

helping others to understand you

1 Warmer

- a. In pairs, brainstorm how you could describe the term in the Taboo Card without mentioning any of the three taboo words.

| Taboo Card |
|-------------------------|
| Term: MICROPHONE |
| Taboo words: |
| machine |
| voice |
| speak |

Now, follow the Taboo Card activity instructions.

Instructions:

1. Get into pairs. Decide who is Student A and Student B and take the corresponding Taboo Cards that your teacher gives you. Don't show the cards to your partner.
2. Student A, look at your first card. You have 30 seconds to explain the term to your classmate. But remember, don't say any of the taboo words! Also, don't mention the names of any famous people or brands. Can Student B guess the correct term?
3. Student B, now look at your first card and repeat the process from above.
4. Continue alternating until you have explained all of the terms. Who described the terms best?

b. Identify which of these two techniques you used in Task 1a.

- Comparing – term = MELON: *It's like an orange, but it's bigger.*
The speaker focuses on similarities and differences.
- Talking about context – term = DESK: *You can find this in an office.*
The speaker focuses on a typical context where you can find a desk.

c. In pairs, read this definition of mediation and brainstorm common situations in which people use mediation.

“Mediation is when we use language to explain *something* to *someone* who doesn't fully understand it without our help.” (Thom Kiddle)

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2 Text

- a. In each of the situations below, a speaker is using mediation to explain something. Read what each speaker says and mark the sentences as True or False.

Situation 1: Frank is playing Taboo with a friend. Look at his card and read the description that he gives.

| Taboo Card |
|---------------------|
| Term: CLOCK |
| Taboo words: |
| time |
| watch |
| hour |
| minute |



“This is a device which you can find in many places. It can be on the wall of a room, or you can even find it on the screen of your phone. Its function is to show people if they are early or late. For instance, if you have an important meeting, you look at this device to make sure that you don’t arrive late. In other words, if you pay attention to this device, you’ll always be punctual! Does that make sense?”

1. Frank describes various contexts where you might see a clock. True False
2. Frank checks that his classmate has understood. True False

Situation 2: Maria is giving a presentation about technology. She shows the audience a definition for the term *internet of things*, but some people seem confused about its meaning. Look at the definition, and then read the explanation that Maria gives.

internet of things (noun, singular) /,ɪntə(r)net əv 'θɪŋz/
connections between objects of all kinds via the internet that enable them to communicate with each other



“So, let’s unpack that definition. What it means in practical terms is that machines can now ‘talk’ to each other. Years ago, we used to think of the internet as a sort of pool of information where people could find the answers to certain questions. But the internet of things doesn’t need questions. In fact, it doesn’t need people! That’s why it’s an internet of *things*!”

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Let's take an everyday example. Imagine, you have a smart fridge which is able to sense that you only have one pot of yoghurt left. It can then automatically send an order to your supermarket to make sure they include yoghurt in their next delivery to you. And so, your fridge and the supermarket's computer have used the internet of things to have this 'conversation.' You get the yoghurt, but the machines have done all the work! Is that any clearer?"

3. People use the *internet of things* to find answers to their questions. True False
4. With the *internet of things*, your fridge can send you a reminder to buy more yoghurt. True False

Situation 3: Hannah is the director of a technology company. She is giving a presentation, and shows the audience her business's mission statement. Look at the statement, and then read how Hannah explains it.



Our mission statement: To shift the dominance of AI in online retail from the global giants to SMEs.

"That statement is a lot to take in, so let's break it down. First of all, there are the two acronyms: you probably already know that AI stands for Artificial Intelligence, while an SME is a small to medium-sized enterprise.

Next, let's focus on the term *online retail*. That refers to businesses that sell their products on the internet. As for the term "global giants", I'm talking about the huge, multinational corporations which have a very strong position in the sector. And, of course, the reason for this is that only big businesses can afford to use Artificial Intelligence.

So, to put it simply, our mission is to offer AI at a cheap price, so that smaller businesses can use it. That will allow these smaller businesses to take control of the sector. Do you follow?"

5. Hannah suggests that the mission statement is a little complicated. True False
6. Hannah suggests that Artificial Intelligence is quite an expensive industry. True False

- b. In pairs, read these common techniques for mediation. Then, analyze the phrases highlighted in the three situations above and find one or two examples for each technique.

Simplifying information

- Technique 1: Separate ideas into steps
- Technique 2: Use simple, clear language
- Technique 3: Check that people have understood you

Adapting language

- Technique 4: Explain reasons and background information
- Technique 5: Give examples

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- c. Turn to the Mediation Phrases page of this worksheet and complete the gaps. After finishing, check your answers by reading the texts in Task 2a. Identify any of the phrases highlighted on the Mediation Phrases page which you would like explained to you.

3 Language in use

Correct the mistakes in each of these sentences.

