

Confidentiality and Gossip

Seeking Advice



# Effective Communications

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# How is it spelled?

email

Email

eMail

EMail

e-mail

E-mail

e-Mail

E-Mail



# How is it spelled?



Gregg, Microsoft, and AP: **e-mail**

*Wired:* **email**

Email Experience Council:  
**email is standard**

# What makes email different?



*"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."*

# Difference: Tone

- No **nonverbal** cues
- **Tone** becomes crucial
  - In Germany and Britain, 23 percent and 14 percent respectively [of respondents to a *Daily Mail* survey] admitted confrontations with colleagues because of e-mail misunderstandings.



# Tone: Example One



To: Female employees

From: H. Honcho

Re: Dress code

Date: 1 July 2006

Clients will be visiting next week. Halter tops and jeans will not make the right impression. It's time you started dressing for the office instead of the beach. Leave your flip-flops at home!

# Tone: Example Two

To: All staff

From: H. Honcho

Re: Reminder about what to wear to work

Date: 1 July 2006

During the summer, our dress code is business casual. We think “business casual” means clothes that feel comfortable and look professional.

Men

Women

- khaki pants
- casual pants and skirts
- leather shoes...
- leather or fabric shoes...

# Tips: Tone

- Avoid being brief, which can be misinterpreted
- Use face-to-face communication if issue is sensitive
- Read your emails aloud, looking for ambiguity



# How to write email to an academic

- You know that your lectures will always have different teaching styles: serious, more relaxed, formal, and less formal.
- However, you need to write **appropriate academic emails**.
- You will need to use **a more formal tone** when you email.
- Emailing your lecturers is *not* the same as **texting** or **chatting**. You must *always* capitalize your “I”, spell words correctly and completely, and identify yourself when you write one of your instructors an email.



# Email body (1/3)

To:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ <b>Always</b> be sure that you check your teacher's email address. <i>Many students make typing mistakes!</i></li> </ul>
Subject: (or Re:)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ <b>Always</b> write something in this box. <i>This tells the teacher what your email is about.</i></li> </ul> <p>OKAY: From + your name OKAY: Dev Eng 97/98 (Class name) OKAY: Essay 2 or Homework, etc. NEVER OKAY: an empty box!</p>
(Greeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ <b>Always</b> use a greeting.</li> <li>☞ <b>Always</b> spell your teacher's name correctly!!! <i>You can choose which name to use based on your teacher's personalities and what they tell you to call them in class.</i></li> </ul> <p>OKAY (informal): Dear Marcie,</p>

# Email body (2/3)

	<p>OKAY (formal): Dear Miss Leek,          NOT OKAY: Dear Teacher,          NOT OKAY: Teacher,          NOT OKAY: Hi,          REALLY NOT OKAY: Hey,</p>
(First Sentence)	<p>☞ <b>Always</b> announce who you are.  <i>When we identify ourselves in American English (even on the phone), we say, "This is ..."</i></p> <p>OKAY: This is + your first and last name or + your nickname.          NOT OKAY: I am + your name.</p>
(Next Sentence)	<p>☞ Explain why you are writing.</p> <p>OKAY: Here is my paragraph/ assignment, etc.          OKAY: I can not come to class today because I am sick.</p>
(Next Sentences)	<p>☞ If you have anything to tell or ask your teacher, do it here.</p> <p>OKAY: Could you please send me the assignment?</p>

# Email body (3/3)

<p>Closing</p>	<p>☞ We usually use a “sign off” word before we sign our name.</p> <p>OKAY (very formal): Sincerely,          OKAY (regular): Thank you,          OKAY (a bit informal): Have a nice day/evening/etc.,          OKAY (a bit informal): Thanks,          NOT OKAY (too informal/personal):                    Love,                                I love you,                    Much love,                      Lots of love,            (any words about love)</p>
<p>Signature</p>	<p>☞ Always sign your name.</p> <p><i>You can use your first name only, as long as there is only one person in class with that name. Or you can use both/all of your names. If you have a nickname, use that, too.</i></p> <p>OKAY: Marcie          OKAY: Marcie Leek          OKAY: Marcelle (Marcie) Leek          OKAY: Marcelle Leek (Marcie)          NEVER OKAY: no sign off</p>

- What does **CC** mean (probably between “To” and “Subject”)?  
If you want to send your email to two (or more) different people, write the other address(es) in this box. You will send copies to everyone at the same time. (CC = carbon copy, or exact copy)
- What does **BCC** mean?  
This means “Blind Carbon Copy”. You will send the email to another person, but it’s a secret if you put it in BCC. The original recipient (person in the “To” box) won’t know that you sent it to someone else.

