Without proper communication, you will get absolutely nothing done during a session. Most people assume that since we’re editing and correcting their work, we automatically look down on them and their ideas, which, of course, is not the case. To put a client at ease and honor their work, all you really have to do is be patient, tactful, and respectful.

**Beginning**
Most first-time clients will be shy. It’s your job to be at ease. If you’re comfortable in the situation, they’ll be more comfortable as well.

- Ask about their day. If you find something in common with them (same teacher, class, etc) go with it.
- Jokes. People have said that this tool works wonders. Tell them about what a mess your first college paper was, admit that you’ve waited to the last minute to do work, too,

**Down to Business**
Sometimes the client doesn’t feel more comfortable after chatting, so the best option might be to just jump straight into talking about the paper. These are tactics to use during the session with or without the opening chat.

- Favor “open” questions, whose answers require an explanation (“How does this conclusion better explain your argument’s implications?”). This could include:
  - Compare/contrast questions (How does what we generated in our session compare to what you brought in? What is the difference between the model essay’s conclusion and your own?)
  - Options-based questions (When you say “culture,” are you referring to anything in particular, like politics? Economics? Social life?)
  - Location questions (Where in this body paragraph do you make the strongest claim about “x”?)
- Avoid “closed questions,” whose answers only require a “yes,” “no,” or other one-word response (“Does this conclusion answer the “so what” question?”).
- Ask questions whose answers provide you with information about either the paper or the writer’s process (“How did you create this thesis statement?”).
- Avoid questions that ask how the client feels (“How do you feel about your argument? Are you confident in your argument?”) or may cause them to infer a judgment upon their writing (“Is this a good thesis, now?”).
- Always make suggestions. Don’t tell the clients what you think they should do. Suggest something to them and be sure to provide a decent explanation for why you suggested it. If they don’t like your suggestion, then suggest something else.
- Use reflective listening, which is a way of phrasing statements and questions while maintaining an air of respect and tact. Here are some examples:
  - Say “It seems to me that...” or “It might be helpful if...” when suggesting corrections or ideas, or any variation thereof.
  - When asking for clarification on what a client is telling you, phrases such as “It appears you...” and “I’m not certain I understand, but are you saying/thinking/feeling...” etc.

**Reflective Listening: Suggested Phrases**
To exercise reflective listening, learn some of these suggested sample phrases, which are broken into three categories:

1) Phrases to use when you think your perceptions are correct.
- I’m sensing...
- I wonder if...
- I get the impression that...
- As I hear it, you...
- From your point of view...
- In your experience...
- As you see it...

2) Phrases to use when you think the client’s perceptions are correct.
- I’m picking up that you...
- Could it be that...
- Correct me if I’m wrong...
- Let me see if I’m wrong. You...
- It seems you...
- What I hear you saying...

3) Phrases to use when you think the client has a question.
- I’m not sure that...
- I’m not certain I understand...
- I hear you saying...
- I’m not sure what you mean by...
- I’m picking up...
- I’m not sure what you mean when you say...
- I’m not sure what you mean by...
- I’m not sure what you’re suggesting...

2) Phrases to use when you have difficulty understanding.

- Could it be...
- I’m not sure if I’m with you, but...
- Is it possible that...
- This is what I think I hear you saying...
- Could this be what’s going on, you...
- Maybe this is a long shot, but...
- I’m not certain I understand; you’re feeling...
- As I hear it, you...
- Would you buy this idea...
- Correct me if I’m wrong, but...
- Does it sound reasonable that you...
- Is there a chance that you...
- ...is that the way it it?
- As a reader, I am confused about...

3) Phrases to use when you disagree with the client

- I hear what you’re saying, but you may want to consider . . .
- That’s a valid point, but in my experience, professors typically care more about . . .
- Maybe we can put this on hold for now and come back to it later if we have time
- You know, I might suggest you do “x” differently, but if you feel strongly about it, then that is your call. This is your paper; I’m just here to offer a new perspective.

Exercise:
Read the following introductory paragraph:

A Framework for Understanding Poverty was written by Ruby K. Payne, “the Leading Expert on the Mindsets of poverty, Middle Class and Wealth” (Payne, Cover Page) and was ranked number 360 on Amazon in 2005 (Boomer, 1). For many American educators this sounds like a reliable introductory source to poverty. Unfortunately, the faults are numerous.

After talking with your client about his introduction, asking questions such as “what exactly is this paper about?”, your client communicates that he is comparing and contrasting two books about poverty. You come to the conclusion that the introductory paragraph needs to set up a better framework of the paper’s purpose. Using the suggested phrases above, write two examples of how you might communicate this to the client.

Type Example 1 Here:

Type Example 2 Here:

Now imagine that when you communicate your concerns with the client in one of the ways you suggested above, he begins to argue that he disagrees. Using the suggested phrases above, write two examples of how you might continue to communicate your concerns to the client without offending him or making him feel threatened.

Type Example 1 Here:

Type Example 2 Here:

Revisit the strategies under “down to business” and consider how you would discuss the introduction and structure the rest of the appointment. What would you say? What would the specific goals be? In what order would you work on them? How would you communicate this plan to the client?

Type Here:
Exercise:
Read the following assignment and paragraph. Beneath, you will find a table with lists of both good, open questions as well as weak, unproductive questions. Consider the examples provided and add three questions to the left column that would elicit a productive conversation about revising this introduction, and add three questions to the right column that would impede your conversation.

Did Wrangham provide a convincing argument for his claim that cooked food made humans who we are today? 3-5 pages, due 2/29

Richard Wrangham the author of Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human asks “What made us human?” (Wrangham 2). He answers his question “I believe the transformative moment that gave rise to the genus Homo, one of the great transitions in the history of life, stemmed from the control of fire and the advent of cooked food” (2). In his book he gives thorough evidence that cooking did make us human. Without cooking we still may be going out and foraging for food everyday. Cooking our food has led to everything humans have created. It gave us an advantage over other organisms because humans were able to get more calories from their food. Wrangham explores who would go out and forage for the food, he explores how eating raw food is not beneficial for your health and why we have larger brains and smaller guts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Productive Questions</th>
<th>Unproductive Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where in this paragraph is your most direct response to the assignment’s question?</td>
<td>1. Do you think this paragraph introduces your paper’s topic to readers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What was your reasoning behind including evidence in the introduction, as opposed to a body paragraph?</td>
<td>2. How do you feel about your thesis statement?</td>
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