1. That idea is a little complicated, so I'm going to cut it down for you.
2. What this means in practical words is that sales of mobile phones are decreasing.
3. To give it simply, the costs of this project are too high.
4. There are a few different ideas in that sentence, so let's unbreak them one by one.
5. Let's take a daily example to explain the idea a little better.
6. Does that have sense? Or, would you like me to explain it a little more?
7. I agree that it's a great plan. And as to money, it probably won't be very expensive.
8. We used to think to video games only as entertainment – but they're starting to have a stronger educational element.
9. The letters UFO stand on *Unidentified Flying Object*.
10. I can't follow this presentation. There's too much to give in – I think my head might explode!

4 Communication

Work in pairs. Decide who is Student A and who is Student B. In this task, you are going to research certain concepts and then explain them to your partner.

- Do some online research for each of the three concepts in your Student box.
- Prepare your explanations. Remember to use the techniques from the Mediation Phrases page (e.g. your explanation might include steps, background information, examples, etc).
- Explain the concepts to your partner and answer any questions which he/she may have.

Student A: Concepts

- Serendipity
- Blue sky thinking
- The law of attraction

Student B: Concepts

- Six degrees of separation
- Playing devil's advocate
- The Peter Principle

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5 Discuss

Discuss the questions with your classmate.

1. Reflect on your explanations from Task 4. How many of the techniques from the Mediation Phrases page did you use? How effective were they?
2. The concepts in Task 4 are linked to philosophy, management and communication. Can you think of any other interesting concepts from these different areas? If so, how easily can you explain them?
3. Can you describe a person you know who explains things very well? This could be a teacher, a journalist, a family member, etc. What is so special about this person's explanations?
4. Can you describe a presentation you've seen which you thought was great? This could be a presentation you attended, or perhaps a TED Talk. Why did you like it?

Red Words

describe*** term (noun)*** explain*** technique*** compare*** context***
understand*** device*** function*** check (verb)*** presentation*** audience***
explanation*** confused (adjective)** meaning (noun)*** definition*** communicate**
practical*** information*** question (noun)*** everyday** example*** clear (adjective)***
statement*** focus (verb)*** refer*** reason (noun)*** simply*** follow*** simplify*
adapt** separate*** step (noun)*** simple*** background*** phrase (noun)***
complicated (adjective)** concept***

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The highlighted phrases are useful for mediation.

| Simplifying information | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Technique 1: Separate ideas into steps</p> <p><i>Maria:</i> So, let's _____ (1) that definition. And so, your fridge and the supermarket's computer have used the internet of things ...</p> <p><i>Hannah:</i> That statement is a lot to take _____ (2), so let's break it _____ (3). First of _____ (4), there are ... Next, let's focus on ... As for the term <i>global giants</i>, ...</p> | <p>Technique 2: Use simple, clear language</p> <p><i>Frank:</i> In other _____ (5), if you pay attention to this device, you'll always be punctual!</p> <p><i>Maria:</i> What it means in _____ (6) terms is that machines can now 'talk' to each other.</p> <p><i>Hannah:</i> So, to _____ (7) it simply, our mission is to offer AI at a cheap price ...</p> | <p>Technique 3: Check that people have understood you</p> <p><i>Frank:</i> Does that _____ (8) sense?</p> <p><i>Maria:</i> Is that _____ (9) clearer?</p> <p><i>Hannah:</i> Do you follow?</p> |

| Adapting language | |
|--|--|
| <p>Technique 4: Explain reasons and background information</p> <p><i>Maria:</i> Years ago, we used to think of the internet as a sort of pool of information ... That's why it's an internet of <i>things</i>!</p> <p><i>Hannah:</i> ... there are the two acronyms ... AI stands _____ (10) Artificial Intelligence, while an SME is a the term <i>online retail</i>. That _____ (11) to businesses that sell their products on the internet. As for the term <i>global giants</i>, I'm talking about the huge, multinational corporations ... And, of course, the reason _____ (12) this is that only big businesses can afford to use Artificial Intelligence.</p> | <p>Technique 5: Give examples</p> <p><i>Frank:</i> _____ (13) instance, if you have an important meeting, you look at this device ...</p> <p><i>Maria:</i> Let's take an everyday example. _____ (14), you have a smart fridge which is able to sense that you only have one pot of yoghurt left.</p> |

Task 1a: Student A Taboo Cards

| Taboo Card |
|---|
| Term: CAMERA |
| Taboo words: photo/photograph image machine |

| Taboo Card |
|--|
| Term: PRINTER |
| Taboo words: print machine paper |

| Taboo Card |
|--|
| Term: HEADPHONES |
| Taboo words: listen hear ear |

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Task 1a: Student B Taboo Cards

| Taboo Card |
|----------------------|
| Term: WEBSITE |
| Taboo words: |
| internet |
| online |
| page |

| Taboo Card |
|---------------------|
| Term: ALARM |
| Taboo words: |
| noise |
| clock |
| wake up |

| Taboo Card |
|-----------------------|
| Term: KEYBOARD |
| Taboo words: |
| type |
| computer |
| write |