## Activity 2:

### ***Emails about missing class:***

- If you know in advance that you will be missing class due to religious observance or a school-sanctioned activity (e.g. athletic competition), notify your professors as soon as possible, and ask how you can make up the work.
- If you miss class due to illness, explain why you missed class *without* explicit details and make a plan for catching up.
- Talk to classmates and check the class website to find out the most information possible regarding the class you have missed *before* consulting your professor.
- Attempt to make up work ahead of time or soon after you miss class.

## Tip: Electronic $\neq$ Instant

Many expect a phone call to alert them to an email labeled Urgent.

Allow a reasonable time (two days – week) for a response.

Respond before senders have to follow up or business is delayed.

## Activity 3:

# *Emails requesting recommendations*

- · Send this type of email *at least* two weeks in advance.
- · Make it clear that you are extremely appreciative for the time the professor is spending to help you.
- · Provide all necessary information, such as a short description of the program, deadlines, how to submit, and any requirements for the recommendation.
- · Describe why you personally will benefit from the program or experience.
- · Ask if the professor would like to see your resume and any other application materials.
- · If the professor agrees to write the recommendation, follow up with a handwritten thank you note, office visit, or an email to show your appreciation.



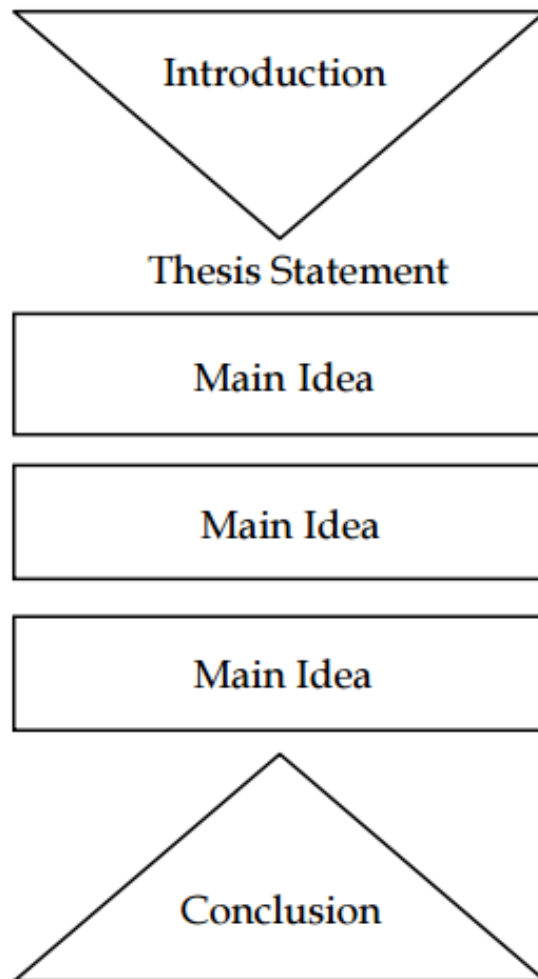
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# Essay format



## Essay outline

Introduction

Body

Conclusion

## Paragraphs

Orientate the reader  
Identify the focus/purpose  
Outline scope  
State thesis

Topic sentence 1  
Supporting details  
Concluding sentence 1

Topic sentence 2  
Supporting details  
Concluding sentence 2

Topic sentence 3 and so on  
Supporting details  
Concluding sentence 3

Restate thesis  
Summarise argument

## THE ADMISSIONS TUTOR:

- is a lecturer in the subject
- has been promoted to the position of choosing students for their degree course
- recruits the target number of students to ensure the course is financially viable

An Admissions Tutor is a *gatekeeper* between you and your chosen course

WHAT IS AN ADMISSIONS TUTOR?



