

5 Steps to Better Communications

1. Make change seem possible



Set out the issue in your own terms, avoid the **Parrot trap** of repeating the terms of your opposition.
E.g. Say "poverty is created" rather than "poverty is not natural"

Give people hope and avoid the **Cobra trap** of over-stating the threat.
E.g. Say "We already know how to address the problem" rather than "We have never faced anything on this scale before"



2. Make the cause of the problem clear



Use language that makes the damage clear, avoid the **Chameleon trap** and 'sanitising' words.
E.g. Say "killing civilians" rather than "collateral damage"

Get active and avoid the passive **Sloth trap**
E.g. Say "Actions by the media have fuelled xenophobia and increased hate crime" rather than "Hate crime has increased"



3. Understand your audience



Better understand what is in your audience's heads, avoid the **Rat trap** of assuming what they think.
E.g. Say "walking and cycling" rather than "active travel"

Think carefully about the associations words have, avoid the **Shark trap** and don't use 'contaminated' terms.
E.g. Say "Let's create a fairer United States" rather than "Make America Great Again"



4. Motivate your audience



Respect what people feel positively about, avoid the **Robin trap** of criticising what people love.
E.g. Say "We need to spend less on guns and bombs" rather than "We need to reduce funding for our boys"

Encourage empathy by bringing people into the picture, avoid the **Virus trap** of othering.
E.g. Say "people seeking refuge" rather than "refugees"



5. Hone your message



Keep it short and simple, avoid the **Platypus trap** and don't try to cram everything in.

E.g. Say "Black lives matter" rather than "All lives are important but Black and brown people are disproportionately targeted with violence"

Think about what you've left unsaid, avoid the **Anglerfish trap** to not miss out something important.
E.g. Say "Those buying ivory are exploiting wildlife and people" rather than "Poachers are driving the ivory trade"

