# Questions for Review

1.  What are the primary functions of the communication process in organizations?
    **Answer**: There are four major functions.
    a.  Communication acts to control member behavior in several ways. When work groups tease or harass a member who produces too much, they are informally communicating with, and controlling, the member's behavior.
    b.  Communication fosters motivation by clarifying to employees what is to be done, how well they are doing, and what can be done to improve performance. The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress toward the goals, and reinforcement of desired behavior all stimulate motivation and require communication.
    c.  Communication provides a release for the emotional expression of feelings and for fulfillment of social needs. For many employees, their work group is a primary source for social interaction.
    d.  Communication facilitates decision making. It provides the information.

2.  What are the key parts of the communication process, and how do you distinguish formal and informal communication?
    **Answer**:  The communication process is listed in Exhibit 11-1. The key parts are the following:
    a.  Sender
    b.  Encoding
    c.  The Message
    d.  The Channel
    e.  Decoding
    f.  The Receiver
    g.  Noise
    h.  Feedback

    Formal Communication Channels are established by the organization and transmit messages that are related to the professional activities of members. Informal Channels are used to transmit personal or social messages in the organization. These informal channels are spontaneous and emerge as a response to individual choices.

3.  What are the differences among downward, upward, and lateral communication?
    **Answer**:  Communication can flow upward, downward or laterally. Vertical communication can be either downward or upward. Downward communication flows from one level of a group or organization to a lower level. It is used to provide managers to assign goals, provide job instructions, inform employees of policies and procedures, and offer feedback about performance. Upward communication flows to a higher level in the group or organization. It is used to provide feedback to higher ups, progress toward goals, and relay current problems. It also keeps managers aware of how employees feel about their jobs.

4.  What are the unique challenges to oral, written, and nonverbal communication?
    **Answer**: Nonverbal communication involves body language, and paralinguistics describes the nonverbal aspects of communication that encompass tone of voice, pacing, pitch, and similar aspects that go beyond the spoken word. It has been

argued that every body movement has a meaning and that no movement is accidental.
- a. Oral Communication
    - i. Advantages: Speed and feedback
    - ii. Disadvantage: Distortion of the message
- b. Written Communication
    - i. Advantages: Tangible and verifiable
    - ii. Disadvantages: Time consuming and lacks feedback
- c. Nonverbal Communication
- d. Advantages: Supports other communications and provides observable expression of emotions and feelings
- e. Disadvantage: Misperception of body language or gestures can influence receiver's interpretation of message.

5.  How are formal communication networks and the grapevine similar and different?
    **Answer**:  The formal communication networks are:
    - a. Chain: Rigidly follows the chain of command
    - b. Wheel: Relies on a central figure to act as the conduit for all communication
    - c. Team with a strong leader
    - d. All Channel: All group members communicate actively with each other
    - e. Self-managed teams

    The grapevine is an informal communication network but it is an important source of information. The three main grapevine characteristics are that it is:
    - a. Informal, not controlled by management
    - b. Perceived by most employees as being more believable and reliable than formal communications
    - c. Largely used to serve the self-interests of those who use it

6.  What are the main forms of electronic communication? What are their unique benefits and challenges?
    **Answer**:
    - a. E-mail
        - i. Advantages: quickly written, sent, and stored; low cost for distribution
        - ii. Disadvantages:
            1. Messages are easily and commonly misinterpreted
            2. Not appropriate for sending negative messages
            3. Overused and overloading readers
            4. Removes inhibitions and can cause emotional responses and flaming
            5. Difficult to "get" emotional state understood – emoticons
        - iii. Non-private: e-mail is often monitored and may be forwarded to anyone
    - b. Instant Messaging
        - i. Immediate e-mail sent to receiver's desktop or device
    - c. Text Messages
        - i. Short messages typically sent to cell phones or other handheld devices
        - ii. IM and TM are quick, in real time or use portable devices. They are flexible and you can be reached anytime, anywhere.
        - iii. One disadvantage is the informality that sometimes spills over into business e-mails or other communication such as the

abbreviations used. You must be vigilant to communicate
professionally and formally when appropriate.
- d. Blogs
    - i. Popular but may be against company policy
    - ii. Videoconferencing
    - iii. Now uses inexpensive webcams and laptops in place of formal
videoconferencing rooms

7.  Why is channel richness fundamental to the choice of communication channels?
    **Answer**:  The model of "media richness" helps explain an individual's choice of
    communication channel.
    - a. A "rich" channel is one that can:
        - i. Handle multiple cues simultaneously
        - ii. Facilitate rapid feedback
        - iii. Be very personal
    - b. Choice depends on whether the message is routine. High-performing
      managers tend to be very media-sensitive.

8.  What are some common barriers to effective communication?
    **Answer**;
    - a. Filtering - A sender's manipulation of information so that it will be seen
      more favorably by the receiver
    - b. Selective Perception - People selectively interpret what they see on the
      basis of their interests, background, experience, and attitudes
    - c. Information Overload - A condition in which information inflow exceeds
      an individual's processing capacity
    - d. Emotions - How a receiver feels at the time a message is received will
      influence how the message is interpreted
    - e. Language - Words have different meanings to different people
    - f. Communication Apprehension - Undue tension and anxiety about oral
      communication, written communication, or both
    - g. Gender Differences - Men tend to talk to emphasize status while women
      talk to create connections

9.  What unique problems underlie cross-cultural communication?
    **Answer**: Cross-cultural factors increase communication difficulties. There are a
    number of problems:
    - a. Cultural Barriers:
        - i. Semantics: some words aren't translatable
        - ii. Word Connotations: some words imply multiple meanings beyond
          their definitions
        - iii. Tone Differences: the acceptable level of formality of language
        - iv. Perception Differences: language affects worldview
    - b. Cultural Context:
        - i. The importance of social context to meaning
        - ii. Low-context cultures (like the U.S.) rely on words for meaning
        - iii. High-context cultures gain meaning from the whole situation