Because you have the  
required grades

Because of the positive  
comments in your  
reference

Because of your Personal  
Statement



## WHAT are the common PROBLEMS?



**Firstly, it begins like a life story**

## MORE PROBLEMS....

Many long sentences

Making grammatical errors

Sets out to impress but comes across as arrogant

Not being proof read

**Turn yourself into an Admissions Tutor**



Admissions Tutors were asked

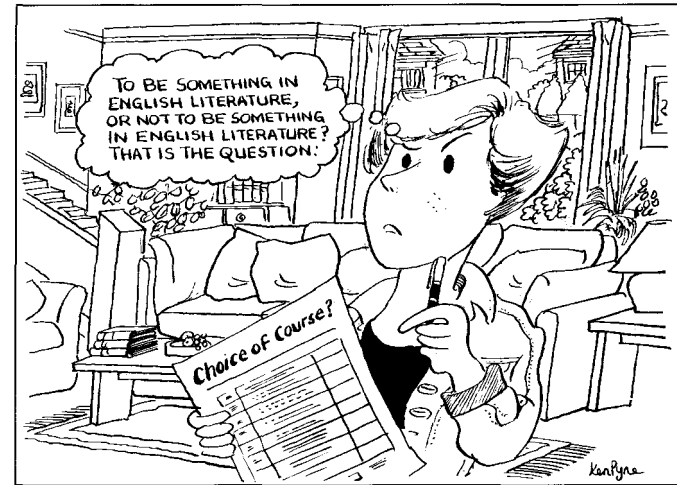
**‘WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WHEN YOU READ A PERSONAL STATEMENT?’**

- Interest in the course (*most important*) – *most of the statement could deal with this*
- *Motivated student*
- *No spelling or grammatical mistakes*
- *Clearly written*
- *Balance studies with 'life'*
- *Interesting person*
- *Work experience (if relevant)*
- *Wider key skills (e.g. teamwork, if relevant)*
- *Any interesting hobby (especially if relevant)*

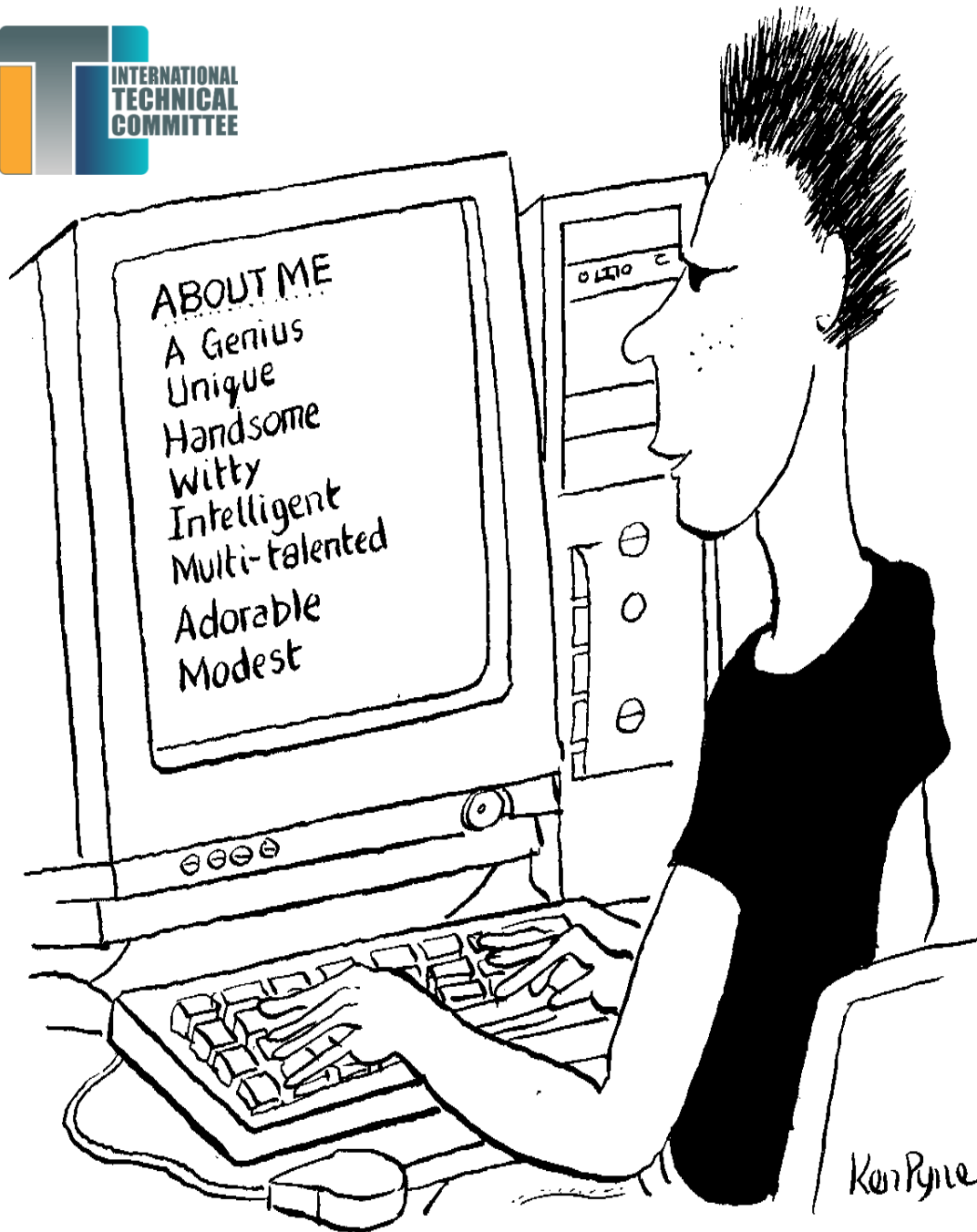
## ADMISSIONS TUTORS WERE ASKED 'WHAT SHOULD APPLICANTS AVOID?'

