

## COMMUNICATION SELF-ASSESSMENT INVENTORY

The MIT Communication Requirement stemmed partly from alumni feedback. MIT alumni consistently report that expertise in communication principles and practices—in other words, knowing how to write and speak clearly and compellingly in both formal and informal situations—is essential to their careers after MIT. A majority of MIT alumni report that they wish they had dedicated more of their own time and effort to learning how to argue effectively with evidence, how to write and speak with grace and style, and how to assess and provide for the needs of their various audiences.

As an undergraduate now in a CI subject, you have the opportunity to learn from their experience and to take charge of your own communication education, which begins by assessing your knowledge and abilities, and then setting specific goals for the semester. As you move through the communication requirement, you can keep adding new or more advanced goals, so that by the time you graduate, you will have learned how to write and speak as a professional in your field.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**MIT ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your year** First year Sophomore Junior Senior

**Semester** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Course** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject** \_\_\_\_\_

Is this the first CI subject you have taken at MIT?

YES

NO If “NO,” please list the other CI subject(s) you have taken: \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you take the FEE?**

YES

NO

**If yes, what do you remember as the most important feedback that you received?**

Circle the best answer to the following statements:

1	I enjoy writing and seek opportunities to write for different purposes	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
2	I believe that writing helps me to develop stronger ideas and to explore complex issues in academic work	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
3	I have sufficient experience and knowledge about writing in this subject	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
4	I have no strong feelings about writing, neither seeking nor avoiding it	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
5	I find writing to be easy in some subjects and harder in others	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
6	I generally understand the principles for academic writing, but want to learn more about writing in this subject	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
7	I haven't given much thought to writing in different situations; I just write the same way in each subject	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
8	I have mostly avoided writing, and subjects that involve writing	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
9	I often feel unclear about the principles and purposes for writing in this subject, or in most subjects	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
10	In my writing, I communicate research findings to multiple audiences using discipline-appropriate conventions	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
11	For my writing projects, I conduct research using methods for investigating questions appropriate to my discipline	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
12	In my writing, I seek relevant authoritative information and recognize the meaning and value of that information	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
13	In my writing, I use inquiry as a process to develop questions relevant for authentic audiences within a variety of disciplines	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
14	For my writing projects, I practice different ways of gathering, investigating, developing, and presenting information	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
15	I listen to and reflect on the ideas and responses of others—both peers and instructors—to my writing	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
16	In my writing, I make connections between my own ideas and those of others	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
17	I understand how to find meanings new to me or build on existing meanings as a result of new connections	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
18	I know how to incorporate new content knowledge into my writing projects	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →

19	I enjoy learning to apply new knowledge that I have discovered	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
20	I like to learn new methods to investigate questions, topics, and ideas	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
21	I understand how to communicate what I have learned in a variety of ways	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
22	I understand how to evaluate the effects or consequences of my communication choices	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
23	I commit the time it takes to explore, in writing, a topic, idea, or demanding task	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
24	I understand how to grapple with challenging ideas, texts, processes, or projects	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
25	I follow through, over time, to complete tasks, processes, or projects	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
26	I consistently take advantage of in-class (peer and instructor responses) opportunities to improve and refine my work	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
27	I consistently take advantage of out-of-class (writing or learning center support) opportunities to improve and refine my work	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
28	I understand how to engage and incorporate the ideas of others, giving credit to those ideas by using appropriate citation methods	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
29	I approach writing assignments in multiple ways, depending on the task and my purpose and audience	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
30	I recognize that conventions (such as formal and informal rules of content, organization, style, evidence, citation, mechanics, usage) are dependent on discipline and context	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
31	I understand how to reflect on the communication choices I make in light of context, purpose, and audience	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
32	I examine processes I use to think and write in a variety of disciplines and contexts	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
33	I know how to use what I learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
34	I am comfortable locating and evaluating sources	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
35	I am comfortable developing a focused, clear thesis statement	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
36	I am comfortable organizing information & ideas to structure into a logical sequence	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
37	I am comfortable generating the first draft of a paper	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
38	I am comfortable writing the introduction and conclusion to a paper	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →

