

# 6.1 Communication

Syllabus 2026 - 2028

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Characteristics and uses of communication media: newsletters, posters, websites, multimedia presentations, audio, video, media streaming and ePublications
- The use of mobile devices for communication: SMS messaging, phone calls, VoIP, video calls and accessing the internet

## Communication media

| Medium                         | Characteristics                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Uses                                                               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Newsletter</b>              | Short, regular publication with articles, text and pictures. Aimed at a specific group. Printed or sent digitally.                                                                                                 | Keeping parents, members or customers informed of news and events. |
| <b>Poster</b>                  | A single large page with big headings, pictures and a short message. Eye-catching and read quickly.                                                                                                                | Advertising, announcing events, health and safety information.     |
| <b>Website</b>                 | A set of linked web pages (hyperlinks) with text, images, video and sound. Available 24 hours a day, worldwide. Can be updated at any time.                                                                        | Advertising, selling, news, information, education.                |
| <b>Multimedia presentation</b> | Slides that combine text, images, animation, sound and video. Can use transitions and links between slides.                                                                                                        | Teaching, training, sales talks, reports to an audience.           |
| <b>Audio</b>                   | Sound only, such as music, speech or podcasts. Stored as digital files. Can be played on many devices.                                                                                                             | Music, podcasts, audio books, announcements, language learning.    |
| <b>Video</b>                   | Moving pictures with sound. Larger files than audio. Can be edited and shared online.                                                                                                                              | Films, tutorials, advertising, news, recording events.             |
| <b>Media streaming</b>         | Audio or video sent continuously over the internet and played as it arrives, so the whole file does not have to be downloaded first. Needs a good connection; a buffer stores a little data ahead to avoid pauses. | Music and film services, live broadcasts, online lessons.          |
| <b>ePublication</b>            | A digital book, magazine or newspaper read on an e-reader, tablet, phone or computer. Text can be searched and enlarged and may include links, audio and video.                                                    | Reading books and news, textbooks, magazines.                      |

| Advantages                                                                       | Disadvantages                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| + ePublications are cheap to distribute and a device can hold hundreds of titles | - Devices need power and may cause eye strain                                           |
| + Text can be searched, resized and updated, and may include sound and video     | - Streaming needs a fast, reliable connection and uses data                             |
| + Streaming gives instant access without storing large files                     | - Digital content can be copied illegally (piracy) and some users cannot afford devices |

## Mobile communication

| Method               | How it works                                            | Points to remember                                                                                        |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SMS messaging</b> | Short text messages sent over the mobile phone network. | Cheap and quick; works without an internet connection; limited length and no pictures unless MMS is used. |

| Method                        | How it works                                                                                 | Points to remember                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Phone calls</b>            | Voice calls over the mobile network (cellular network).                                      | Instant two-way speech; needs network coverage; can be costly abroad.                                           |
| <b>VoIP</b>                   | Voice over Internet Protocol: voice is turned into data packets and sent over the internet.  | Calls are cheap or free, even internationally; needs an internet connection; quality depends on the connection. |
| <b>Video calls</b>            | Both people see and hear each other using a camera, microphone and speaker.                  | Needs a good connection and uses a lot of data; helps people communicate face to face at a distance.            |
| <b>Accessing the internet</b> | Mobile data or wi-fi lets a phone browse the web, send email, use social media and run apps. | Convenient anywhere; small screens, data costs and battery life are limits.                                     |

**EXAM TIP**

When asked for the characteristics of a medium, describe what it is like (for example, a poster is one page with large images).  
When asked for a use, give a real purpose (for example, advertising an event). Do not mix the two.

**Key terms**

| Term              | Meaning                                                                         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>VoIP</b>       | Making voice or video calls over the internet instead of the phone network.     |
| <b>Streaming</b>  | Playing audio or video as it arrives, without downloading the whole file first. |
| <b>Buffering</b>  | Storing a little data ahead of time so that playback does not stop.             |
| <b>Hyperlink</b>  | A link on a web page that takes the user to another page or file.               |
| <b>Multimedia</b> | A mixture of text, images, sound, animation and video.                          |