- Waffle
- Swallowing a dictionary
- Statements with no examples or evidence
- Very ordinary interests e.g. visiting family
- Becoming somebody you are not
- Religion and Politics
- Personal experiences & extreme hardships/family problems
- Rushing producing a poorly written statement
- Lying (remember the interview!)

**Write a  
section  
about your  
choice of  
COURSE**







and  
write a  
section  
about  
**YOU**

**But...remember to be selective**



## HOW DO YOU WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT?

Many admissions tutors complain of reading statements that appear the same.

A response to this problem has been to **try to capture the reader's attention**

## HOW DO YOU WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT?

A more impressive and less risky way to sell yourself is to convince an admissions tutor that you are really passionate about the course so....

do your course research

Need some help? Read on...

# HOW DO I WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT & PERSUADE AN ADMISSIONS TUTOR THAT I AM KEEN TO STUDY THEIR COURSE?

Be \* Motivated \* &

\* interested in the course

Write about any relevant books / articles you have read

*(even writing about a short article in a chapter / journal / a few pages in a book is going to have more of an impact than simply stating you want to study the course)*

## HOW DO I WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT & PERSUADE AN ADMISSIONS TUTOR THAT I AM KEEN TO STUDY THEIR COURSE?

Write about your relevant current courses

*(e.g. write about **topics that interested you most** & **why** or skills you have developed that you believe to be relevant)*

## HOW DO I WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT & PERSUADE AN ADMISSIONS TUTOR THAT I AM KEEN TO STUDY THEIR COURSE?

Write about experiences that relate to the course

*Conferences, short courses, trips, people you have met, something you have read, hobbies, future plans, something you have seen – anything relevant that will convince the admissions tutor that you have given **serious** thought to the choice of course*

## HOW DO I WRITE A UNIQUE PERSONAL STATEMENT & PERSUADE AN ADMISSIONS TUTOR THAT I AM KEEN TO STUDY THEIR COURSE?

By researching your choice of course carefully, you should achieve two outcomes:

You will be more confident that you have chosen the right degree for you

You will be able to write about the course in a more informed and persuasive way



# Reading materials

- Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School, Presenter: Carl Selinger  
Recorded: 14 April 2011,

**SOURCE** : <http://www.ieeeusa.org/careers/webinars/2011/webinar-04-14-11.html>

- Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School: Communicating Effectively  
**SOURCE** : <https://iee-elearning.org/CLE/mod/scorm/view.php?id=277>

- THE FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY-

**SOURCE**: [http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/five\\_par.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/five_par.htm)

- Email communication - **SOURCE** : <http://word-crafter.net/email.html>

- Handout accompanies the brain shark presentation at - **SOURCE** :  
<http://my.brainshark.com/Yo-Dear-or-Hello-Professor-Mastering-the-Discourse-of-Academic-Email-437291938>

- Reading aloud idea from Louise Dobson, “Avoiding Email Catastrophes,” -  
**SOURCE**: <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-20060405-000001.html>



## Evaluation

Please write a feedback or an evaluation note

and **email** it to [ITC@sbu.ac.ir](mailto:ITC@sbu.ac.ir)

☺ THANK YOU ☺

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