39	I am comfortable creating smooth, logical transitions between paragraphs and sections	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
40	I am comfortable incorporating and properly citing sources in my papers	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
41	I am comfortable adapting my written message to a specific target audience	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
42	I am comfortable revising my draft for logic, structure, and development after instructor, peer, and/or self-review	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
43	I generally stick to the topic, identifying and omitting extraneous information	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
44	I often move beyond the surface or the obvious claims to a more rigorous argument	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
45	I know how to establish and maintain a writing schedule that gives me enough time to produce my best paper	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
46	I feel tense when I see the words “speech” and “public speech” on a class syllabus	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
47	I have no fear of giving a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
48	I look forward to giving a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
49	I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
50	I enjoy preparing for a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
51	I do poorer on speeches because I am anxious	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
52	I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
53	When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
54	I feel relaxed while giving a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
55	I am comfortable giving informal oral presentations on a reading or topic	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
56	I am comfortable giving a presentation about my research	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
57	I make a deliberate effort to adapt my oral presentation to specific target audiences	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
58	I use strategies to capture the audience’s attention in the beginning of a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
59	I enjoy giving oral presentations	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
60	I feel comfortable and relaxed before giving a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →

61	I am comfortable giving feedback to other students on papers	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
62	I am comfortable giving feedback to other students on oral presentations	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
63	I am confident that I appear relaxed and confident when I give a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
64	I am confident that I use sufficient vocal variety when I give a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
65	I am confident I make sufficient eye contact when I give a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →
66	I am confident I use appropriate gestures and body movement when I give a speech	← Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Slightly Disagree   Not Sure   Slightly Agree   Agree   Strongly... Agree →

Please check the appropriate box to identify the level of experience you have with the following communication (writing or speaking) genres

Genre	No experience	Some experience	Significant experience
Personal writing (journals, first-person essays)			
Creative writing (fiction and poetry)			
Essay exams			
Technical writing and reports			
Blog entries			
Lab reports			
Literary analysis			
Literature reviews and annotated bibliographies			
Written arguments that draw on multiple sources			
Factual (descriptive or explanatory) papers/reports			
Informal oral presentations on a reading or topic			
Formal presentations about research			
Formal argumentative speeches			
Formal debates with assigned or chosen positions			
Informal debates in class when there are differences in interpretation			

Please check the appropriate box to identify how helpful you have found the following activities in the past to support your writing process

Activity	Not helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
Summarizing ideas from lectures or readings			
Writing out your own reflections and responses to readings or lecture material			
Writing critical questions and exploratory answers about the material as you read			
Writing definitions of key concepts in your own words			
Keeping a general journal for recording thoughts and ideas			
Free writing on the topic before you begin formal writing			
Brainstorming notes in an informal outline, mind map, or cluster diagram			
Writing a formal outline			
Talking out your questions and ideas with a classmate or friend			
Receiving comments on my use of evidence and understanding of the content			
Receiving comments on my thesis, original ideas, and insights about the material			
Addressing questions that ask me to clarify what I mean in specific passages			
Addressing questions that raise issues I hadn't yet considered, or considered fully			
Receiving comments about the form or structure of my essay			
Receiving positive comments about what's working well			
Receiving critiques of what's not clear, accurate, or well-developed			
Receiving specific suggestions for further development			
Receiving editing marks on my syntax, grammar, and punctuation			

## SETTING PERSONAL WRITING AND SPEAKING GOALS FOR YOUR CI SUBJECT

Think about the kinds of writing and speaking you expect to do as a professional after graduation. Next, think about any gaps that exist between your current repertoire of writing and speaking skills and those needed by professionals in your field. To close these gaps, what needs to change about your writing and speaking?

The goals you choose should be rhetorically based, specific, and realistic (i.e., achievable). Thus, goals such as "ace this course" (not rhetoric-based), "get better at writing" (too general), and "produce grammatically flawless first drafts" (probably not realistic) are inappropriate for this exercise. List your goals here:

### Writing:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

### Speaking:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

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