



People  
will  
always  
follow  
us  
if  
we  
stick  
to  
simple  
rules.

## Help Others Understand You

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Have you ever been with someone who speaks continuously and never stops? It is uncomfortable, isn't it? One of the keys of communication is to do as much as possible for others to follow our message.

How can we speak more clearly? Here are some ideas.

**Use introductory phrases** before the important part of your message so people are already listening when you say what is relevant. This will let them adjust their hearing to your pronunciation and voice.

Examples of introductory phrases are "Good morning everyone" or "I'm here to talk about an exciting subject". Of

course there are many more so choose any that you like and find easy to pronounce.

**Magnify gestures**, since they will help to transmit your message if people don't follow your words. Use your hands as often as possible, smile when you are pleased, clap when you approve, shake your head when you don't, move near a person if you like what they say, stand up to make an important statement, etc.

As a foreign speaker your weakest area could be verbal language, so make up for this with stronger non-verbal signs.

**Use visual aids** because pictures are worth a thousand words. Two thousand if you're foreign!

**Rephrase sentences** when you're misunderstood. Instead of repeating the same words give an explanation or an example. Even an anecdote or a story can help.

Instead of repeating "The reason I'm not on time is I had a flat tire" retell the situation by saying "Suddenly my car started to move in a strange way and I realised there was a problem in one of the wheels so I stopped to check. A nail had punctured the tire. It took twenty minutes to replace. That's why I'm late and also why my hands are dirty!"

**If it's important say so.** Introduce it with "This is a key point" or a similar expression. If possible raise your voice and add movement such as lifting your hand, walking towards your listeners or simply standing up, as I said before.

A common mistake is to think people will be listening when you say something crucial; in fact, they won't know it's important until you've said it!

**Avoid slang or irony** because listeners do not expect to hear this type of language from non-natives and it could take them some time to adjust to this type of vocabulary.

Both slang and irony are very difficult to use properly if you haven't lived in an English speaking country for some time, so it's better to stay away from them.

*Core: main part.*  
*Relevant: important.*  
*Rephrase: say again with different words.*  
*Slang: very informal language.*  
*Chew: masticate.*

**Speak slowly**, more slowly than in your native language so as to give listeners the opportunity to follow your sounds. Remember they might have trouble with your pronunciation and intonation, so slower is always better.

**Let listeners know** when you change the subject with phrases like "Now we will introduce the next proposal". Make people aware that you're speaking about something new.

### **Listen first and speak afterwards**

Don't interrupt people and wait until they have stopped speaking. Start only after they have finished.

**Don't chew, eat or look away** while you speak. Let people see your lips because in this way they will understand your words better. And throw away that chewing gum before you open your mouth!

*Andrew's advice: Learn the exact pronunciation of every word. Some people will get lost if you mispronounce sounds.*

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