

Topic: Communications – Telephone, Mail, Email

Let's get started... Did you talk on a cell phone today? Did you send or receive an email today? Did you write or receive a letter today? Did you send or receive a fax today?

Background:

New advances in technology have made communicating with our friends, families and work colleagues faster and more convenient than even 10 or 20 years ago. Some people like the greater speed and ease of communication. Other people find the pace of modern life stressful, and prefer a slower pace of life, when people would visit more in each other's homes, sit on front porches and talk about the day's or week's events. But one thing is certain – there is a lot of communication going on in the world today!



In pairs for 5 minutes, ask and answer these questions:

- How do you prefer to communicate with your family – by phone, email, letter, or in person? Why is this your preferred method of communication?
- How do you prefer to communicate with your friends? Why is this your preferred method of communication with friends? Is your choice different for friends living in your native country, or friends living near you in the Seattle area?
- How do you prefer to communicate at work? Why is this your preferred method of communication? Is it the same or different from the way you communicated at work in your native country?

Share your partner's answers with the group.

Discussion Questions:

Do you call family or friends in your native country by telephone? How often do you call? How long do you talk? What do you talk about?

Do you use a cell phone or a land line phone?

What phone company do you use? Are you happy with your phone company? Is this for cell phone or land line calls? Tell a partner about your experience with your phone company. Is it expensive? Tell a partner about any special features with your phone service (for example, text messaging, free long distance, free roaming).

Do you send emails to friends or family in your native country? If yes, how often do you email? What do you talk about in your emails?

How many different friends or family members do you correspond with by email? How much time do you spend every week sending and reading email?

Do you write letters to friends or family members in your native country? If yes, how often do you write? What do you write about in your letters?

How many different friends or family members do you correspond with by letter? Is it expensive? How much does it cost to send a letter to your country?

How often do you receive letters from friends or family members? What do they write to you about?

Some family members write to share joys, sorrows, to give advice, or to tell stories. Do you enjoy receiving letters? Tell about a special letter you received, and why it is special to you.

Do you spend more or less time writing letters now, than you did when you were living in your native country?

Some people use facsimile transmission (fax) for business correspondence, or to send copies of important documents. Have you ever sent a fax? If so, what did you send? Was it expensive? Where did you go to send the fax?

Have you ever received a fax? If so, what did you receive? Was it expensive? Where can you go to send or receive faxes?

New words and Idioms:

Technology; communicating; communication; convenient; colleagues; ease; pace; porches; events; preferred method; land line phone; local calls; experience; special features; text messaging; roaming; correspond; joys; sorrows; advice; facsimile transmission; fax; business correspondence; documents.