Interpersonal Communication

Language - A system comprised of vocabulary and rules of grammar that allows us to engage in verbal communication

Verbal Symbols - Words, or the vocabulary that make up a language.

Grammar - the rules that dictate the structure of language

Encoding - The process of putting thoughts and feelings into verbal symbols, nonverbal messages, or both.

Decoding - The process of developing a thought based on hearing verbal symbols, observing nonverbal messages, or both.

Denotative Meaning - The literal, dictionary meaning of a word that most people in a culture have agreed upon.

Connotative Meaning - The meaning a verbal symbol has derived from our personal and subjective experience with that symbol.

- Concrete - Able to be seen, smelled, tasted, or touched.
- Abstract - Not able to be seen, smelled, tasted, or touched.
- Referent - The thing a symbol represents.

- Framing Theory - A theory that argues that when we compare two unlike things in a figure of speech, we are unconsciously influenced by the decision.

(Read Why War Metaphors Matter)

1. Why are metaphors for war helpful?
2. Why might they not be a good thing?

Process of Abstraction - our ability to move up and down the ladder of abstraction (our ability to picture things based on descriptions and/or the way we change descriptions depending on receiver and situation)

Read Carsten Wendt's description of the Ladder of Abstraction and then add your own definition.

Strategic Ambiguity - Leaving out cues in a message on purpose to encourage multiple interpretations by others.

Equivocation - A type of ambiguity that involves choosing our words carefully to give the listener a false impression without actually lying.

Euphemism - A milder or less direct word substituted for another word that is more blunt or negative.

Idiom - a word or phrase that has an understood meaning within a culture but whose meaning is not derived by exact translation.

Phatic Communication - communication consisting of words and phrases that are used for interpersonal contact only and are not meant to be translated verbatim.

Code-Switching - Shifting back and forth between languages in the same conversation.

Other factors impacting our understanding of verbal language -

- Sex/Gender
- Generation
- Context

- Our last activity for today is to write a brief letter to your friend that tells us what you did this weekend. Then write a letter to your grandma/pa that tells them what you did this weekend.