



# Reading 349

*For questions 1-10 put the following parts of the text in the correct order to recreate the text.*

## Speaking vs. Communicating

*By Merryweather*

A. I might be feeling much better or much worse than I'm telling you, and highly likely what I'm telling you is only a fraction of what's really going on for me in that moment. When it comes to writing, especially, dramatic, flawless communication is virtually impossible to avoid, despite the fact that it's what we are constantly aiming at. If our communication were always without imperfections, then films and TV shows would be incredibly dull. And boring.

B. When you see animals hunt, play and mate, it's hard to believe that their interaction includes contempt, jealousy, and resentment. Although documentarians try to personify their subjects to make their struggles more identifiable for humans, the only real drama between tigers, sharks and insects seems to be which one of them will finally get the shelter, the food or the mate.

C. Again, this is the larger part of the iceberg that is hidden beneath the surface. The original line is what you will be speaking out loud, but this new line is what you will really be communicating with your body. Say the new line out loud until you know how it feels in your body. Say it, mean it, communicate it actively and fully. Now say what's written on the page out loud at the same time as thinking the new line in your head alone. Do you see now that the this line is really only a thin mask over what you would actually say if society wasn't persistently telling you to be polite, wait your turn, and not to make a fuss? You might be thinking, "yes, but you're just talking about subtext," and you're dead right.

D. For most of the humans though, not so much. When it comes to an actor's speech, the words themselves are not that important compared to the message that the character communicates. It would be a mistake to take most people and characters, for that matter, entirely at their word. This is not cynicism, like you might think. It's pragmatism. When you ask me how I am and I say, "fine, thanks," it's a far cry from the whole story of my life, even if it actually is a more or less pleasant one.

E. It's a common knowledge that we speak to communicate but, unfortunately, all we do is just confuse things. I sometimes wonder if eagles and lions hear one another "talk" and think, "What the heck is her problem?" or if it's only us, humans, that unintentionally pepper their dialogue with hidden meaning. Drama prospers on miscommunication but in real life it is a major problem for humans. Do the animals have subtext?

F. There may be many numerous icebergs peaks in each scene, and using specific lines stops you from washing a whole scene with something you've invented that has very little relevance to each line.

G. And short. Remember how Alfred Hitchcock called drama "life, but with the dull bits cut out"? If you are acting or reading a drama, take a look at any single line in a scene. Actually, find the most challenging line in the script, the one which is the most difficult to understand or deliver. Now imagine that this line is just the

tip of an iceberg and that what you are actually trying to communicate is what lies beneath the surface of the water. The actual message is so much deeper, complex and meaningful than the line itself. Now create a new line that you think means precisely what you're trying to communicate to the other person.

H. They both want the one and the same thing — to survive — and they do their best to get it. In the animal kingdom, it's the strongest, crudest or most cunning who wins out in the end when the other follows the first, suffers a defeat and an exile, or even death. It's pretty simple, actually.

I. So, from now on in acting and life, listen to what people are actually communicating and not just their words. When you master the practice you will not only become a more natural performer, but you may just find the challenges and desires of others have been clear all along. It wasn't as much in their words, as it was underneath them.

J. However, the problem with subtext is that it often makes us create something we either want to say to the person in the scene, or a particular mood or state to feel, and then highlight everything with it. This isn't actually as realistic as finding the peaks of these icebergs and exploring what may hide beneath each one.

# Key

1. E
2. B
3. H
4. D
5. A
6. G
7. C
8. J
9. F
10. I